

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Local Innovative Community Mental Health Program Finalist For International Award

*Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Selecting Winners By Online Voting This Week*

WHEAT RIDGE—Colorado’s community mental health system has earned its share of national recognition for its innovation and effectiveness, but now a program developed to help seniors has become an international model of excellence that can shape the future of care for seniors around the world.

Senior Reach, a collaborative program with Jefferson Center for Mental Health, the Seniors’ Resource Center, and The Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties, is a finalist in an international competition coordinated by the Ashoka’s Changemakers and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The award program is called “Rethinking Mental Health: Improving Community Wellbeing.” The Senior Reach program is 1 of 12 finalists in the world.

Senior Reach was developed to support the well-being and independence of seniors by educating community members on how to identify and refer isolated, at-risk older adults who may benefit from mental health and/or care management services. By being proactive and intervening early, care for these older adults is more compassionate, effective, and less costly than waiting for more serious symptoms to develop. Senior Reach has demonstrated that an estimated 86 percent of seniors who are referred to the program and qualify for services will accept those services. This is the reason Senior Reach was started.

This innovative program is now being considered for an award called “Rethinking Mental Health: Improving Community Wellbeing.” The competition promotes the importance of mental health services for those living with mental illness and strives to improve the rights and resources for those with serious mental illnesses. The competition received more than 340 entries from 42 countries. Judges selected finalists for their vision, innovation, impact, and sustainability

“These finalists have proven that communities worldwide will now have the resources and support to address mental health care needs,” said Changemakers’ executive director Charlie Brown. “We are thrilled to highlight and encourage each solution and look forward to continuing our efforts to radically rethink mental health.”

To build awareness and support for Senior Reach and the other finalists, the awards program includes online voting. Stakeholders and fans are encouraged to vote for their favorite three

finalists by December 9, 2009. The three finalists that generate the most votes will be announced on December 16 and each will earn a \$5,000 cash award. The finalists include:

1. National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare, USA
2. JDW National Referral Hospital, Department of Psychiatry, Bhutan
3. Buckelew Programs, Inc., USA
4. The South African Depression and Anxiety Organisation, South Africa
5. Active Minds, USA
6. Anjali, India
7. Schizophrenia Research Foundation, India
8. Tiyatien Health, Liberia
9. University of Washington School of Social Work, USA
10. Center for Rural Mental Health Studies, USA
11. FORGE, Zambia
12. Senior Reach, Jefferson Center for Mental Health, the Seniors' Resource Center, and The Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties, USA

“We have recommended including the Senior Reach program in the National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices,” said Judy Trujillo, President of Denver-based Trujillo Group, which provides consulting services to nonprofit organizations and public agencies to enhance organizational capacity. “Senior Reach provides comprehensive support services such as community education, outreach, care management, information/referral, and mental health treatment to adults 60 years plus. “The program has demonstrated successful outcomes in achieving improved emotional health, reduced isolation and increased ability to live independently.”

To learn more about the awards program and to support Senior Reach, visit www.changemakers.com. For more information about Senior Reach, or to become a Community Partner, visit www.seniorreach.org

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Background

About Senior Reach: As people age, they face new social, physical, emotional challenges. Many older adults have lost the support of spouses, family or friends, and maintain their independence without significant support from their community. Unfortunately, some older adults have more difficulty and require help that is not provided by their friends and family. Often these at-risk and isolated adults do not self refer and are very reluctant to seek outside help. If their problems are not addressed, the individuals may be exposed to even greater risks. For example, poor health, loss of loved ones, increasing social isolation due to lack of mobility, depression, Alzheimers disease, and financial problems can all contribute to the inability of some older adults to cope and to remain independent in their own community.

With the help of trained community members (called Community Partners), along with many local service agencies, we can reach out to these older adults and provide the care that can make a difference. Community Partners are individuals or organizations that interact with seniors on a regular basis. They act as advocates for seniors who exhibit the need for assistance. So far, more than 8,100 people have been trained as Community Partners.

In 2005, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration awarded Senior Reach a three year grant to develop a program that identifies and provides outreach assistance to at risk older adults, 60 years and older, who may not typically come to the attention of the aging services and mental health delivery systems. Funding today is dependent on a variety of sources, including public assistance, programs, private insurance and grants. The program serves 400 people per year and demand for these services continues to rise with our aging population.

