



*The Florida Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
Innovation Exchange*

Submission Form

Name and Title of Submitter:	Gail Wattley, Administrator
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Date of Submission:	6/21/10
Title of Innovation:	Eyesight Support Group
Topic for Submission: (Please choose a topic from the list included in the attached submission guidelines which best describes the innovation you are submitting.)	Low Vision Support Groups
Audience: (Choose one or more, as appropriate.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Housing (HUD, tax credit, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Assisted Living Facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Home & Community Based Services <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing Homes <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement Communities (CCRC or Fee for Service) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All of the Above

1. **Description of Innovation:** Please succinctly describe the innovative program or service, creative idea or best practice and the resulting benefits to your organization or the consumers you serve. Limit the narrative to three pages, excluding attachments such as forms.

This is a resident run program offered to residents of our community who suffer with Low Vision and other eyesight infirmities. This program was developed with hopes that it would help residents with sight problems to continue to live independently in safety and in comfort. About 10 years ago, residents at VOTG led an intensive search to find a charitable organization focusing on the promotion of low vision support groups. Since that time, VOTG has used the services of the Lighthouse which is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization who is able to come to VOTG, interview individual residents and identify the specific problems each were having with low vision. Currently there are about 30 residents who participate in this program. This program included a variety of subjects ranging from: how to use electrical appliances (washers, dryers, stoves, dishwashers, microwaves and toaster ovens; how to organize and take medications; how to prepare simple meals; how to do the laundry and many others. At first the CITE (now Lighthouse) organized and ran the program. However, when CITE grant

funds were exhausted, residents passionate about the program took it upon themselves to organize and run the program themselves. This group meets regularly on a monthly basis with planned hour-long programs. The meetings are open to all residents who wish to attend. Interested members and others offer suggestions as to program content. Some of them even assume the responsibility for following through with providing qualified persons to present the programs. In any event, one of the regular members is always available to step in and see to it that every program is a success. As to program content, the group has benefits from: presentations by representatives of manufacturers of technical equipment and devices for improving vision, and demonstration of how to use such devices; demonstrations of electronic books; presentations by blind persons who discuss methods for coping with problems involving transportation, shopping, cooking and eating; recitals by blind pianists; and how to obtain help from charitable organizations and governing agencies. Every meeting includes time allotted for the members to exchange helpful information with each other about new developments in treatment or methods of coping with vision loss. VOTG residents have found that although there are programs from charitable organizations such as the Lighthouse that offer support, there is no substitution for personal contact. This is because blind persons, like people generally, enjoy the conviviality of human companionship – and tend to feel isolated and depressed without it. Consequently VOTG's blind residents enthusiastically endorse the in-home reading programs because it offers opportunities for discussion of the reading material with another person.

2. **Budget:** Provide information about the annual budget or total cost of your innovation (if a one-time expense) and the number of staff or volunteers used to implement it. If your innovation did not require a budget or staff, please indicate.

This innovation does not require a budget. There are several not-for-profit organizations throughout the state of Florida who offer support groups for senior adults with low vision or other sight related problems. We can furnish a list of charitable organizations that do not charge residents a fee to be participants in these support groups. Residents will serve as volunteers to run the program from their communities. The community provides the space for the group to hold their meetings.

FLORIDA ASSOCIATION OF HOMES AND SERVICES FOR THE AGING
The FAHSA Innovation Exchange

Suggested Submission Guidelines

Mission Statement:

The mission of *The FAHSA Innovation Exchange* is to advance the vision of affordable and high-quality residential services and a continuum of care for elder Floridians by:

- Showcasing excellence, innovation and creative ideas and best practices at work in member organizations;
- Offering members the opportunity to learn from each other's experience; and
- Providing a clearinghouse for members to share examples of excellence and innovative initiatives that benefit the people they serve or improve the efficiency of their organization.

Definition of an Innovation:

Submissions may include descriptions of innovative programs or projects, creative ideas, helpful research that led to systematic product selection or change within your organization, or a promising practice. No idea is too small. If it worked for your organization, it could help other providers.

Qualified Submitters:

Any FAHSA member in good standing may submit a paper to ***The FAHSA Innovation Exchange***, including the corporate offices of multi-facility members and associate members. Submitters must give FAHSA unrestricted right to post the paper describing the innovation on the *FAHSA Members Only* Web site and to reproduce and disseminate it for educational purposes.

