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Front Porch Center for Technology Innovation and Wellbeing Explores How Innovative Technology Can Empower Older Adults to Live Well

Davis Park Appointed as Director

Burbank, Calif. March 29, 2011 – The Front Porch Center for Technology Innovation and Wellbeing (CTIW), a 5013C, is founded on the belief that technology innovation plays a vital role in enhancing each individual’s ability to “live life my way.” It strives to harness technology solutions that support and enhance wellbeing in older adults. Front Porch CTIW’s core initiatives focus on how technology can: assist in maintaining brain health; enhance social connectedness; promote engagement and growth; empower control over health and wellness; prevent emergencies or serious events; and increase resources and support for formal and informal caregivers.

[Front Porch](#), Southern California’s largest not-for-profit provider of retirement living communities, announces the appointment of Davis Park as director of the CTIW. In this role, Park is responsible for the Front Porch CTIW efforts to identify, pilot and deploy emerging technologies that empower older adults to live well. He joins Kari Olson, president of the Front Porch CTIW and CIO of Front Porch.

“Front Porch embraces a leading-edge approach to wellness in aging, offering innovative programs and activities that meet the needs of the people we serve,” said Gary Wheeler, Front Porch CEO. “The CTIW grew out of Front Porch’s commitment and dedication to innovation and aims to develop technology into adaptive solutions to enhance the aging experience in our communities and beyond.”

This year, the first Baby Boomers will turn 65, launching an era where more Americans than ever will be entering their retirement years. By 2030, the number of Americans over 65 is expected to double and will represent nearly 20% of the population¹. Technology innovation and adaption will become especially important during the “Silver Tsunami” to help this generation age better.

The Front Porch CTIW’s process of introducing new technologies into its communities is three-fold. First, the CTIW team works collaboratively with residents and staff, as well as researchers, academic institutions and other care providers, to identify the needs of older adults that can be met with the help of technology solutions. Secondly, based on its findings, the Front Porch CTIW works in partnership with solution providers to identify existing technology solutions, sourcing the most creative ideas and finding

¹ Administration on Aging
http://www.aoa.gov/aoaroot/aging_statistics/index.aspx

ways to apply them with older adults in innovative ways. And lastly, the CTIW also works in partnership with solution providers to develop these types of technologies.

“Technology by itself is not the answer,” said Olson, the CTIW’s president. “The key is finding ways to creatively apply technology as a tool that individuals can use to help live life their way in the place they call home. Identifying touch points and delivering real-world solutions that meet these critical needs is what the Front Porch CTIW is all about.”

Among the Front Porch CTIW’s first ventures was its collaboration with Dakim, a brain fitness software program designed to engage the minds of aging adults, which was developed in response to the growing rate of people suffering from Alzheimer’s. Dakim is designed to help preserve brain health and fight the advance of memory loss by keeping the brain active.

Front Porch was an original investor in the company, a beta tester for its original computer program and the first organization to install it into its communities. It now has the largest installation of the program nationwide. Front Porch’s work with Dakim demonstrated its ability to explore new ideas and rapidly deploy technology into its communities. Based on the success of this initiative, Front Porch decided to formalize the CTIW.

“Much of the technology that can be used to help older adults already exists,” said Olson. “It’s a matter of finding applications and retooling them for this arena – that’s the goal of the Front Porch CTIW. Our greatest hope is to move from research to rapid deployment and adoption over large populations. Davis joined to help us achieve that successfully.”

In addition to the Dakim software, The Front Porch CTIW is working on several other initiatives to help its residents and the greater community of older adults. They include:

- Partnering with University of Southern California (USC) on a study of how to make Facebook more accessible to older adults who don’t use computers.
- Utilizing Nintendo Wii to increase social networking within and across it’s communities while simultaneously increasing older adults’ exposure to everyday technologies while also helping individual communities participate in tournaments with other retirement communities across the country.
- Implementing the LifeBio program, an innovative approach to help older adults document memories in their online biographies. The technology connects youth and families more to residents’ life stories.

About Front Porch

Front Porch is the largest not-for-profit provider of retirement living communities in Southern California. Front Porch active adult and full service retirement communities offer a full range of options from independent living to continuing care, along with specialized programs like memory support. With innovative communities and programs that meet the changing needs of people as they age, Front Porch communities represent a leading-edge approach to wellness in aging. Front Porch is comprised of 11 full-service retirement communities in California and three adult living communities: one in Louisiana, one in Florida and one in Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico. Of these, seven are Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC). Front Porch, based in Burbank, Calif. and founded in 1999, is a not-for-profit organization that gives back to its residents and the communities it serves.

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Editor's note: Images are available upon request.