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Canyon Ranch Institute Partners with *Connect Savannah* and Charles H. and Rosalie Morris to Improve Health in Savannah

New initiative designed to advance health literacy, prevent disease, and eliminate health disparities

SAVANNAH, GA (February 19, 2014) – The non-profit Canyon Ranch Institute (CRI) today announced a partnership with *Connect Savannah* and Savannah community leaders Charles H. and Rosalie Morris to bring CRI's best practices to Savannah.

"My wife Rosalie and I want to help make Savannah even better," said **Charles H. Morris**. "Rosalie and I have experienced the life-changing impact of healthy lifestyles, and we want our community to have the same opportunities."

The first program made possible through CRI's partnership with *Connect Savannah* and Charles H. and Rosalie Morris is the Canyon Ranch Institute Life Enhancement Program (CRI LEP) in Savannah. The Morrisses invited CRI to team up with Savannah organizations because of their love for Savannah as well as their concern for the community. Savannah is a vibrant city located in the "stroke belt" across the Southeast United States, where high rates of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes contribute to some of the greatest health disparities and highest medical costs in the nation.

"Chronic diseases are the most costly health problems facing our nation today. The good news is that most chronic disease can be prevented," said **Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., FACS**, 17th Surgeon General of the United States and President of Canyon Ranch Institute. "We are honored that Savannah has welcomed Canyon Ranch Institute's evidence-based approaches."

Curtis V. Cooper Primary Health Care, Inc., a Federally Qualified Health Center offering a wide range of health services to the uninsured and under-insured in Savannah, is a key collaborator in this effort. The CRI LEP in Savannah will be offered at no cost to participants, and will be held at Curtis V. Cooper Primary Health Care and at the Charles H. Morris Center at historic Trustees' Garden.

"As part of the 'stroke belt' of the United States, there is a tremendous need to address chronic disease in Savannah, especially among the medically underserved. The Canyon Ranch Institute Life Enhancement Program has achieved impressive results in other areas of the nation, and I know we can do even better in Savannah," said **Albert Grandy**, CEO of Curtis V. Cooper Primary Health Care.

"The CRI LEP uses our proven integrative health model to help advance health literacy so that people have the knowledge, tools, and support to prevent disease," added **Andrew Pleasant, Ph.D.**, CRI Senior Director for Health Literacy and Research. "Through the CRI LEP, Savannah residents will participate in group sessions and one-on-one consultations that address physical activity, nutrition, behavior change, stress management, and social support."

A Core Team representing the integrative health model – physicians, nurses, exercise professionals, nutritionists, behavioral health specialists, faith and spirituality experts, community health educators, and others – are participating in a specialized education program designed by Canyon Ranch Institute, in order to implement the CRI LEP in Savannah.

“We need health services that address the whole person – mind, body, and spirit – for all people, regardless of their situation,” said **C. McGill Brown, Ph.D.**, Pastor, Second African Baptist Church, and Board Chairman, Curtis V. Cooper Primary Health Care. “The CRI LEP in Savannah can have a lasting impact because it emphasizes all aspects of a healthy life, not just physical ailments.”

The CRI LEP in Savannah will start serving patients of Curtis V. Cooper Primary Health Care in March 2014. Planning is also underway for a Theater for Health program to leverage Savannah’s rich arts and cultural scene – to help improve health and well-being. Long-term plans of the partnership include the development of a demonstration kitchen and a community garden on the site of Savannah’s historic Trustees’ Garden, home to the Charles H. Morris Center, a multi-event venue restored by Charles H. Morris in 2008, and neighbor to Curtis V. Cooper Primary Health Care.

“*Connect Savannah* and Charles H. and Rosalie Morris are making it possible for Savannah residents to experience the power of healthy living in numerous ways, so that people can make an enduring personal connection to a life of wellness,” said **Jennifer Cabe, M.A.**, Executive Director and Board Member, Canyon Ranch Institute.

Learn more about the CRI LEP in Savannah at <http://bit.ly/1eiOvqR> and CRI’s partnership with *Connect Savannah* and Charles H. and Rosalie Morris at <http://bit.ly/LQrh13>.

About Canyon Ranch Institute®

Canyon Ranch Institute catalyzes the possibility of optimal health *for all people* by translating the best practices of Canyon Ranch and our partners to help educate, inspire, and empower every person to prevent disease and embrace a life of wellness. Canyon Ranch Institute is a 501(c)3 non-profit public charity. More information is available at www.canyonranchinstitute.org.

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