



2024 Honor Award, "The Women In My Family" by Rory Hejtmanek.

Stronger Together – Family • Community • Connection

2026

PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD CONTEST

“Connection is why we’re here; it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives.” — BRENÉ BROWN

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) invites photographers to capture older adults 60+ thriving through family, friendships, and community. **Empower individuals, support families,** and show how **community connections** bring joy, purpose, and vitality—proof that aging well means staying active and engaged.

THEME: **Stronger Together – Family • Community • Connection**

AWARDS:

NCOA will grant the following awards:

- First Place Cash Award: **\$1,000**
- Second Place Cash Award: **\$600**
- Public Vote Cash Award: **\$500**
- Eight Merit Cash Awards: **\$300 each**
- Ten Honorable Cash Awards: **\$150 each**

All selected artworks will appear on the virtual ncoaGallery.org. In addition, Twenty award-winning photographs will be printed on high-quality, large-format canvas for presentation in the onsite exhibition at NCOA 2026 Age+Action Conference in Arlington, VA; showcased in multiple art galleries throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area (DMV); and proudly included in the permanent collection at NCOA’s headquarters in Crystal City, VA.

ncoa.org

JURIED EXHIBITION:

Carol Lukitsch will serve as our guest juror this year. Together with the NCOA Committee, we will review all eligible submissions and select the final works based on creativity, storytelling, technical quality, and alignment with the theme. Twenty award-winning photographs will be printed on premium-quality canvas for public exhibitions.

About the Guest Juror: We are honored to have Carol Lukitsch return as the awards juror for the 2026 NCOA Photography Award Contest, Stronger Together – Family, Community, Connection. A distinguished artist, educator, and curator, she has juried over 300 national and local exhibitions and spent over six years as Curator and Director of Exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington in VA. A Fulbright Grant recipient who taught studio art for more than two decades, Lukitsch has exhibited her work nationally and internationally, with pieces included in major public and private collections such as The National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C.; The Museum of Contemporary Art in Montecatini, Italy; The State Museum of Painting and Sculpture in Ankara, Turkey; and the American Embassy in Panama. She holds an MFA from the University of Maryland, College Park, and a BFA (cum laude) from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville.

ELIGIBILITY:

- **The national call is open to U.S.-based professional and amateur photographers ages 18 and above.**
- **Photos should feature an older adult (60+) living in the United States** as the primary subject, and may also include family, friends, or community members who share a meaningful connection with them.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Previous artwork** submitted to NCOA contests will not be accepted.
2. **Color photographs only.** Black-and-white and AI-generated images are not accepted.
3. **Any camera type is welcome:** DSLR, smartphone, or film.
4. **Art Statement:** Each image must include a caption or statement (minimum 100 words) about the subject
5. **File naming format:** First Name-Last Name_Image Title.jpeg (e.g., Andrea-Smith_MyMom.jpeg/jpg).
6. **You must name/title each image.** Submissions labeled “untitled” will be removed from the jury process.
7. **Image specifications:** .jpeg or .jpg, high resolution, maximum no more than 5 MB per file.
8. **Total Media per Entrant:** Minimum 2 images / Maximum 10 images.

DEADLINES & INFORMATION:

- Application Deadline: **March 15, 2026 @ 11:59 p.m. ET**
- Winners Notified: **April 30, 2026**
- Public Voting Opens: **May 15, 2026**
- In-Person Exhibition: **May 26–29, 2026**, NCOA Conference at Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, VA
- Public Vote Winner Announced: **June 10, 2026**
- Awards Mailed: **June 30, 2026**
- Additional DMV Gallery Exhibitions: **June–November, 2026**, TBA (Curated by Mosaic Arts).

LEGAL AGREEMENT:

- **All selected artworks will appear on the virtual ncoaGallery.org.** In addition, the twenty winning photographs will be featured in the onsite exhibition at NCOA’s 2026 Age+Action Conference in Arlington, VA; showcased in multiple art galleries throughout the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area (DMV); and proudly included in the permanent collection at NCOA’s headquarters in Crystal City, VA.
- **Ownership remains with the artist.** All credits belong to the respective photographers. Artists may sell their works through the gallery with no commission taken by NCOA or Mosaic Arts Inc.
- **By submitting, artists grant NCOA permission** to use their images for promotional purposes supporting the mission of Aging Well for All—including NCOA websites, social media, printed materials, and exhibitions. Twenty award-winning photos will be printed on premium canvas for gallery exhibitions.

Questions? Contact: van.nguyen.ctr@ncoa.org or gallery@mosaicarts.site