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CITY OF FREMONT HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT RECEIVES 'FRESH IDEAS' GRANT TO REACH ETHNIC AND FAITH BASED OLDER ADULTS

Five community organizations will implement a Community Ambassador Program for Seniors to provide information and referral assistance to underserved seniors in their communities

[Fremont, CA, March 6, 2007] – The City of Fremont Human Services Department is proud to announce Fremont City Council's acceptance of a grant award of \$300,000 from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care. This two-year grant will fund the development of a program called **The Community Ambassador Program for Seniors (CAPS)**.

The CAPS proposal was developed by a **collaborative effort of five community organizations** who have been working closely with the **City of Fremont** and the **Tri-City Elder Coalition** to identify how to better address the needs of underserved seniors within their communities. These organizations include: the **Centerville Presbyterian Church, the Muslim Support Network, Sikhs Engaged in Volunteer Activities, the India Community Center and the Taiwanese Senior Association.**

CAPS will build capacity to serve seniors in their own communities, in their own language, within their own cultural norms, and will do so where seniors live, worship, socialize and learn. "We are very pleased to have received this prestigious grant. It is a privilege to collaborate with such dedicated and caring partners to reach seniors who are currently underserved," stated Mary Anne Mendall, City of Fremont Human Service's Administrator of Aging & Family Services Division.

The city of Fremont Human Services Department has a long history of partnering with community organizations in serving older adults. Yet there remains a significant number of seniors who are underserved due to: lack of awareness of services, physical isolation, inability to speak English, and cultural barriers. "Awareness of local programs and services serving seniors is very low in our community, and oftentimes our seniors and caregivers don't know how to locate them," states Moina Shaiq, Program Director of the Muslim Support Network. "This project will train volunteers from our own communities, who will then relay this information via events, fairs, home visits, and other avenues where older adults and their families congregate".

The five community organizations will each hire a site coordinator who will recruit at least 10 volunteers per site. City staff will train site coordinators and volunteers to provide information and referral assistance to seniors in their respective communities, utilizing a curriculum developed and tested by staff from **Stanford University Geriatric Education Center and San**

Jose State University. Site coordinators and volunteers will meet collectively across sites to collaborate with one another and to share best practices.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation solicited grant applications to develop new community-based approaches to health and health care problems faced by immigrants and refugees. The Foundation was especially looking to support organizations outside the formal network of health care providers, such as grassroots organizations, faith and ethnic groups. “We are proud to award this grant to the City of Fremont Human Services, and anticipate that their model will be replicable for other communities nationally,” stated Wendy Yallowitz, program officer at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

This initiative is part of the larger 5-year Robert Wood Johnson funded strategic project, *Pathways to Positive Aging*, a partnership of the City of Fremont Human Services Department and the Tri-City Elder Coalition, whose goal is to create a community where seniors will understand, choose and access culturally enriched, affordable services and opportunities that enhance their quality of life. Visit www.tceconline.org for more information.

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 30 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. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime.

The City of Fremont Human Services Department works to support a vibrant community through the creation and maintenance of services that empower individuals, strengthen families, encourage self-sufficiency, enhance neighborhoods, and foster a high quality of life.

The Tri-City Elder Coalition is an affiliation of health care and long-term care providers, community and governmental agencies, elected officials, caregivers and older adults. The Coalition works to identify and meet the needs of seniors in the community by taking action through advocacy, education, resource coordination and information sharing.