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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **DR. ROBERT PUTNAM NAMED RECIPIENT OF GENERATIONS UNITED'S JACK OSSOFSKY AWARD FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN SUPPORT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND OLDER ADULTS**

*Awards ceremony will take place at Generations United's upcoming conference, Intergenerational Action on a Global Scale.*

(Cambridge, MA)–Washington, D.C.-based Generations United proudly announced today that Dr. Robert Putnam will be the recipient of the 2015 Jack Ossofsky Award for Lifetime Achievement in Support of Children, Youth and Older Adults.

“We are honored to present Dr. Robert Putnam with Generations United’s Jack Ossofsky Award for Lifetime Achievement in Support of Children, Youth and Older Adults,” said Donna Butts, executive director of Generations United. “Throughout his career, Dr. Putnam has contributed thought-provoking ideas designed to weave the critical social compact that binds and strengthens intergenerational ties and builds stronger communities.”

The award honors the lifetime achievements of an individual whose efforts benefit both the young and the old. It is a lasting tribute to Jack Ossofsky, who was executive director of the National Council on the Aging, and one of the co-founders and early leaders of Generations United.

Dr. Putnam is a distinguished political scientist best known for popularizing the concept of social capital – the collective value of our social networks – in his work *Bowling Alone*, which examined the decline of social capital in the United States and altered the course of social science in the fifteen years since its publication with its provocative insights. Earlier this year, Putnam published an acclaimed book titled *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis* that explores issues of inequality of opportunity and the growing class gap among youth in the US.

The other 2015 Generations United award recipients are: **Michelle Singletary, Dr. Matt Kaplan, Dr. Alan Lai, Family Education & Support Services of Olympia, WA, ‘Iolani School, Sweet Readers, The Gary and Mary West Foundation, Elouise Frank, Taylor Hamai, Sandy Kraemer and Dr. Nancy Henkin.**

**Michelle Singletary** (recipient of the 2015 Generations United Media Award) often writes about “Big Mama” in her nationally-syndicated personal finance column, “The Color of Money,” which appears in *The Washington Post* on Wednesday and Sunday. Her award-winning column is syndicated by The Washington Post Writer’s Group and is carried in more than 100 newspapers nationwide. The column was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize only a year after its inception.

**Dr. Alan Lai** and **Dr. Matt Kaplan** (co-recipients of Generations United's 2015 Brabazon Award for Evaluation Research) developed an intergenerational English as a second language (IG-ESL) guidebook and curriculum that enlists older adult volunteers to be instructors in college-based ESL classes. The curriculum was implemented at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, taking advantage of the area's high number of highly educated older adults.

Operating in three counties in the western portion of Washington with the philosophy that strong families generate strong communities, **Family Education and Support Services (FESS)** (recipient of Generations United's 2015 Brookdale Foundation Grandfamilies Award) provides multiple programs that strengthen families, including a variety of family enrichment activities, parent support programs, and parent trainings. FESS' mission is "to inspire healthy child development through the provision of quality family support services." This mantra extends to kinship care, also known as grandfamilies, a field that FESS is particularly active in supporting.

Intergenerational exchange is a priority for the **'Iolani School** (co-recipient of the 2015 Generations United Intergenerational Innovation Award), which offers its students multiple opportunities to learn about issues of older adults and interact with kupuna. The school's curriculum includes two classes on intergenerational issues: the One Mile Project and the hospice class. The One Mile Project educates students about issues facing the elderly in their community.

Based in New York City, **Sweet Readers** (co-recipient of the 2015 Generations United Intergenerational Innovation Award) connects middle school children with older adults suffering from Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia through art, music, hands-on projects, and conversation. Its goal is to discover the person behind the disease. Sweet Readers partners with museums, schools, senior centers, and other community groups in six cities. In 2014, Sweet Readers connected 800 10 to 14 year-old students with 350 adults.

The **Gary and Mary West Foundation** (recipients of the 2015 Generations United Leadership Award for Outstanding Support of Intergenerational Programs) was created in 2006 to make a significant impact on the quality of life in the community and in our country. Two of the foundation's central areas focus on improving the quality of life of low-income older adults and helping urban youth who are not going on to college find employment. Because of this intersection, the foundation has paid particular attention to funding a variety of intergenerational programming.

**Elouise Frank** (recipient of the 2015 Generations United Outstanding Older Adult Volunteer Award), better known as Puna (short for kupuna, Hawaiian for older adult) to her foster grandchildren, has volunteered at Lanakila Head Start for the past four years as a foster grandparent. She inspires the children with arts and crafts, gardening, songs, and dances. More importantly, she provides guidance, love and a listening ear. Frank teaches the children how to make things and care for plants and passes on whatever knowledge she has to the children.

As one of Generations United's 2008 Youth Jumpstart Grantees, **Taylor Hamai** (recipient of the 2015 Generations United Outstanding Youth Volunteer Award), then a student at the 'Iolani School, led a collaborative intergenerational effort with her peers in the "One Mile Project" class. Hamai's most personally rewarding intergenerational initiative was a fundraiser called "MessAGING with Love," where students interviewed local centenarians and placed their life advice and wise quotes on greeting cards.

**Sandy Kraemer** (recipient of the 2015 Generations United Pioneer Award) is a global leader in intergenerational innovation and networking, frequently requested as a speaker and consultant to local, national, and international

organizations interested in intergenerational work. He also is founded the Intergeneration Foundation 27 years ago. The foundation's most significant accomplishment was in creating Intergeneration Day in 2000.

**Dr. Nancy Henkin** (recipient of the 2015 Generations United Intergenerational Champion Award) is the founder and former executive director of the Intergenerational Center at Temple University. Under her leadership, the center developed a wide range of innovative cross-age programs, from older adult mentoring programs targeting a wide variety of groups including refugees, teen mothers, and oral historians to youth ESL and respite care programs.

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**About Generations United:** *For nearly three decades, Generations United [www.gu.org](http://www.gu.org) has been the catalyst for policies and practices stimulating cooperation and collaboration among generations, evoking the vibrancy, energy and sheer productivity that result when people of all ages come together. We believe that we can only be successful in the face of our complex future if generational diversity is regarded as a national asset and fully leveraged.*