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LEADINGAGE TEXAS TO HONOR TWO INDIVIDUALS FROM JULIETTE FOWLER COMMUNITIES: Tina Harris to receive Service Excellence Award; Cindy Wabner to receive Volunteer of the Year Award

DALLAS, TEXAS – May 9, 2023 – LeadingAge Texas, a community of nonprofit aging services providers, will honor two individuals from Juliette Fowler Communities (JFC) on Monday, May 22, at its annual award ceremony during the organization’s [Annual Conference & Solutions EXPO](#) in Round Rock, Texas. **Tina Harris**, a 22-year employee at JFC and dementia specialist, will receive the Service Excellence Award, and **Cindy Wabner**, a beloved volunteer for the past seven years at JFC, will receive the Volunteer of the Year Award. Each year, the LeadingAge Texas Awards honor those who are committed to enhancing the field of aging services and who excel in leadership and advocacy.

The Service Excellence Award honors those individuals in direct service, who demonstrate extraordinary talent, expertise, and dedication in provision of exceptional service and life enrichment to residents. Tina Harris, a resident of Balch Springs, has worked in the aging service industry for 37 years and in her current position as dementia specialist for the past three years. As a certified “I’m Still Here” Dementia Specialist at JFC, she implements the program’s principles of promoting dignity, engagement, community, and education. JFC is the only certified I’m Still Here® Center for Excellence in Dementia Care in North Texas and one of only two in Texas. The program employs evidence-based techniques to adapt experiences to an individual’s cognitive abilities and strengths.

“It is such an honor to receive this LeadingAge Texas award for doing something I love to do every day,” said Harris. “My passion to help people with dementia developed during my mother’s dementia journey. My goal is to increase the quality of life for people living with Alzheimer’s and other memory loss. I also make it a priority to help family members understand that their loved one is ‘still there.’”

“Tina’s caring and effective ways with residents and their family members exemplify Fowler’s values of loving people, pursuing excellence, and making a difference,” said Nicole Gann, president and CEO, Juliette Fowler Communities. “She views the whole person within each resident, treating them with respect and dignity as she brings joy to their lives through creativity projects, educational moments, and activities that bring them purpose.”

The Volunteer of the Year Award honors those who demonstrate exceptional commitment to older adults through volunteer service, enhancing and enriching their lives. Cindy Wabner, a resident of Forest Hills in East Dallas, first developed her passion serving older adults as a child volunteer at JFC and then as an adult volunteer through her church. She joined the staff at JFC, where she worked for 25 years, first as the volunteer coordinator and later as development director. Following her retirement, she became a dedicated volunteer – a role she has maintained for the past seven years. As a member of Dallas County Master Gardeners (DCMG), Wabner engaged DCMG’s support of JFC while giving thousands of her own hours to keep the 21-acre campus beautiful for its 500 senior and youth residents. She provides

recommendations for landscape design and has secured material donations from nurseries and other providers for volunteer workdays and all garden initiatives. Over the years, she has also been instrumental in bringing new volunteer groups to Juliette Fowler Communities – many of whom will dedicate an entire day to gardening throughout the grounds.

“It gives me great joy to work with Fowler Communities, helping to provide a beautiful environment for the residents while encouraging others to volunteer, giving of their time and generosity,” said Wabner.

Additionally, Wabner has increased Fowler’s relationship with Texas A&M’s AgriLife extension, encouraging them to provide programming for Fowler seniors and youth through horticultural therapy. Just this past year, she solidified a partnership with a local digital gardening mapping system and introduced unique technology to Fowler. Through these partnerships, residents enjoy horticulture education classes and even maintain a selection of raised horticulture therapy beds.

“Because of Cindy’s hard work, including her design skills and collaborations, our residents gain so much enjoyment from our beautiful, manicured grounds while finding purpose again in caring for the raised beds,” added Gann. “Cindy works nonstop alongside her fellow volunteers until the project is complete. She is an inspiration to all who know her.”

LeadingAge Texas' national partner, LeadingAge, is an association of 6,000 not-for-profit organizations dedicated to expanding the world of possibilities for aging. Together, these two associations advance policies, promote practices, and conduct research that supports, enables, and empowers people to live fully as they age.

“We are so thrilled that these two outstanding individuals with servant hearts will be honored for their hard work and commitment to improving the lives of others,” added Gann. “Many thanks to LeadingAge Texas for recognizing Tina and Cindy for their faithful service and unfailing generosity of spirit.”

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Juliette Fowler Communities is a unique faith-based, intergenerational community of residents at various life-stages. Located on 21 picturesque acres, Juliette Fowler Communities provides independent and assisted living, a Five-Star Quality Rated skilled nursing and rehabilitation center, memory care and affordable senior housing. As the only certified I’m Still Here® Center for Excellence in Dementia Care in North Texas and one of only two in Texas, Fowler’s program employs evidence-based techniques to adapt experiences to an individual’s cognitive abilities and strengths. Children, youth, and family services at Fowler include a residential program for women ages 18-24 at risk for homelessness due to neglect, abuse, and aging out of the foster care system, and a Youth Support Center. Visit fowlercommunities.org or call 214.827.0813.

