

## **Canadian Football Legend Bernie Custis, the First Black Pro Quarterback in North America, is Profiled in Unique Film Project that Teams Up Young and Old to Celebrate Seniors' Lives**

*The Revera and Reel Youth Age is More Film Project promotes intergenerational understanding*

TORONTO, Canada, December 2, 2013 – Bernie Custis refused to give up on his dream. When the National Football League denied him the quarterback position because of the colour of his skin, he packed up and moved to Canada. The Hamilton Tiger Cats signed him and, in 1951, he became the first black quarterback in North American professional football, the kick off to a great career and a berth in the Canadian Football League Hall of Fame.

Now, Bernie is helping to break another barrier. Ageism is Canada's most widely tolerated form of social discrimination,<sup>1</sup> according to research. A unique new program between Revera, Canada's leading provider of seniors' care and services, and Reel Youth, a not-for-profit which empowers youth to create engaging films about important social issues, is bringing together young and old in a film project that promotes intergenerational learning and celebrates ageless spirit.

"Far too often people are judged," says Mr. Bernie Custis, resident at Appleby Place Retirement Residence. "In my life I have been fortunate enough to break some of these social barriers, which is why I was keen to participate in making this film."

Called *The Revera and Reel Youth Age Is More Film Project*, the program brings two generations together to build understanding through the creation of a series of short films that profile the lives of 25 older adults. The films can be viewed on [AgeIsMore.com](http://AgeIsMore.com).

"Age is More is focused on breaking down misperceptions and celebrating ageless spirit," says Stephen Foster, Senior Vice President, Retirement Living at Revera. "This project is a fun and meaningful way for the generations to come together, share experiences and learn from each other."

According to Zoe Miles, Programs Manager from Reel Youth, "Even during the first day of filming there were a lot of connections being made between the younger and older participants. The youth were really interested in learning the stories of each of the older adults—each of them had their own approach to life."

There are surprising benefits to intergenerational contact, like better psychological health for both generations, according to a Boston College Study. Other benefits can include learning new skills from each other, helping to alleviate fears of aging, giving people a sense of shared purpose and reducing the likelihood of depression and isolation among older adults.



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Revera: 50 years of experience  
with over 250 locations.



“Older and younger Canadians need to find opportunities to connect more,” says Greg Shaw, Director, International and Corporate Relations of the International Federation on Ageing. “The simple act of getting to know someone from a different generation promotes positive attitudes and behaviours, and helps address misperceptions that inadvertently set in when people don’t have enough exposure to each other.”

And, according to research from Revera, the younger and older demographics have more in common than they think. They have both experienced considerable age discrimination in Canada, with 73 per cent of Gen Y and 63 per cent of seniors (66 years of age and older) saying they have been treated unfairly or differently because of their age. Furthermore, 35 per cent of Gen Y and 24 per cent of seniors say they have been a victim of stereotyping.

The *Age Is More Film Project* is being produced in two locations in 2013: Whitecliff Retirement Residence in White Rock, British Columbia and Appleby Place Retirement Residence in Burlington, Ontario, where Bernie Custis lives.

The project is part of Revera’s ongoing effort to shed light on ageism through its social initiative, *Age Is More*. *Age is More* is part of Revera Giving, Revera’s way of giving back through philanthropy, supporting employee volunteerism, and combating ageism.

This holiday season Revera is asking Canadians to go to [AgeIsMore.com](http://AgeIsMore.com) to share stories of how their lives have been enriched by someone of a different generation. All stories are entered in a contest for a chance to win one of three \$100 restaurant gift cards. Winners are encouraged to use the prize money to spend time with someone of a different generation.

#### Notes To Editor:

**Interview Opportunities** are available with **Greg Shaw, Director, International and Corporate Relations of the International Federation on Ageing**, who is available to talk about the benefits to both generations for being more connected, and give tips on how Canadians can help combat ageism. **Stephen Foster, Senior Vice President, Retirement Living from Revera** and **Zoe Miles, Programs Manager from Reel Youth** can speak about the *Age Is More Film Project*. **Reel Youth filmmakers and Revera residents who participated in the project are also available for interview.**

#### About Revera

Revera is a leading provider of seniors’ accommodation, care and services; built on a 50-year history of helping seniors live life to the fullest. With more than 240 sites across Canada and parts of the U.S., we work to enhance lives in our retirement communities, long term care homes, U.S. nursing and rehab centres and through the provision of home health services. Find out more about Revera at [www.reveraliving.com](http://www.reveraliving.com) or find us on Facebook and Twitter.

#### About Reel Youth

Reel Youth is a not-for-profit program that encourages youth, adults and organizations to create and distribute compelling films about important issues. Over the past six years, Reel Youth has produced over 800 films with 2,500 people within Canada and across the world. For more information, visit [www.reelyouth.ca](http://www.reelyouth.ca) or find us on Facebook and Twitter.



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### **About International Federation on Ageing**

The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) is an international, non-governmental organization and point of global connection to experts and expertise in the field of aging. The IFA believes in generating positive change for older people through helping to shape and influence effective age-related and senior policies and practice. For more information about the IFA visit [www.ifa-fiv.org](http://www.ifa-fiv.org).

### **About the Revera Research**

Revera, in partnership with Leger Marketing, surveyed online Canadians aged 18-32 (Gen Y's), 33-45 (Gen X's), 46-65 (Boomers), 66-74 (Younger Seniors) and 75-plus (Older Seniors) to better understand their attitudes on aging. The survey was completed online from August 24th to September 4th, 2012 using Leger Marketing's online panel, *LegerWeb*, with a sample of 1,501 Canadians. A probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error of 2.5%, 19 times out of 20.

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i Revera Report on Ageism, Revera and the International Federation on Ageing, 2012



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