The success of Jefferson Centers Senior Reach program can be illustrated in the inspirational stories of the seniors served. Here is one such story that shows the life changing impact of Senior Reach. Mrs. J is an older adult woman who recently moved to Colorado, She was having a difficult time adjusting to her new home and felt lonely being separated from her family and friends. She called the Senior Reach 1-800 number and told the call center operator that she needed help because she felt depressed. A Senior Reach clinician made an initial visit and discovered that Mrs J. not only needed help with depression but also with chronic pain management and her feelings of isolation. During the next several months, Senior Reach staff offered support to Mrs J as she worked on improving both her mental and physical health. She learned skills to cope with her depression and found a new strength in reaching out, connecting, and making new friends. At the same time Mrs. J learned various relaxation techniques to help with her chronic pain and found new social outlets. Mrs. J said with a big smile at the end of her time with the Senior Reach program, "I don't know what I would have done without you!"

For more information about Senior Reach, or to become a Community Partner, visit www.seniorreach.org

About Ashoka's Changemakers: Changemakers is an initiative of Ashoka, an organization with over three decades of finding, funding, and expanding the work of social entrepreneurs across the globe. It is a global online community of action that connects people to share ideas, inspire and mentor each other, and find and support the best ideas in social innovation. The

Changemakers online community builds on this history and expands the Ashoka vision by creating an “Everyone a Changemaker” world through networking, relationship-building, and the sourcing of funding opportunities.

Through its collaborative competitions and open-source process, Changemakers’ has created one of the world’s most robust laboratories for launching, refining, and scaling ideas for solving the world’s most pressing social problems.

To learn more about the awards program and to support Senior Reach, visit www.changemakers.com.

- 1) Click on “sign in” or “register to vote”
- 2) Create a new user account
- 3) Check your email for your temporary password
- 4) Log in using the link in your e-mail
- 5) Reset your password
- 7) Go to “Competitions”
- 8) Vote.

About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 35 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. For more information visit www.rwjf.org.

About Jefferson Center for Mental Health: Since 1958, Jefferson Center for Mental Health has successfully helped nearly ½ million individuals facing mental health challenges—friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers. Jefferson Center for Mental Health serves individuals and families who are impacted by mental illness in Jefferson, Gilpin and Clear Creek Counties. The Center provides comprehensive, community-based mental health services to more than 7,200 people each year and reaches thousands more with education and prevention services. The Center serves the people throughout its three-county area with 350+ staff in 40 locations, including numerous community settings such as schools, nursing homes, senior centers and other partner locations. It offers a variety of programs including: outpatient counseling, vocational services, and employee assistance programs. The Center provides mental health services and hope to people of all ages to foster recovery and resilience for individuals who have mental health problems, promoting a better quality of life and a healthy community. For more information, visit www.jcmh.org.

About The Mental Health Center Serving Boulder and Broomfield Counties: The MHCBBC offers a wide range of programs and services to individuals of all ages and their families. The MHCBBC staff includes psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, mental health workers, nurses, and administrative professionals as well as many trained volunteers to serve our community. All of our clinical programs are divided into one of the five networks.

In partnership with others, we improve quality of life and reduce the burden of illness by providing comprehensive, community-based mental health services for those with the greatest need. Advancing human potential through excellence in treating mental illness and responding to community needs in service to others. Our vision is:

- Supporting individuals and families toward independence and community integration
- Working in partnership with consumers, families, human service agencies, funders, donors, and the community
- Serving diverse cultures with sensitivity, understanding, and skill
- Leading clinical and operational excellence
- Sustaining an aligned and energized workforce

www.mhcbbc.org

About the Seniors' Resource Center: Seniors' Resource Center, a 501c3 nonprofit organization, is a community partner providing person-focused, coordinated services to enhance independence, dignity and quality of life for seniors. These services include intensive Transportation, Adult Day & Respite Services, In-Home Care Services, mental health outreach, Job Training Services, Volunteer opportunities and Care Management Services. SRC's funding sources are diverse, and reflect the importance of older adult services to sponsoring groups. Our funding sources include fees for service; local, state and federal allocations; and contributions from foundations, corporations and businesses, civic groups, clients and friends.

www.srcaging.org