

Nominee's Name	How did the nominee go above and beyond for the older adults community?								
Open-Ended Response	Open-Ended Response								

Joyce Hefner has had a long history of quality service to the older adult community in Austin. During her tenure at Family Eldercare Inc (FEC), Joyce has been instrumental in ensuring the basic needs of Austin's older citizens are met with numerous initiatives (including - Best Single Source, Money Management, Guardianship, and more) to address financial insecurity and help ensure successful aging in place. In more recent years, Joyce's leadership has played a significant role in addressing the needs of older individuals who are unhoused, supporting FEC's rapid rehousing program and identifying additional grant and funding sources to expand homeless prevention and existing supportive housing services. This nomination is being put forth in recognition of Joyce's significant role in establishing programs to support boots on the ground service coordination at the Housing Authority of the City of Austin and the new Pecan Gardens (currently under development). Joyce not only walks the walk but talks the talk. Under her watch as Director of Housing and Community Services, she has taken the FEC mission/vision and turned it into effective service delivery to address some of the toughest issues facing older adults and family caregivers in Austin. In addition to her work in housing, Joyce has also always championed diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring cultural competency, access to services and person-centered approaches to empower historically underserved populations. This past year (2022) Family Eldercare launched Rainbow Connections, providing social engagement connections, and support to Austin's older adult LGBTQIA2+ community. This program would not have been possible without the dedicated advocacy and leadership of Joyce Hefner. Joyce continues to seek out gaps in service to older adults and fills them with innovative, effective programming to meet the often-complex needs focused on the unique stories and situations of every older adult served. For all the reasons above I nominate Ms. Joyce Hefner for the Age Friendly Community Service Award.

Joyce Hefner, LMSW

I am pleased to nominate Nancy Walker for the 2023 Commission on Aging Community Service Award. Nancy has been a volunteer with engAGE Travis County for 13 years and serves as the volunteer Executive Director for the Funeral Consumer's Alliance of Central Texas (FCACTX). Yes, you read that correctly. Nancy is a VOLUNTEER Executive Director; she receives no compensation for her work. Nancy is the heart of this volunteer operated organization and is responsible for all their operations. Nancy is passionate about helping older adults and has been instrumental in assisting thousands in developing an end-of-life plan best suited to them. She worked on re-branding the program, updating their website, creating materials, teaching end of life classes through the Lifetime Learning Institute and so much more. She also serves on the Aging Services Council and is very involved in the aging community. Although Nancy only records a small percentage of the time she actually "works" for Funeral Consumer's Alliance, she spends most of her day doing some type of work for the organization. We joke that she even dreams about work, which I believe is a possibility. To date, Nancy has reported over 20,893 volunteer hours to us in almost 13 years. Nancy always has a smile on her face and positive attitude. She is passionate about helping older adults have a plan for their end-of-life that best suits them and their family. FCACTX provides individuals in Williamson, Travis, Hays, Bastrop and Caldwell counties with free information on end-of-life options. Their mission is to help people make educated, practical choices that will meet their needs at the end of life. This is innovative because there are very few other agencies that can provide up to date information on this important subject. FCACTX does the following: - Serves all individuals without discrimination - Educates the public about end-of-life planning, decision making, and related issues - Conducts and publishes regular surveys of funeral home and cemetery prices - Presents people with end-of-life decisions by providing them with a wide variety of choices to meet their needs - Provides information about area resources to assist families with end-of-life planning - Promotes advance planning as a way to preserve or restore dignity and independence at the end of life - Provides information about area bereavement resources - Researches and evaluates innovative solutions for end-of-life needs - Trains professionals and others about end-of-life issues - Networks with other organizations and agencies that share their mission and goals - Individuals will have wills and end of life documents prepared. Individuals will be informed about their end-of-life options and the cost associated with them. Families will feel confident knowing their loved one's estate will be managed after they are deceased.

Nancy Walker