Topics:

The call for submissions is not restricted to a particular theme. Submissions that address quality of care, quality of life, innovative management tips and tools, operational efficiencies or any other topic related to retirement housing, long-term care, or home & community based services are welcome. To generate ideas among the members, FAHSA's Innovation Exchange Task Force developed a list of suggested topics for the call for submissions. The list that follows is intended to stimulate interest and participation in the program. Feel free to submit papers on other topics.

- Quality of Life
- Quality of Care
- Strategic and Financial Planning
- Facility Operations
- Marketing/Public Relations
- Customer Satisfaction (residents, staff, families)
- Workforce Issues (such as employee benefits programs)
- Facility Design and Plant Management
- Cultural, Recreational & Wellness Programs
- Community Outreach
- Senior Housing

Innovation Exchange Criteria:

The idea or best practice must:

- Be in place and functioning for at least six months
- Be creative or innovative
- Have a positive effect on the management or operation of your organization or the residents/individuals you serve
- Be sustainable
- Be replicable
- Be deemed appropriate by the Innovation Exchange Task Force.

Process for Submitting an Innovation:

- The *FAHSA Innovation Exchange Submission Form* may be downloaded from the FAHSA Web site at **www.FAHSA.org**. Click on *Members Only*, enter your pass code, click on *Innovation Exchange*, then click on *Submission Form*. The form is in Microsoft Word so you can save it on your computer and then complete and submit it electronically.
- Read the *Submission Guidelines* (also on our Web site), complete the *FAHSA Innovation Exchange Submission Form*, and E-mail to bgregory@FAHSA.org. Be sure to **print and mail** the first page with your original signature to the FAHSA office, attention Beverly Gregory.
- Include additional information or supporting materials specific to your submission (forms, job descriptions, training materials, etc.).
- All materials should be sent electronically.
- If submitting a hard copy, include four sets of the attachments.
- All submissions must be prepared using Microsoft Word.
- Submissions should not include information that identifies residents by name.
- If supporting data / research results are available, include with submission.

Format for Submission:

Each submission must be on the *FAHSA Innovation Exchange Submission Form* and include a signed copy of the consent form / cover page. Both are included in this document.

Review Process:

- Upon receipt of a submission via E-mail, the packet will be forwarded to members of FAHSA's Innovation Exchange Task Force for review.
- You will be assigned a primary contact who will notify you within 30 days if additional information is required.
- FAHSA's Innovation Exchange Task Force reserves the right to select and post submissions on its Web site based on the needs and mission of the members.

Recognition:

- Each person who submits an application will receive a \$25 credit to offset tuition to a FAHSA educational meeting of his/her choice.
- A drawing for \$250 in cash will be held at the Annual Meeting for persons who submitted an innovation over the past 12 months.
- Innovations will be posted on the FAHSA Web site.
- Based on interests of members, some of the innovations submitted each year will be showcased at the Annual Meeting and, to the extent they are available, at other educational sessions.
- Innovations will be showcased in the *FAHSA LINK* as they are submitted and accepted by FAHSA's Innovation Exchange Task Force.
- Approved innovations will be shared with AAHSA for possible publication in its quarterly magazine.

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Consent Form

The Florida Association of Homes and Services for the Aging reserves the right to select a submission to *The FAHSA Innovation Exchange* based on the needs and mission of its members. By submitting a paper describing an innovation, idea or best practice to *The FAHSA Innovation Exchange*, you are giving permission to FAHSA to post the paper on the *FAHSA Members Only* Web site and to duplicate and distribute it to members upon request. You are also giving us the right to duplicate and distribute your submission at educational seminars and workshops sponsored by the Association. By your signature below, you are asserting that you are the author of the paper and that there are no copyright restrictions on its use. You are further acknowledging that acceptance of the innovation you are submitting does not imply endorsement by FAHSA. *The FAHSA Innovation Exchange* is strictly a service that allows members to share ideas and best practices and to learn from each other's experience.

If you agree with these terms, please sign and date this form:

Name/Title

Date

Note: This page must be **signed and faxed (850/671-3699) or mailed** to FAHSA, attention Beverly Gregory. If you have any questions, please contact Mary Ellen Early, FAHSA's Senior Vice President of Public Policy (Phone: 386/738-0503; E-mail: mearly@earthlink.net) or Beverly Gregory (Phone: 850/671-3700; E-mail: bgregory@fahsa.org).