

December 2, 2015

Esteemed InnovateHER Judging Panel,

It is my privilege to submit on behalf of the Women's Business Center of Southern Arizona, our winner of the local InnovateHER competition, **Home Share Circle**.

A subscription-based web application, Home Share Circle comes to the marketplace at a critical moment when women, who are aging, find themselves alone and disproportionately burdened by housing costs, and have to make daily tradeoffs between buying food, medicine and other basic necessities. To that effect, Home Share Circle offers powerful home sharing tools such as: community building, background checks, sharing agreements, and payment processing. This platform has the potential to significantly impact the lives of millions of women and families, with technology designed for rapid scaling and commercialization. It fills a critical need in the market, as more than 30 million Baby Boomers have housing costs that exceed one-third of their income.

It was clear to the judges that aging affects women disproportionately. As women age *alone*—be it due to the loss of a partner or because of the choice to not burden their family by moving in with them—women have to make the difficult economic decision to either rent their home to augment their income, or downsize to afford living independently. After a lifetime of earning wages at a rate lower than men (as well facing other career and personal challenges) it was clear to the panel that retirement presents a different experience for women, and that this product would have an immediate impact on the lives of women and their families.

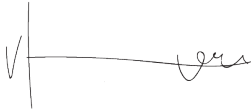
Rapid scaling and commercialization often calls for a product or service that is primed to enter the market with few changes or adaptations. To that effect, we made one of our challenge criteria questions, “Does the product or idea have potential for commercialization on a large/national scale?” Home Share Circle scored well in this area. As a Women's Business Center, we feel the prototype and platform contain elements that appeal to not just women who are in economic need, but also to entrepreneurial women who are familiar with sharing platforms such as AirBnB, VRBO and other social media applications. Home Share Circle gives women the tools and knowledge to leverage their home to earn income (or find a home), and access features such as background checks, sharing agreements, payment portals and community forums.

Americans are living longer and more productive lives, which means access to a large user base for this platform. During 2015, Home Share Circle conducted extensive qualitative interviews with more than 140 single women, ages 50-70 across three states to understand the housing and personal needs of women in this demographic. Rather than offering a face-to-face service, they opted for a web-based approach to home sharing that would allow the company to rapidly convert up to 1,200 paying clients during its first year, with relatively low upstart costs.

Thank you for your time in reviewing this submission; we hope you see why our judging panel felt that Home Share Circle is a technology that millions of American women can no longer afford to live without.

On behalf of the Women's Business Center of Southern Arizona, we are grateful for the invitation to host this competition so we may continue to level the playing field for women entrepreneurs in the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victor Mercado", written over a horizontal line.

Victor Mercado
Deputy Director
Women's Business Center of Southern Arizona (WBC)