

Active and involved, fit and creative

With the German Senior Citizens Awards, the foundation honors **ideas by seniors** and **ideas for seniors**

They may be getting on in years, but they're healthy and adventurous. In countries such as Germany, senior citizens are playing an active role in shaping community life. They are mentors, bloggers, aid workers, social workers, and rent-a-grannies. There are no limits to their ideas. What's more, according to a recent survey of German seniors by the Allensbach Institute, senior citizens feel much younger than they actually are.

Role models for a new generation of senior citizens

On average, people of 60 or 75 feel 8 years younger than they are, while those over 75 feel as much as 10 years younger.

By living an active "retirement," older people are making an important contribution to creating a functioning community. The Robert Bosch Stiftung wants to ensure that the initiatives serve as role models for an entire generation. For this reason, it is honoring the best ideas by seniors and for seniors with the German Senior Citizens Awards. "Sometimes, the ideas that win the award are small and simple, but they are also truly exceptional and help our society to progress," said Kristina Schröder, Federal Minister for Family Affairs and patron of the German Senior



Modern sports help seniors stay mobile well into old age.
Photo: Fee Roth



The current award winners won over the jury with their exemplary projects: Wolfgang Hasselkus from the City of Rödental (left) and Peter Hartmann from JUSTament (right) with honorary award-winner and former health minister Ursula Lehr. Photo: Manuel Frauendorf

Citizens Awards, at the award ceremony in Berlin. "Many seniors want to start something new, to play an active role in shaping society, and to use their extensive experience to make an impact. If we support them here, society as a whole will reap the benefits."

The best examples are the projects competing for the German Senior Citizens Awards. The Hamburg-based agency Granny Aupair makes it possible for women over 50 to work as au pairs for host families and social projects around the world. More than 1,500 women have already shown interest in taking part. In Munich, seniors volunteer to be part of a Mobile Werkstatt ("mobile workshop") that helps people repair or replace their household appliances if they lack the required skills or financial resources. And the project Fit ab 50? Fit bis 100! ("Fit after 50? Fit until 100!") introduces seniors to modern sports such as inline skating, Nordic walking, and skiing in Norway. Sports help to maintain and increase the mobility of seniors well into old age.

From among the many applicants, the jury selected the JUSTament project, which pairs seniors with students. The idea is that seniors can use their career and life experience to help students get ready to enter the job market. They work together to prepare applications, and conduct practice interviews and aptitude tests. The award for the best idea for seniors went to a concept from the small town of Rödental, which developed simple but innovative solutions to allow older and aged people to carry on living at home. Both projects received €60,000 each.

A place near and dear to the heart

An interview with **Manuel Neuer** about his dedication to youth programs

Manuel Neuer was born in Gelsenkirchen. As a child, he joined the Bambini-Kicker – the youth soccer program run by local team FC Schalke 04. From there, he went on to become goalkeeper of the German national team. Through his Manuel Neuer Kids Foundation, he now supports civic education programs for young people in his former team's stadium. Neuer has been Bayern Munich goalkeeper since 2011.

Mr. Neuer, in cooperation with the Robert Bosch Stiftung, you are supporting Schalke Open For Classes, a program that provides civic education for young people at the stadium owned by venerable Schalke 04. Is this a good place for kids to learn?

Stadiums are a reflection of society. Every other weekend, thousands of people come together to support their team. People from all levels of society come to the games, and for 90 minutes, it doesn't matter where they work or where they're from. Their love of the team unites them. Additionally, on the field, the players demonstrate tolerance, fair play, and team spirit. I think it's great that Schalke Open For Classes picks up on these values and actively communicates them in an environment where young people already have such positive associations. We all know that learning is easiest when you're motivated – and where could kids'

motivation be stronger than in a place that's near and dear to their hearts?

What do you like about the Schalke Open For Classes concept?

Schalke Open for Classes takes an extremely intelligent approach to teaching. As a team, Schalke 04 gives young people in the region something to identify with. This project simply uses young people's enthusiasm for soccer to get them interested in issues relevant to politics and society. These kids have experienced problems such as violence and racism first hand, and unfortunately, these issues are also present at stadiums. But why not address the problems there, too, instead of just pointing fingers? Most importantly, these young people have positive experiences with solidarity and support during this program. And support is something we need in society – not just in goal. I'm personally motivated to make things happen in this area.

Clear signal: Manuel Neuer also gives guidance to young people when he's on the football field.



Studying at the stadium

Twelve German soccer stadiums offer educational programs for young people in the same vein as Schalke Open For Classes. These programs are a new way to help kids who love soccer to get interested in civic issues, too. Lernort Stadion (i.e. the stadium as a place of learning) is one of the Robert Bosch Stiftung's many programs that focus on civic education. If you want to learn more about other projects, **take a look at our new magazine!** You can

download it by scanning the QR code below.

