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A Tradition of Community Caring

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Oregon Joins National Effort to Tap Baby Boomers

The Oregon Community Foundation Receives Community Experience Partnership Grant

Portland, Ore. — In Oregon, as in other states nationwide, the baby boom generation is reaching age 60. It's the largest, healthiest, and best-educated group in history to move through and beyond their sixth decade. National research shows that tens of millions of people over 60 are looking to make a difference in their community. With a \$25,000 grant, The Oregon Community Foundation, partnering and working with Oregon Involved and Life by Design Northwest, will study how we can take full advantage of this interest locally — identifying opportunities for older adults to help provide creative solutions to community problems, and for engaging residents over 60 in work that benefits the state of Oregon.

The grant was announced Friday, September 8, by The Atlantic Philanthropies — a private foundation that supports programs worldwide. It is part of the first phase of The Atlantic Philanthropies' Community Experience Partnership, in which 30 U.S. community foundations have been selected to receive grants totaling \$750,000 to assess and better understand the opportunities for older adults to become engaged in devising creative solutions for problems in their communities. This initial \$750,000 in local investment will be followed up by subsequent grants providing millions of dollars of support for the planning and implementation of new programs that facilitate greater civic engagement among the over 60 population.

"Tapping the tremendous potential of older adults to improve life for everyone in their communities is at the heart of this initiative," said Laura Robbins, head of the U.S. Aging Program for The Atlantic Philanthropies.

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“In communities across the U.S., the energy, skills and experience of people over 60 are ready to be unleashed. Imagine how much stronger communities will be when they choose to benefit from the time and talents of their most experienced citizens.”

Oregon, however, may lack the supports and structures needed to mobilize and place people over 60 in positions that address serious social issues. Attitudes and perceptions may stand in the way too. “One of the greatest strengths of Oregon has always been the experience of our people,” said Greg Chaillé, The Oregon Community Foundation’s president. “This grant will allow us to take a closer look at how we might overcome outdated attitudes and capitalize on the skills and passions of baby boomers as they transition from career to retirement.”

With the first of 77 million baby boomers turning 60 this year, the United States is facing a massive demographic shift. Research from Civic Ventures, a think tank dedicated to helping society achieve the greatest return on experience, indicates that nearly 45 million boomers want to be involved in work — paid or volunteer — that helps others. Far from frail, most of today’s 60+ boomers are fit, focused, and looking forward to new challenges. According to Civic Ventures, today’s 60-something citizens are “pioneers in a new stage spanning the decades between middle and late life... neither young nor old, they represent an extraordinary pool of social and human capital.”

Through its part in the Community Experience Partnership, The Oregon Community Foundation, with its partners Oregon Involved and Life by Design Northwest, will help tap this extraordinary pool of experience locally. They will study ways to increase the involvement of people over 60 in civic improvement through volunteering, employment and lifelong learning opportunities. Selected from a national pool of applicants, The Oregon Community Foundation will help lead the charge in deploying the wealth of boomer experience for the good of their communities.

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According to Kathleen Cornett, Vice President for Programs, “The Oregon Community Foundation is an expert in analyzing community problems, assessing solutions, and leveraging financial resources. This initiative gives us the opportunity to maximize the value of a growing supply of human resources available to our community.”

The Community Experience Partnership is managed by Community Planning & Research LLC with fiduciary support from the Community Initiative Funds at the San Francisco Foundation.

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The Oregon Community Foundation: Founded 32 years ago, The Oregon Community Foundation works in partnership with individual, family, business and organization donors to improve the lives of Oregonians through philanthropy and by building an endowment — now over \$800 million — for Oregon’s future. OCF provides more than \$42 million annually in grants and scholarships statewide. For more information, visit www.ocf1.org or call 503-227-6846.

The Atlantic Philanthropies: The Atlantic Philanthropies is dedicated to bringing about lasting changes in the lives of disadvantaged and vulnerable people. Atlantic focuses on critical social problems related to aging, disadvantaged children and youth, population health, and reconciliation and human rights. Programs funded by Atlantic operate in Australia, Bermuda, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, South Africa, the United States and Viet Nam. To learn more, please visit www.atlanticphilanthropies.org.

Community Foundations: More than 700 U.S. community foundations provide a simple, powerful, and highly personal approach to giving. Offering a variety of giving tools to help people achieve their charitable goals, community foundations create lasting good work in their communities through civic leadership, philanthropic services and strategic investments.