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**METLIFE FOUNDATION AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AREA AGENCIES ON
AGING HONOR OUTSTANDING OLDER VOLUNTEERS AT WASHINGTON, DC EVENT**

***The Older Volunteers Enrich America Awards Celebrate and Promote Volunteering
Among Adults Over the Age of 50***

Washington, DC – Today, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) announced recipients of the 2011 MetLife Foundation *Older Volunteers Enrich America Awards*. The program, now in its ninth year, honors the exemplary contributions of older volunteers and promotes volunteering among older adults nationwide. The award-winning volunteers, who range in age from 54 to 92 years, were in Washington, DC today to attend a ceremony in their honor.

Healthy communities engage the time, talent and best thinking of residents of all ages,” said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. “We are pleased to join n4a in recognizing 26 older volunteers who are making a positive difference in their communities. They are an inspiration to people of all ages.”

The award winners, selected by a blue ribbon panel, are recognized in three categories: *Community Champion*, which honors those who use their time and talent to make their community a better place to live; *Mentor*, which recognizes older volunteers who are devoted to working with young people and their families; and *Team Spirit*, which pays tribute to older volunteers who assist other older adults.

The top award recipient in each category received recognition as a Gold Honoree:

Pendleton Woods, 87, of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma earned top recognition in the *Community Champion* category for his service with the Epilepsy Association.

Ida Odom, 89, of Chester, Pennsylvania earned top recognition in the *Mentor* category for her service with the Foster Grandparent Program of the Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

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LaVerne Gordon, 92, of Pleasant Hill, California earned top recognition in the *Team Spirit* category for her service with the Contra Costa County Area Agency on Aging's Tax-Aide program.

"The *Older Volunteers Enrich America Award* honorees have dedicated thousands and thousands of hours volunteering to help others and to strengthen their communities," said Sandy Markwood, CEO n4a. "We commend these men and women for their service and for setting the example of what is possible when we support each other. Volunteerism is an important part of life for retirees and there are so many opportunities to touch the lives of others in positive ways. We are grateful that MetLife Foundation makes it possible to recognize these honorees and hope that by doing so, other volunteers will follow in their footsteps."

In addition to the Gold Honorees, 23 individuals received recognition as Silver Honorees for their outstanding volunteer contributions:

Community Champion Category

Isha Salas-Desselle, 54, Turning Point Center, **Houston, Texas**; Lawrence Hills, 80, PET Florida, **Penney Farms, Florida**; Judy Wunsch, 72, Alzheimer's Association California Southland, **Los Angeles, California**; Norman Moeller, 71, RSVP Community Task Force/Missoula Aging Services, **Missoula, Montana**; Joel Becker, 77, RSVP, **Hauppauge, New York**; Marie Mosby, 69, Volunteer Guardianship Program of Arlington County, **Arlington, Virginia**; Don Moreland, 75, Aging and Disability Services, **Seattle, Washington**; Karen Maidana-Dahl, 65, Vernon County Unit on Aging, **Viroqua, Wisconsin**; Lois Ruppel, 67, Know County RSVP, **Vincennes, Indiana**.

Mentor Category

Clarie Miller, 76, Mid Iowa Foster Grandparent Program, **Marshalltown, Iowa**; Ruth Dodds, 60, Lutheran Social Services, Foster Grandparent Program, **Jamestown, New York**; Tim Wingard, 69, Youth Mentoring Connection, **Los Angeles, California**

Team Spirit Category

Mary Nellis, 63, Catholic Charities-Aging Services, **Madison, Wisconsin**; Margi Miller, 69, Tidewell Hospice, **Venice, Florida**; Rev. Ronald Chochol, Ph.D., 73, SGSM Network, **St. Louis, Missouri**; Arthur Budnik, 60, Minuteman Senior Services, **Arlington, Massachusetts**; Marjorie Bronk, 72, Alzheimer's Association Capital of Texas Chapter, **Burnet, Texas**; Robert Clarke, 72, Suncoast Hospice, **Palm Harbor, Florida**; Ralph and Charlene Getz, 76 and 71, Family Services of Western Pennsylvania, **Monroeville, Pennsylvania**; Tom Grgurich, 64, Elder Point Ministries of Greater Lakeland, **Lakeland, Florida**; Mary Frances Gilliard Oliver, 85, League of Women Voters of Spartanburg County, **Spartanburg, South Carolina**; Claude Brown, 66, Bonney Lake Senior Center, **Bonney Lake, Washington**.

All of the honorees received engraved gifts, and their volunteer organizations received monetary awards.

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) is the leading voice on aging issues for Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) across the country and a champion for Title VI Native

American aging programs. n4a's primary mission is to build the capacity of its members to help older persons and persons with disabilities live with dignity and choices in their homes and communities for as long as possible. (www.n4a.org)

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 by MetLife to carry on its longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation is committed to building a secure future for individuals and communities. This commitment is reflected in the Foundation's focus on building livable communities, preparing young people and empowering older adults. For more information about MetLife Foundation, visit www.metlife.org.
