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For Immediate Release
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Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds Grant Brings Outdoor Fitness to Chelsea

UMRC Foundation and 5 Healthy Towns Foundation Partner to Support Health and Wellness for Community's Older Adults

Chelsea, MI, January 12, 2021 – Staying active as we age is key to maintaining physical and mental health and well-being. A new outdoor fitness area, located at the Chelsea Wellness Center, is being made possible through a \$50,000 grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds of the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan and a partnership between the grant recipient, United Methodist Retirement Communities (UMRC) Foundation, and 5 Healthy Towns Foundation (5HF). This grant is part of the Legacy Funds' Design & Access Fund which supports projects in southeast Michigan that increase outdoor recreational activities within the region.

The UMRC Foundation and 5HF launched this project last fall, and installation of the fitness equipment began in December 2020. It includes eight ADA compliant machines that will allow adults to participate in a variety of ways to exercise and strengthen their upper body, arms, back, and legs. Many of the machines can be used by two persons at a time so thirteen people can use the site at once. A well-rounded selection of units was chosen to offer accessible, multi-generational, and inclusive activities, including rowing, elliptical cross training, and more. In addition to grant funds, two exercise machines were donated by Greenfields Outdoor Fitness, Inc., the maker of this equipment.

This outdoor fitness equipment is open to youth and adults ages 13 and up; a Chelsea Wellness Center membership is not needed to access the equipment.

“I love the ability to work out – outdoors!” says UMRC Foundation President Wendy Brightman. “Exercise itself boosts one’s spirits; getting to exercise outside in the sunshine is a natural antidepressant. I have enjoyed working out at a park near our home with very similar equipment. It is fun to use this equipment with a friend. It feels like playtime when the activities really benefit your physical and mental health.”

5HF CEO Amy Heydlauff agrees. “What a wonderful gift our good partners have shared with our community! We hope you’ll all come by and try this equipment. Maybe start some regular ‘meet ups’ to work out with friends or family. It’s a Covid-safe environment!”

With its location at the Chelsea Wellness Center and close proximity to St. Joseph Mercy Chelsea Hospital, the new outdoor fitness equipment is easily accessible to community members, including older adults living at UMRC's Chelsea Retirement Community, Silver Maples of Chelsea (another partnership between UMRC and 5HF) and those who utilize the Western-Washtenaw Area Value Express, or WAVE, bus. "I am especially excited that this workout equipment is located near the hospital's walking path and will be terrific for older adults and young people alike," says Brightman.

According to Matt Pagouskie, 5HF Community Investment Manager, several local vendors were employed to install the fitness equipment, including Rathburn Contracting and McLennan Landscape based in Manchester, Michigan. "For a project of this scale to go from concept to essentially complete this quickly is a testament to our local partners," says Pagouskie. "Their hard work has allowed people to already have access to the equipment."

Benches and additional landscaping will be added in Spring 2021 to complete the project.

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*Building on a foundation of 165 years of combined service to older adults, **United Methodist Retirement Communities (UMRC) & Porter Hills** is a faith-based, nonprofit organization whose mission is: Welcoming all, partnering together, enriching lives. Its vision is: A world in which all are empowered to age well. Together, UMRC & Porter Hills represents the second largest nonprofit senior living organization in Michigan. With a tradition of exceptional quality and a commitment to cutting-edge care, UMRC & Porter Hills and its affiliates combine to serve approximately 6,000 older adults each year, from 24 locations and service lines, across 22 counties in Michigan's lower peninsula. umrc.com/734.433.1000 and porterhills.org/616.949.4975*

*The **UMRC Foundation** is the charitable arm for United Methodist Retirement Communities, with headquarters in Chelsea, Michigan. Since its inception in 1998, the UMRC Foundation has provided over \$18,500,000 through its Benevolent Care Fund to help UMRC residents remain in their homes when they outlive their resources. The mission of the UMRC Foundation is to promote the wellness, dignity, and independence of seniors by supporting the residents, staff, and communities UMRC serves. umrcfoundation.com/734.433.1000*

***5 Healthy Towns Foundation** is a tax exempt, private foundation representing populations in the school districts of Chelsea, Dexter, Grass Lake, Manchester and Stockbridge with a mission to cultivate improvements in personal and community wellness.*

*The **Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan** creates permanent, positive change in southeast Michigan through thoughtful philanthropy. With generous support from thousands of donors, the Community Foundation is building permanent endowment for the region and helping individuals, families and businesses fulfill their charitable goals. **The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Legacy Funds** of the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan honor Mr. Wilson's charitable legacy by supporting efforts across the region in caregiving, design & access, and youth sports.*