



For Immediate Release:

January 6, 2021

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LeadingAge Ohio announces full 2020 awards slate

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Ohio’s voice for the continuum of long-term services and supports, LeadingAge Ohio, today announced its full slate of 2020 award winners, including Dr. John Weigand, President at Central Ohio Geriatrics and Chief Medical Officer at National Church Residences. Dr. Weigand is the lead developer of the Post-Acute Regional Rapid Testing (PARRT) program, which has, to date, helped test over 48,000 residents and staff of Ohio long-term care and assisted living facilities.

LeadingAge Ohio represents over 400 long-term care organizations and hospices, as well as those providing ancillary health care and housing services, in more than 150 Ohio towns and cities. The continuum of care reflected by the member organizations serve an estimated 400,000 elderly Ohioans daily and employ more than 35,000 persons statewide.

“2020 has been without doubt the most challenging year ever experienced by the long-term care sector,” stated Kathryn Brod, President/CEO of LeadingAge Ohio. “To have champions like these award honorees within our membership has given strength to care providers as they have continued to serve residents and patients, as well as support staff and families, throughout this past pandemic year.”

Aging Services Impact Award

The entire LeadingAge Ohio membership

The Aging Services Impact Award is awarded to an individual or LeadingAge Ohio member organization for communication efforts which promote a positive image of aging services and enhances the public perception of services offered by member organizations. LeadingAge Ohio has recognized its entire membership with the 2020 Aging Services Impact Award. LeadingAge Ohio honors the heroes on the frontlines of care for their service and sacrifices made while caring for Ohio’s most high-risk population.

Emerging Leader Award

Patti Klingel, Executive Director of Compliance & Clinical Services, United Church Homes (Marion, Ohio)
Mark Plunkett, Corporate Director of Information Technology, Maple Knoll Communities (Cincinnati, Ohio)

The Emerging Leader Award is bestowed to an individual(s) within a LeadingAge Ohio member organization who demonstrates personal integrity, leadership, and professional dedication in his or her career. The 2020 Emerging Leader Awards were presented to Patti Klingel, Executive Director of Compliance & Clinical Services at United Church Homes in Marion, Ohio, and Mark Plunkett, Corporate Director of Information Technology at Maple Knoll Communities in Cincinnati, Ohio.

During the ongoing public health crisis, Patti Klingel guided United Church Homes’ response to the COVID-19 pandemic. She continues to filter the flood of messages and directives from federal, state, and local authorities, and monitors over 30 states where United Church Homes has communities. She personally leads education sessions related to infection control for staff, and develops training curriculums to assist clinical teams. Simply put, Klingel leads by example, and exemplifies United Church Homes’ core values of compassion, hospitality, respect, integrity, stewardship, and transparency.

Mark Plunkett has been described as a consummate servant leader—always willing to serve others first. When the pandemic struck, Plunkett and his team quickly set up devices to help residents communicate with their loved ones via video conference when the facilities were placed on lock-down. Plunkett also spearheaded a new telehealth project that allows

residents to meet with doctors in the comfort of their own home or room. Due to Plunkett's leadership and passion for connecting residents to technology, Maple Knoll Communities was technologically ready to take on the pandemic.

Excellence in Caring

Karra Weil, Director of Nursing, Western Reserve Masonic Community (Medina, Ohio)
Connie McNeal, Activities Director, Willow Brook Christian Village (Delaware, Ohio)

The Excellence in Caring Award is awarded to an outstanding direct or indirect care professional(s) within a LeadingAge Ohio member organization who exemplifies quality and care in the field of aging services. The 2020 Excellence in Caring Awards were presented to Karra Weil, Director of Nursing at Western Reserve Masonic Community in Medina, Ohio, and Connie McNeal, Activities Director at Willow Brook Christian Village in Delaware, Ohio.

A dedicated team member of Western Reserve Masonic Community for over 13 years, Karra Weil started as a nurse's aide, working full-time while going to school to become an RN. As Director of Nursing, Weil has had a direct impact on improving the quality of care and experience of the residents she serves, building an excellent team through servant leadership and setting high standards. She has helped guide the organization's strategic dementia strategy, developing and piloting new programming, and consistently leading by example, showing a constant passion to ensure that those under her care are able to age with dignity and grace.

Connie McNeal's job is to lead activities for residents at Willow Brook Christian Village, and, gifted with a love of music, McNeal presents musical programs featuring residents, employees, children and their parents. Her leadership ability and fun spirit make employees new and old want to emulate the love and care she displays. COVID-19 has offered a new way for her to mentor co-workers: responding to the closure of many resident activities, she identified the talents of other staff and encouraged them to share their skills with all residents, including nail care, hair styling, and art. Despite her many accomplishments, Connie is humble and self-effacing, and continues to serve as a pillar of the organization.

Excellence in Volunteer Service

Gary Olin, Resident and Council President, Kendal at Oberlin (Oberlin, Ohio)

The Excellence in Volunteer Service Award is awarded to an individual or group whose exemplary volunteer service plays a critical role enriching the lives of those served by a LeadingAge Ohio member organization. The 2020 Excellence in Volunteer Service Award was presented to Gary Olin, Resident and Council President at Kendal at Oberlin in Oberlin, Ohio.

