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## **Front Porch Receives Grant from Consumer Technology Association Foundation to Expand Voice First Initiative**

*CTA Foundation grant supports the work of Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing in application of Voice First and smart home technologies to enable greater independence and social engagement among older adults.*

**GLENDALE, Calif., August 7, 2019** – The [Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing](#) (FPCIW), part of [Front Porch](#), a not-for-profit organization serving individuals and families through full-service retirement, active adult communities and affordable housing communities, announced today it received a grant from [The Consumer Technology Association \(CTA\) Foundation](#)<sup>®</sup> for its “**Expanding New Voice Opportunities for Communities (ENVOC)** project.”

As outlined in IBM’s study [Loneliness and the Aging Population: How Businesses and Governments Can Address a Looming Crisis](#), the statistics on older adults experiencing social isolation and loneliness are alarming: 29% increased risk of cardiovascular disease, 64% increased risk of dementia, and 26% increased risk of death.’ The situation is compounded by the fact that the adult population 65 and older is rapidly growing and expected to double reaching more than 98 million by 2060, according to the U.S. Census. FPCIW aims to address these challenges of social engagement and independence among older adults and their caregivers through the ENVOC project.

The ENVOC project is a sequel initiative to the CTA-funded [Voice-Assisted Independence and Smart Home Engagement project \(VISHN\)](#) that has been deploying voice assistant technologies to older adults’ homes within Front Porch retirement communities. FPCIW will continue to examine emerging voice integrated devices that empower older adults through three primary focus areas: social connectedness, independence, and wellness. As a result, FPCIW will impact more older adults with a wider range of needs such as visual and hearing impairments. This serves as an opportunity for FPCIW to explore other assistive technologies including hearables, augmented reality, and screen-based voice devices (like Amazon Echo Show and Google Hub). In addition, FPCIW will also deploy voice-enabled sensory carts and sensory room spaces to help in areas of reduced anxiety, increased socialization, and high calming effects.

Within a 12-month period, ENVOC will leverage the valuable social capital of community leadership, life enrichment, and care staff in collaboration with residents to promote the access and adoption of voice assistants and smart home technologies. ENVOC utilizes a unique FPCIW engagement strategy designed to build community and strengthen relationships through the deployment of innovations such as a Voice First smart speaker.

“The CTA Foundation is pleased to continue our support of the Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing. Both the VISHN and ENVOC projects show how important voice-activated technologies can be for people of all ages and abilities,” said Stephen Ewell, executive director of the CTA Foundation. “This grant will build on prior success in using voice and smart home technologies to enable greater independence and engagement for older adults.”

The project is currently underway throughout Front Porch retirement communities: [Sunny View](#) in Cupertino is the first Front Porch community to provide a voice assistant and smart light device in every home; [Wesley Palms](#) in San Diego is testing a voice-activated augmented reality headset from [IrisVision](#) to address low vision users; and [Vista del Monte](#) in Santa Barbara is piloting a voice and technology-enabled sensory room that uses Alexa to activate colored lights, an aroma diffuser, and visual content.

“We are encouraged by the positive impact this work is already having on the lives of older adults and their loved ones,” said Kari Olson, president of Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing and Front Porch’s chief innovation and technology officer. “The ENVOC initiative is an excellent example of what can be achieved when key stakeholders across the ecosystem, from older adults, to families and caregivers, to solutions providers, funders and more, work in partnership to co-create adoption models for emerging solutions like Voice First and smart home technologies.”

This is the third consecutive year FPCIW has been recognized by the CTA Foundation for its innovative technologies benefitting older adults. In 2017, FPCIW earned the same prestigious grant for its [Hearables for All](#) project, which piloted wearable hearing devices in its retirement communities, reaching 840 older adults with hearing loss. In 2018, FPCIW earned the grant for its [VISHN](#) project, which utilizes Voice First and smart home technologies to address challenges of social engagement and independence among older adults.

“We are honored to receive the continued support from the CTA Foundation to expand our work with Voice First and smart home technologies as it has such positive effects on the overall wellbeing, satisfaction and social engagement among the older adults we serve,” said Davis Park, executive director of the Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing.

#### **About the Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing**

The Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing (FPCIW) is part of [Front Porch](#), one of Southern California’s largest not-for-profit providers of retirement living, active adult and affordable housing communities. In collaboration with innovative [partner organizations](#), the FPCIW reaches across cultural and socioeconomic barriers to meet the diverse needs and enhance the well-being of Front Porch residents and the older adult population at large. Using technology as a tool to solve real-world problems, the FPCIW pilots innovative technology solutions that change lives and make a difference. Its core initiatives aim to assist in maintaining brain health, enhance social connectedness, promote engagement and growth, empower control over health and wellness, prevent emergencies or serious events and increase resources and support for formal and informal caregivers.

The FPCIW has achieved sustainable outcomes with real impact, a challenge in this sector. As a creative ecosystem developer, the FPCIW builds pilots using a collaborative 360-degree approach to matching needs, anticipating barriers, identifying solutions and executing steps to successful implementation and adoption. Learn about FPCIW's work by reading its [impact stories](#). The FPCIW is the signature program of [Humanly Possible](#)<sup>®</sup>, Front Porch's commitment to cause-based innovation and dedication to doing everything humanly possible to creatively meet needs now and in the future. For more information visit [www.fpciw.org](http://www.fpciw.org).

### **About Front Porch**

[Front Porch](#) is a not-for-profit organization based in Glendale, Calif., serving individuals and families through full-service retirement, active adult communities, affordable housing and related management and development services. Front Porch retirement communities offer options ranging from independent living to skilled care, including assisted living and memory care. Front Porch holds an A credit rating from FitchRatings and an A- credit rating from Standard & Poor's. Founded in 1999, Front Porch embraces a leading-edge approach to enhancing well-being with innovative communities and programs that meet the changing needs of people as they age. The Front Porch culture is driven by [Humanly Possible](#)<sup>®</sup>, a commitment to cause-based innovation that harnesses the innovative spirit of all of its staff in an effort to do whatever is humanly possible to meet emerging needs of the people we serve now and in the future. Specialized outreach programs like the Front Porch Center for Innovation and Wellbeing and the Front Porch Gallery support the Front Porch belief in understanding and creatively meeting the needs of individuals in community.

Front Porch is comprised of 10 full-service retirement communities in California and two adult living communities: one in Louisiana and one in Florida. Front Porch also serves individuals and families through 25 affordable housing communities managed by CARING Housing Ministries, a division of Front Porch.

### **About the CTA Foundation**

The CTA Foundation, a public, national foundation affiliated with the Consumer Technology Association (CTA)<sup>™</sup>, was launched in 2012 with the mission to link seniors and people with disabilities with technologies to enhance their lives. The foundation strategically supports programs that affect these communities and facilitates dialog among industry, consumers, government, advocacy groups and other key stakeholders.

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