



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 28, 2022

CONTACT:

Henry Kenney III, hkenneyiii@aarp.org, (202) 714-0214

**AARP Announces 2023 Purpose Prize® Award Winners and Fellows;
Award-Winning Filmmaker and Actor Tyler Perry to Receive Honorary
Purpose Prize**

*\$50K Awards Will Be Presented To Five Winners And Their Organizations That Lead Extraordinary
Missions In Their Communities.*

WASHINGTON – Today, AARP announced its [2023 AARP Purpose Prize award recipients](#). The one-of-a-kind national award honors people age 50-plus who have proven that they are using their knowledge and life experience to make a difference. Five AARP Purpose Prize Winners who have founded a non-profit will receive \$50,000 for their organization. In addition, 10 AARP Purpose Prize Fellows and their organizations will be recognized with an award of \$10,000. All award recipients will also receive a year of technical support to help broaden the scope of their organization's work.

“Each of the winners and fellows acknowledged here today deserve all of the praise and recognition we have to offer for their exemplary work,” said AARP CEO Jo Ann Jenkins. “We celebrate these inspiring individuals, who have used their decades of life experience to give back in a meaningful way, to be leaders in their communities, and to create a better future for us all.”

Alongside the Purpose Prize winners and fellows, AARP will present critically acclaimed filmmaker, screenwriter, actor and philanthropist Tyler Perry with an honorary Purpose Prize Award for his founding and leadership of [The Perry Foundation](#). Since its inception in 2006, The Perry Foundation has been committed to transforming tragedy into triumph by cultivating individual potential, supporting communities, and harvesting sustainable change. Partnering with a myriad of organizations nationally and globally, The Foundation focuses on education, health, agriculture, human rights, technology, arts & culture, global sustainability, and economic development. Through this organization, Tyler Perry has aided people and charities who help others overcome the obstacles that he, too, once faced.

The AARP Inspire Award will also return for its second year. Starting today, the general public will have the opportunity to vote at aarp.org/InspireAward for the AARP Purpose Prize Winner they would like to win the AARP Inspire Award, which grants the recipient an additional \$10,000 for their organization. The AARP Inspire Award recipient will be announced during an in-person celebration honoring all recipients in Washington, D.C. on October 25, 2022.

The 2023 AARP Purpose Prize winners are:

Zerqa Abid – Columbus, Ohio – [MY Project USA](#)

- MY Project USA’s mission is to protect and empower American youth by creating opportunities for them to become productive citizens and strong community leaders of the United States of America.

Jamesetta Ferguson – Louisville, Kentucky – [MOLO Village, CDC](#)

- Molo (“welcome” in the South African dialect Xhosa) Village is a grassroots organization committed to holistically addressing complex issues that the neighborhood of Russell — a once-thriving African American community — now experiences, including poverty, inadequate housing, limited food access, low educational attainment and systemic racism.

Sharron Rush – Austin, Texas – [Knowbility](#)

- Knowbility's mission is to create an inclusive digital world for people with disabilities.

Bill Toone – Escondido, California – [ECOLIFE Conservation](#)

- ECOLIFE Conservation's mission is to protect wildlife, natural resources and the people who depend on them.

Dr. Imani Woody – Washington, D.C. – [Mary’s House for Older Adults](#)

- Mary’s House for Older Adults Inc. is committed to helping its community by developing housing and inclusive environments that comprehensively address affordability and access, and eliminate the constant worry of discrimination or even violence based upon the LGBTQ+/SGL status of the individual.

The 2023 AARP Purpose Prize fellows are:

Gulshan Harjee, M.D. – Atlanta, Georgia – [Clarkston Community Health Center](#)

Judith Heilman – Bozeman, Montana – [The Montana Racial Equity Project](#)

Chien-Chi Huang – Somerville, Massachusetts – [Asian Women for Health](#)

Debra Isaacs – Henderson, Nevada – [UNSHAKEABLE](#)

Mishelle Rudzinski – Portland, Oregon – [SPOON](#)

Elizabeth Shaughnessy – Berkeley, California – [Berkeley Chess School](#)

Charles Schmuck – Menlo Park, California – [The Peninsula College Fund](#)

Richard Sesler – Charlotte, North Carolina – [Camp Blue Skies](#)

Richard Valenza – Los Angeles, California – [RaiseAChild](#)

Michele R. Wright, Ph.D. and Terry Gene Wright – North Little Rock, Arkansas – [National Organization of African Americans with Cystic Fibrosis](#)

###

About AARP

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence and nearly 38 million members, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to families: health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also produces the nation's largest circulation publications: AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.