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## AARP and Parsons School of Design at The New School Award \$5,000 Prize in the “Disrupt Aging Design Challenge”

**NEW YORK** – AARP culminated a one-of-a-kind design competition with Parsons School of Design at The New School Tuesday, May 9. Parsons senior Camila Chiriboga was named winner of the Disrupt Aging Design Challenge for her exploration of a more inclusive system of fashion for the blind and visually impaired featuring a redesigned tagging method to make her garments easier to identify and understand. The winning collection was chosen for its ability to:

1. Identify a critical design issue facing an aging population or user
2. Research and develop a design that addresses the issue
3. Produce a garment or product that solves the identified problem



“With this collection, I set out to explore the ways in which fashion could expand beyond its visual language to include the senses of touch, smell, sound,” said Chiriboga. “What better way to do it than to work with a community, mostly comprised of people over 50 who have slowly lost their sight due to age or age related diseases, that have been excluded from the visual system of fashion until this point?”

The Disrupt Aging Design Challenge grew out of AARP’s desire to explore the concept of aging in the fashion industry. It was launched this year to encourage students to explore design that leverages, rethinks and includes the needs of older fashion consumers during the design process.

“As we add more years to our lives, we need new thinking about how to make the most of this added time. AARP’s #DisruptAging campaign is a call for innovators like these students to consciously shape the future of aging,” said Debra Whitman, Chief Public Policy Officer at AARP. “This partnership with Parsons School of Design was created to inspire solution-based design concepts that deconstruct outdated beliefs about what it means to age and live well in society.”

During the 12-week design challenge, students worked alongside older co-collaborators – ranging from an 80-year-old with Parkinson’s disease to a collective of former inmates over 50. Students used various mediums of design to create items that refute traditional fashion stereotypes and provide wearable solutions to health issues that could accompany aging. The resulting designs ranged from a vest with extended wingspan for users with skeletal issues, shoes with integrated navigation for the blind, lasercut fabrics to rebrand the stereotypes faced by the previously incarcerated, buttonless apparel for degenerative disease sufferers and more.

Parsons BFA Fashion Design students were invited to participate in the challenge and 12 finalists were selected to present their prototypes during a “Shark Tank”-like pitch event held at the Parsons School of Design at The New School on May 9th, 2017. Challenge judges included: Debra Whitman, Chief Public Policy Officer for AARP; Jonathan Stevens, Senior Vice President, Thought Leadership, AARP; Kay Unger, Chair of the Parsons Board of Governors and New School Trustee; Yvonne Watson, Associate Dean of Parsons School of Fashion and Grace Jun, Executive Director, Open Style Labs.

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### **About AARP**

*AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With nearly 38 million members and offices in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also works for individuals in the marketplace by sparking new solutions and allowing carefully chosen, high-quality products and services to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the world’s largest circulation publications, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org) or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.*

### **Parsons School of Design at The New School**

*Parsons School of Design at The New School, founded in 1896, is one of the leading institutions for art and design education in the world. Based in New York but active around the world, the school offers undergraduate and graduate programs in the full spectrum of art and design disciplines, as well as online courses, degree and certificate programs. Critical thinking and collaboration are at the heart of a Parsons education. Parsons graduates are leaders in their respective fields, with a shared commitment to creatively and critically addressing the complexities of life in the 21st century.*

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