

# Innovating around the intergenerational opportunity: Interview with Marci Alboher



**Marci Alboher** is Vice President, Strategic Communications, for [Encore.org](https://encore.org).

**Jathan Janove:** What is Encore.org?

**Marci Alboher:** Encore.org is a national nonprofit working to transform longer lives into a force for good. To grow the power of people 50+ as an asset and to build mutually beneficial intergenerational connections, we focus on three strategies: catalyzing cultural change (creating a new normal for later life), promoting organizational innovation, and developing and supporting leaders. Transforming how people think and behave is work that can't be done alone, so we collaborate with an array of diverse individuals and organizations.

**Jathan Janove:** What is Encore's origin and how has it evolved over time?

**Marci Alboher:** Encore.org (originally called Civic Ventures) was founded in 1998 by social entrepreneur and author [Marc Freedman](#) and grew out of a desire to transform the aging of America — one of the most significant demographic shifts of the 21st century — into a powerful, positive source of individual and social renewal. Since Encore.org's founding, we have been a hub of social innovation and thought leadership. We have successfully created new programs, demonstrated their effectiveness, and often spun them off to more appropriate entities to bring them to scale. Our very first initiative, Experience Corps (now an AARP program operating in more than 20 U.S. cities), was created to tap the talent of adults 55+ as literacy tutors for public school children. Today we have come full circle with Gen2Gen, our campaign to mobilize 1 million adults 50+ to stand up for — and with — young people. Along the way, we've been a leading voice in the conversation to frame older adults as assets to society and to make intergenerational connection commonplace for all, throughout the lifespan.

**Jathan Janove:** What are some of the organizations you partner or collaborate with?

**Marci Alboher:** We've partnered with countless organizations over the years in different ways. Our Gen2Gen

campaign currently has more than 150 partners — from organizations working to engage women and men 50+ in large national networks like Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Mentor, and AARP, to smaller, local youth-serving and community programs. Our Encore Fellows — experienced professionals with high-impact, temporary assignments at nonprofits — have brought their skills to hundreds of organizations and government agencies, including Planned Parenthood, Habitat for Humanity and the City of San Jose. The Encore Network, a membership group for leaders advancing encore ideas and programs, now has more than 100 members in 33 states and 11 countries. We've also partnered with media outlets, universities and research organizations, and LinkedIn Learning. Every part of our work relies on close collaboration with partners.

**Jathan Janove:** Please share a success story.

**Marci Alboher:** It's incredibly gratifying when our work sparks similar efforts around the world and that's been happening with more frequency. Here are two examples. This fall, a German foundation will launch a new prize modeled after The Purpose Prize, an award we created to celebrate change-makers over the age of 60. And a few years ago, The Seoul 50+ Foundation in South Korea was launched, using many of the ideas we have popularized in the U.S.

In a very different way, it's thrilling to see one of our Purpose Prize winners make it big. Barbara Allen created Fresh Artists to encourage companies to hang student art in their buildings and donate money to support art in schools. Just recently, she partnered with Crate & Barrel to produce designs from her student artists. All the money raised will go to support public school art classes.

**Jathan Janove:** Your organization awards prizes. What are they and how are they determined?

**Marci Alboher:** We've offered several prizes over the years. For 10 years, we ran the Purpose Prize, which told a new story about the power of experience by celebrating and investing in social innovators over the age of 60 (that program is now operated by AARP). Currently, we are in the midst of the selection process for a new prize, the Gen2Gen Encore Prize, which will award \$100,000 to organizations developing new ways to tap the talents of people over 50 to help young people thrive. Public voting on our 24 semi-finalists begins on September 12th; five finalists will compete in a live pitch competition in November in Los Angeles.

**Jathan Janove:** What else would you like readers to know about your organization?

**Marci Alboher:** Marc Freedman, CEO and President of Encore.org, has a new book coming out in November and if these ideas are intriguing to you, I encourage you to [reserve your copy now](#) (and get access to three video trainings to help you find your encore). It's called *How to Live Forever: The Enduring Power of Connecting the Generations*, and I predict it's going to be a bestseller!