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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 6, 2023

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Ageism Awareness Day: Aging is Fun

Calling attention to the impact of ageism and reframing aging to support aging well.

Waterbury, VT – Governor Scott has proclaimed that Saturday, October 7, 2023 as [Ageism Awareness Day in Vermont](#). Most people, without even thinking about it, use language that describes aging as a negative experience. Ageism is a serious challenge in our culture and communities, and it is manifested in unconscious thoughts, actions and behavior, and institutional policies and systems. Ageism refers to stereotypes (how one thinks), prejudice (how one feels) and discrimination (how one acts) toward others based on age, and it is the most widespread and socially accepted form of prejudice. An estimated 183,157 older adults – those over the age of 60 – live in Vermont, which makes this group our fastest growing demographic in the state and for whom this prejudice of ageism is lived daily.

Ageism negatively impacts Vermonters' health and well-being. It prevents people from seeking support they may need or gaining employment they are more than qualified for. It contributes to errors in the healthcare system. It leads to higher rates of chronic illness and morbidity. According to the research, older adults who have a negative view of aging have a life expectancy of 7.5 years less than older adults who have a positive view of aging. AARP estimated \$850 billion in lost gains to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) because of involuntary retirement, underemployment, and unemployment among older workers. Levy and colleagues (2020) estimated that in just one year, \$63 billion in healthcare costs were due to ageism. Ageism intersects with other forms of discrimination such as racism, quietly exacerbating inequities and worsening the impacts faced by older people of color and other minorities.

The good news is that Vermonters have the power to reframe aging and prevent ageism in education, employment, housing, and healthcare. We have the tools to build a Vermont that is equitable and just for older adults of all backgrounds. With words, actions, policies, and initiatives that promote positive aging and actively combat ageism, Vermont can make a real difference in people's lives – leading to longer, happier, and

healthier lives for all. Learn more about Vermont's work to combat ageism through

[Age Strong, our roadmap for an age-friendly State.](https://www.healthvermont.gov/wellness/brain-health-dementia/age-strong-vermont-our-roadmap-age-friendly-state#)

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About the Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living (DAIL):

Our mission is to make Vermont the best state in which to grow old or to live with a disability - with dignity, respect, and independence.

<http://dail.vermont.gov/>

<https://www.facebook.com/DAILVT>

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