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Portland City Council
Portland City Hall
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Dear Council,

September, 2011 - Dublin, Ireland
Building the WHO's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities



It is our pleasure to report to you the events that occurred in Dublin, Ireland as part of the *1st International Conference on Age-Friendly Cities: Building the WHO Global Network*. As you may know, the Institute on Aging (IOA) at Portland State University (PSU) has been working with Portland's citizens and leaders on the World Health Organization's (WHO) Age-Friendly Cities project since its inception in 2006, including a research project based in Portland from 2006-07 that identified age-friendly features and barriers and suggestions for improving Portland's age friendliness.¹ In spring, 2010, Mayor Adams signed a letter requesting membership into the newly forming Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and in spring, 2011, we were officially awarded with membership to the WHO's Global Network.



June, 2011 – Portland's Certificate of Membership

As part of joining the Global Network, we have committed to working toward creating a Portland that is "friendly for those of all ages and abilities" and to work within the Global Network to foster age-friendly cities around the world. At this time there are only three cities in the U.S. who are officially members – Portland, New York, and Des Moines – but several other U.S. cities and interested "delegates" from the public, private, and non-profits sectors attended the WHO's initial conference in Dublin that aimed to (1) advance thinking and approaches on how to make cities more age friendly, and (2) to strengthen the Global Network for the benefit of all.

The conference was located at the Burlington Hotel near Dublin city center from September 28-30 and had over 365 delegates from 42 countries that spanned 5 continents. The format of the conference

¹ See final report and summary of findings by the IOA at PSU: <http://www.pdx.edu/ia/recent-publications>.

included plenary sessions, workshops, networking opportunities, and a global village that afforded participants the opportunity to learn what cities from around the world were doing to make their cities age friendly. In addition to scheduled conference activities, one of the most important events was the signing of the Dublin Declaration of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities² by 40 municipalities around the world, including an endorsement by Mayor Adams. The Declaration is a commitment to ensuring that aging and older adults are respected and planned for as a valuable portion of society.



Dublin's Lord Mayor signing the Dublin Declaration of Age-Friendly Cities

As we look toward the future of planning for an aging Portland – i.e., developing an action plan and indicators to track progress – several ongoing efforts were highlighted during the conference that offer Portland opportunities to learn from others' successes and to partner as we move forward:

- Canada's federal, provincial, and municipal governments have over 400 coordinated age-friendly initiatives, including those in urban areas, as well as rural and remote communities; partnerships between governmental and academic entities are driving innovative approaches.
- Ireland's Age-Friendly County Programme has eight counties, nearly one-third of all its counties, participating in their program, as well as an international partnership with Wales; a strength of their efforts lies in providing better services in lieu of creating new programs.
- New York's Academy of Medicine, Mayor Bloomberg, and City Council launched the "Age-Friendly New York" collaboration, which includes extensive community consultation, action-based research efforts, and the formation of the Age-Friendly New York City Commission.
- U.S. cities are attempting to create the American Alliance of Age Friendly Cities and Communities (AAAFCC) that will allow for cities to share experiences and work collaboratively to address aging issues unique to our country; although Portland, New York, and Des Moines are among the founding members, future cities within the Global Network and interested cities will be welcomed to become involved as well.



**September, 2011 – Dublin, Ireland
Current Members of the Global Network**

Moving forward, the IOA will convene a second meeting of the Portland Advisory Group on Monday, October 24th, from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at PSU in the Urban Center, room 311. IOA researchers will brief the group on the Dublin conference, detail possible next steps, and ask for input on how to create an action plan for aging in Portland and how to best track progress over time. Staff from the offices of Mayor Adams and Commissioners Fritz and Fish, have been invited to attend, as well as various leaders of public, private, and non-profit organizations serving Portland.

² <http://afc-internationalconference.ie/templates/afc/images/Dublin%20Declaration.pdf>.