



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging Announces Promising Practices Award Winners**

*Thought Leader Shares Innovative Ideas as Free Download*

**Evanston, IL (Feb. 24, 2016)** – Innovations involving day trips to farms and practicing on no-pedal bicycles are among the programs selected by Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging as winners of its annual **Promising Practices Awards**. The awards highlight organizations that are moving away from conventional practices by developing and implementing new and innovative approaches in aging well, long-term care, and senior living communities.

“Sharing these ‘next practices’ reinforces our commitment to encouraging innovation that improves programs and services for older adults,” said Mary Leary, President and CEO of Mather LifeWays. “We hope these groundbreaking programs and ideas will benefit the senior living industry, as other organizations adapt the ideas and help transform them into best practices.”

The goal of Promising Practices is to learn “what is working” and “how it is working” from those who have experienced success in one or more of these areas: culture change, safety/risk management, wellness, technology, workforce development, community-based services, and resident/customer experiences.

**Winners:**

**A Plus Health Care** in Kallispell, Montana, for implementing a program for its home care clients that gives them regular access to the outdoors. The organization’s Lifeside Farms program brings homebound older adults and developmentally disabled youth to area farms, where they can participate in light chores, enjoy a healthy group lunch, and socialize with farmers and each other. Based on a program in the Netherlands, Lifeside Farms encourages healthy physical and social activities and imparts a sense of purpose to participants, improving health, quality of life, and community inclusion.

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**Westhills Village Retirement Community**, a Continuing Care Retirement Community in Rapid City, South Dakota, offers independent living residents the opportunity to ride bicycles again, thanks to a new program involving balance-enhancing, no-pedal bikes. Older adults who have balance problems, as well as those who never learned to ride a bike, are now wheeling around the community on special bikes designed for people with balance issues. Residents enjoy the activity, and biannual fitness surveys showed major improvements in balance for some who participated in the program.

**Honorable Mentions:**

**Benevilla**, a nonprofit social services agency in Surprise, Arizona, found a single solution for providing higher quality products to community members who used their day center; for meeting demand for an inviting community gathering space; and for offering Group Supported Employment (GSE) to intellectually and developmentally disabled adults. That solution: Birt's Bistro, adapted from the Mather LifeWays [Café Plus concept](#). Birt's Bistro is set up as a for-profit Social Enterprise Bistro, providing Benevilla with unique opportunities. The model is able to support the organization's mission and address the challenges, but without having to base decisions primarily on financial considerations as a traditional for-profit business does.

**Casa Dorinda**, a nonprofit Life Plan Community in Montecito, California, has successfully blurred traditional divisions between independent living, assisted living, and other care levels. In an effort to make the campus more inclusive, they regularly bring together residents in all levels of care to participate in specific arts activities together. This has established more cohesive programming that has brought residents together with each other and with staff, creating stronger social bonds campus-wide, and in all care levels. Now, independent living residents who move to a different level of care know they will still see their current friends during these activities. This helps alleviate some of the fear of changing care levels.

A full complimentary report on the 2015 Promising Practices winners and honorable mentions, "Innovation at Work" is available for download at

<http://www.matherlifewaysinstituteonaging.com/innovation-at-work/>

Nominations will open in July for the 2016 Promising Practices Awards, with a submission deadline in September 2016.

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**About Mather LifeWays**

Mather LifeWays is a 75-year-old unique, nondenominational not-for-profit organization that enhances the lives of older adults by creating Ways to Age Well. Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging is its research and education area of service and is an award-winning resource for research and information about wellness, aging, trends in senior living, and successful aging service innovations. For more information, visit [www.matherlifewaysinstituteonaging.com](http://www.matherlifewaysinstituteonaging.com).

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