When Gary Olin took over as Council President after the heartbreaking passing of his predecessor, Olin put personal plans aside to bring his attentive organizational skills, ever-present humor, and grace to his new role. Olin has served as an intermediary between residents and staff during the COVID-19 emergency, and was ready and willing to help address resident concerns during this challenging year. Olin helped to lead a committee that brought together a diverse group to advise the organization on moving forward. A respected, humble leader and 'unsung hero', Olin is held in high esteem by his peers and Kendal at Oberlin for his extraordinary service during this unprecedented time.

Rose and Sam Stein Heart of Hospice Award

Kristen Tracey, Hospice Inpatient Nurse, Genesis Hospice Care (Zanesville, Ohio)

Rose and Sam Stein began supporting hospice in the 1980s when they contributed funds to establish the Stein Hospice Service in Sandusky, Ohio. The success of the program prompted the Steins to award a grant to the Ohio Hospice Organization (now LeadingAge Ohio) to provide quality hospice care for Ohio residents. In the 1990s, the Steins expanded their giving by setting up the Rose and Sam Stein Endowment Fund.

In honor of the Steins' commitment "to help the people who help the people," LeadingAge Ohio is proud to recognize a group or individual that has made a significant, innovative, and extraordinary contribution to hospice and end-of-life care. The 2020 Rose and Sam Stein Heart of Hospice Award was presented to Kristen Tracey, Hospice Inpatient Nurse, at Genesis Hospice Care in Zanesville, Ohio.

Kristen Tracey has been noted as a nurse who sets the bar for performance, strength, and quality among her peers. Her peers and supervisors alike note her as someone with wisdom and maturity that defy her age and experience as a nurse, with an ability to remain calm even during the most stressful situations. Tracey displays a powerful capacity to connect with families and patients, and her inspirational work ethic is known to inspire her colleagues. Tracey treats all of whom she serves and works alongside with dignity, respect, and compassion at a time when they need it most.

Visionary Leadership Award of Honor

Tim McGowan, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President, Maple Knoll Communities (Cincinnati, Ohio)

The Visionary Leadership Award of Honor is awarded to an individual that has made an outstanding contribution in the field of aging through inspirational and visionary leadership. The 2020 Visionary Leadership Award of Honor was presented to Tim McGowan, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President at Maple Knoll Communities in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Tim McGowan has worked in long-term care for over 30 years, and has always put residents, staff, and families before himself. His calm leadership during COVID-19 and efforts to keep staff and residents safe have been worthy of praise, as has his forward-thinking philosophy, exemplified by his creation of a COVID-19 Pandemic Response team which began meeting weekly prior to the first case of COVID-19 being reported in the United States.

Spotlight Award

Dr. John M. Weigand, President, Central Ohio Geriatrics and Chief Medical Officer, National Church Residences (Columbus, Ohio)

The LeadingAge Ohio Spotlight Award recognizes an outstanding individual who has made a significant contribution through an innovative program or service that has positively impacted aging services. The 2020 Spotlight Award was presented to Dr. John M. Weigand, President at Central Ohio Geriatrics and Chief Medical Officer at National Church Residences in Columbus, Ohio.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. John Weigand emerged as a strong voice for the sector and quickly noted a need for a fast response to outbreaks in long-term care settings. Dr. Weigand gathered a team of organizations and volunteers to assist long-term care facilities in central Ohio who required testing. The result was the creation of the Post-Acute Regional Rapid Testing program (PARRT), which brought critical testing directly to affected nursing facilities and assisted living communities during the early months of the pandemic when testing capacity was unable to keep up with the need in long-term care. PARRT also filled an urgent need for expert consultation, guiding providers through steps to take when an outbreak was detected. To date, PARRT has helped test over 48,000 residents and staff of Ohio long-term care and assisted living facilities.

Public Service Award

*Senator Rob McColley (R-Napoleon)
Representative Tim Ginter (R-Salem)*

The LeadingAge Ohio Public Service Award is bestowed as deserved to those legislators that emerge as leaders in the aging sector and show a commitment to taking on the issues most important to older adults and aging services providers in Ohio.

The 2020 Public Service Awards were presented to Senator Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) and Representative Tim Ginter (R-Salem).

A trusted voice on Capitol Square and a leader among his peers in the Ohio Senate, Senator McColley has drawn attention to the regulatory burden placed on health care providers, having undertaken efforts to streamline government functions. LeadingAge Ohio also recognizes Senator McColley's willingness to work with Ohio long-term care providers to address workforce challenges and ensure access to crucial equipment and support, as well as his passion and concern for the caregivers and elders residing in his district and around the state.

As Chair of the House Aging and Long Term Care Committee and a leader among his peers at the Ohio House of Representatives, Representative Ginter has drawn attention to the needs of older Ohioans and the aging services providers who care for them. Representative Ginter's vociferous efforts to advocate for elders, caregivers, families, and aging services providers are commendable, as are his understanding and compassion for the workforce challenges faced by Ohio long-term care providers.

Founded in 1937, LeadingAge Ohio is a nonprofit organization that represents over 400 long-term care organizations and hospices, as well as those providing ancillary health care and housing services, in more than 150 Ohio towns and cities. The continuum of care reflected by the member organizations serve an estimated 400,000 elderly Ohioans daily and employ more than 35,000 persons statewide.