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Kresge Foundation awards \$750,000 to Voices of Detroit Initiative (VODI)

VODI and St. John Providence Health System
to Create Healthy Living Mall in Conner Creek Community

Detroit, Michigan (January 5, 2011) Voices of Detroit Initiative (VODI) has been awarded a three-year, \$750,000 Safety-Net Enhancement Initiative Grant from The Kresge Foundation. VODI intends to use the grant for a Healthy Living Mall in the Conner Creek Village Campus. The campus is located at 4777 Outer Drive and was the former location of Holy Cross Hospital. The Conner Creek community was chosen because of significant morbidity and mortality rates related to diabetes and hypertension. "The Safety-Net Enhancement Initiative is designed to reduce disparities and improve health outcomes of low-income children and adults," says David D. Fukuzawa, Director, The Kresge Foundation Health Program.

VODI is a community healthcare coalition whose members consist of Detroit area healthcare systems (i.e., St. John Providence Health System, the Detroit Medical Center, Henry Ford Health System, Oakwood Health System, the Detroit and Wayne County Health Departments, the Detroit-area Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), Wayne State University School of Medicine and an array of Wayne County social service organizations. Since its inception, VODI has played a major role in addressing health disparities and leading efforts to implement and evaluate programs that positively influence health.

VODI will focus on health disparities associated with diabetes and hypertension in the Conner Creek Community (zip codes 48205 and 48234). The need for health services in this area is evident as nearly twenty percent are uninsured and are at high risk for diabetes and hypertension and therefore resulting complications such as heart disease, kidney disease and stroke (also leading causes of death). In the Detroit area, diabetes and hypertension are self-reported by 13.5% and 38.0% of adults, respectively. In 2006, diabetes accounted for 9.2% of ambulatory care sensitive discharges in 48205 and 6.1% of such discharges in 48234. The total cost of diabetes was estimated to be \$78.4 million in 2008. Lifestyles add to the risk for diabetes and hypertension. Within the Detroit area, 28.7%

of adults had no physical exercise in the past 30 days, 34.6% reported being overweight and 33.7% reported being obese. Only 25% consumed fruits and vegetables at least 5 times per day.

The Conner Creek Village has a residential campus that offers affordable housing for seniors in addition to a commercial facility that includes a 24-hour emergency room, a Federally Qualified Health Center and an array of community development groups and human service agencies. The campus also provides free space for community meetings, workshops and children/family services. For more information on current services please visit <http://www.stjohnprovidence.org/connercreek/>

VODI, along with St. John Providence Health System, the Detroit Community Initiative (DCI) and the Nortown Community Development Coalition, will bring together numerous economic, religious, educational and social service organizations to help create the Healthy Living Mall. The Mall will offer a synergistic approach addressing diabetes and hypertension to promote healthy lifestyles. The Mall will provide meaningful opportunities for residents to participate in community programs and the social networking and interactions offered can strengthen the neighborhood and make it safer. An array of programs to be offered at the Healthy Living Mall will include healthy eating, physical activity and medication use. Lucille Smith, Executive Director of VODI, and recent recipient of the Civic Ventures 2010 Purpose Prize Fellow, states that “The Kresge Foundation award provides us with this unique opportunity to build, and put in to service, programs to help and be a voice for the underserved. It is not only an investment in community innovation and show what’s possible in our communities, but is also a tremendous opportunity.”

The Kresge Foundation is a \$3.1 billion private, national foundation that seeks to influence the quality of life for future generations by creating access and opportunity in underserved communities, improving the health of low-income people, supporting artistic expression, increasing college achievement, assisting in the revitalization of Detroit, and advancing methods for dealing with global climate change. The foundation works in six program areas: arts and culture, community development, education, the environment, health, and human services. For more information, visit <http://www.kresge.org/>.

For more information about VODI visit <http://www.voicesofdetroitinitiative.org/>

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