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TERRA NOVA FILMS TURNS 25

Terra Nova Films is celebrating 25 years of visual storytelling around issues of elderhood and aging. In 1976 Jim Vanden Bosch, fresh out of film school at the University of Iowa, read an article in *Chicago* magazine on the plight of several forgotten and neglected homebound elders in Chicago. The article triggered the idea for a film, *Because Somebody Cares*, then among only a handful of documentary stories that looked at aging-related issues. Encouraged by others in the growing field of aging, Vanden Bosch created other films on aging, such as *My Mother, My Father*, which looked at four families as they dealt with the emotional issues involved in caring for an aging parent.

Out of this work, Terra Nova Films was born in 1981 as a nonprofit organization specializing in the production and distribution of films on aging. Terra Nova began taking on aging-related topics seldom explored, in films with titles such as *Elder Abuse: Five Case Studies* and *A Thousand Tomorrows: Intimacy, Sexuality and Alzheimer's*.

Over the years, Terra Nova became a distributor of not only its own films, but also of those by other producers. It now offers 200 titles on a wide range of aging-related issues.

In addition to producing and distributing films, Terra Nova searches out and showcases films and videos that “reimage and reaffirm the value and meaning of later life,” Vanden Bosch said. The organization partners, for example, with the Chicago International Film Festival in giving the annual Silver Images Generations Award to the film that best portrays realistic and multidimensional images of older adulthood. Terra Nova also consults with AARP in finding and presenting some of the newest and best films on elderhood for AARP’s National Member Event each year.

Vanden Bosch, a first-year boomer, also continues to produce new films. In production now is a new series of five videos on domestic violence against older adults, scheduled for release in late 2007.

For more information on Terra Nova Films’ activities and films, visit www.terranova.org.