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**For Immediate Release
May 7, 2010**

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

***The Older Volunteers Enrich America Awards Program Celebrates and Promotes
Volunteering Among Adults Over the Age of 50***

Washington, DC – Today, the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) announced recipients of the 2010 MetLife Foundation *Older Volunteers Enrich America Awards*. The program, now in its eighth year, honors the exemplary contributions of older volunteers and promotes volunteering among older adults nationwide. The award-winning volunteers, who range in age from 59 to 95 years, were in Washington today to attend a ceremony in their honor.

“Every town -- no matter how small or large – can use the time and talent of volunteers to strengthen communities,” said Dennis White, president and CEO, MetLife Foundation. “We are pleased to join n4a in honoring 26 older volunteers who are making a positive difference in the lives of individuals and families and improving the overall quality of community life. 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 older adults.

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

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The top award recipient in each category is recognized as a Gold Honoree:

Barbara, 78, and Ira, 79, Smith of Acton, Massachusetts, earned top recognition in the *Community Champion* category. Barbara and Ira launched Household Goods Recycling of Massachusetts (HGRM) in their garage in 1990. HGRM is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organization that accepts donated household goods and distributes them free of charge to individuals and families in need. What started as a plan to help one family has grown to an organization of 300 volunteers that now helps close to 4,000 families a year make a home. The Smiths continue to serve as volunteer co-Executive Directors of HGRM. In 2009 alone, HGRM collected and distributed more than 31,000 pieces of major furniture, kitchen, medical, bedding and baby care items as well as 11,000 boxes of smaller household goods, free of charge. Because of the Smiths' hard work and dedication, HGRM is now the largest provider of direct household assistance in New England.

Donald Bend, 60, of Omaha, Nebraska earned top recognition in the *Mentor* category for being a "Big Brother" to a young man who experienced a brain injury at birth and as a result suffers from developmental delays and multiple disabilities. At the time of their pairing, Donald's "Little Brother" Alex was enrolled entirely in special resource classes because he needed extra time to complete work. Today, Alex is a high school senior who takes regular classes, is a member of the National Honor Society, and maintains a GPA of 3.6. His mother attributes much of his confidence and success to his relationship with Don, who spent every Saturday of the last five years with Alex. Don's volunteerism helped Big Brothers Big Sisters of Midland raise more than \$380,000 when he and Alex shared their story with potential donors in 2009.

Jack Scudder, 74, of Newport News, Virginia earned top recognition in the *Team Spirit* category for volunteering to drive seniors to doctor appointments and medical procedures as part of the Medtran program. Despite his own mobility limitations due to a spinal cord injury more than a decade ago, in 2009 alone, Jack donated 540 hours to drive the 10,129 miles and completed 135 medical trips without ever asking for money for gasoline. Prior to retirement, Jack served 21 years in the military and completed two tours in Vietnam. He has been recognized by local TV Channel 3 as a Community Star and by the Daily Press newspaper as an outstanding community volunteer. In 2008, he was one of ten receiving the TV Channel 10 "Ten Who Care" awards in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

Sandy Markwood, CEO of n4a, added, "Everyone wins through volunteerism – local markets get stronger, older adults remain engaged in their communities, and individuals in need of community support are able to receive help. Valuable programs that benefit our most vulnerable citizens continue to be cut around the country as states and localities are facing difficult budget situations. Fortunately, thousands of volunteers like our 26 honorees here in Washington today are stepping in to enrich the lives of their

fellow Americans. We are grateful that MetLife Foundation has made it possible to recognize their inspirational work at a national level.”

All of the honorees will receive engraved gifts, and the organizations that host the volunteers will receive 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 by MetLife in 1976 to carry on its longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Grants support health, education, civic and cultural programs throughout the United States. For more information about the Foundation, visit www.metlife.org.

In addition to the Gold Honorees, 22 individuals were chosen as the Silver Honorees for their outstanding volunteer contributions.

2010 MetLife Foundation *Older Volunteers Enrich America Award* - Silver Honor Recipients

Community Champion Category

Charlie Davis, 82, Rebuilding Together Omaha, Inc., **Omaha, Nebraska**; Edward Ferguson, 76, Collier County Sheriff's Office Volunteer Program, **Naples, Florida**; Deb Matthews, 59, LSS Senior Nutrition Program/Clearwater & Hubbard Co., **Bemidji, Minnesota**; Mari Terbrueggen, 71, The Senior Life Foundation, Inc., **Jacksonville, Florida**; Anna Mae Tomka, 73, United Way of the Midlands, **Omaha, Nebraska**

Mentor Category

Raymond Unger, 80, Bayless High School “Meal Runners,” **Saint Louis, Missouri**; Doris Watkins, 90, The Shelter, **Omaha, Nebraska**

Team Spirit Category

James W. Ayre, 72, Volunteer Connections to Central Alabama, Inc., **Equality, Alabama**; Richard Bear, 71, York County Area Agency on Aging Volunteer Programs; **Dover, Pennsylvania**; Ruth Candeb Avins, 82, Senior Medicare Patrol of New Jersey, **Edison, New Jersey**; Marilyn Fantino, 77, JABA Food Bag Program, **Charlottesville, Virginia**; Mae Giesner, 71, Benefits Assistance Program, **Scottsdale, Arizona**; Sandra

Jackson, 68, Partners In Care-Ride Partners Transportation, **Severna Park, Maryland**;
Virginia Lemire, 73, Minuteman Senior Services Volunteer Program, **Lincoln,
Massachusetts**; Gertrude "Trudi" Myers, 77, Senior Companion Program, **Denver,
Colorado**; Mary Anne Page, 78, Southeast Minneapolis Meals on Wheels,
Minneapolis, Minnesota; Duane Phillips, 62, Senior Legal Hotline Volunteer Program,
Sacramento, California; Joze Pihlar, 77, Respite Connection, **Papillion, Nebraska**;
Charles Pollard, 95, Waxter Center Volunteer Program, **Baltimore, Maryland**; Larry
Rivers, 68, Health Insurance Counseling Program with the Senior LinkAge Line, **Apple
Valley, Minnesota**; Betty Thacker, 82, Mobile Meals, **Knoxville, Tennessee**;
Hilda Woel, 71, Montgomery County Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, **Silver
Spring, Maryland**.