

leadHERship

CELEBRATING INFLUENTIAL WOMEN IN CHARLOTTE COUNTY

It's Time to Celebrate the 2021 Winners!

In July, The Daily Sun asked readers to nominate area women for Woman of the Year, Woman Owned Business of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, Community Leader of the Year and Rising

Star. More than 60 women and businesses were submitted. Many truly worthy women were nominated and a panel (all women, of course) read every nomination and selected our winners.



WOMAN of the Year: JULI JONES RILEY

Here's what the person who nominated her said:

Juli has ferociously battled cancer for the past eight years. Throughout that time, she has continued to work as the New Construction Loans Coordinator for Achieva Credit Union. She has received countless phone calls and requests from other cancer

patients and family members asking advice and how does she cope and stay so strong. She serves on the Board for the Imagination Library and has supported, attended and given to pretty much every non-profit charity organization and youth organization in our community throughout the years. Time and

time again, she has passed on her scarves, turbans and hats to those who have lost their hair to chemo treatments, which is a blessing for those who may not be fortunate enough to afford them. Juli's open and courageous battle has given many hope, faith and determination to fight for their lives.

WOMAN-OWNED BUSINESS of the Year: WHITCO INSURANCE: ALEXIA MARTIN AGENCY

Here's what the person who nominated Alexia Martin Agency said:

Alexia is a powerhouse leader who runs one of the tightest ships in town. As owner of Whitco Insurance, she represents multiple

Boards including the Punta Gorda Chamber, Visual Arts Center, Valerie's House and many more. She is a true visionary and is a great mother and boss, rolled into one. Whitco Insurance, located at

1225 S. Tamiami Trail in Punta Gorda, is a leader in providing quality insurance protection to hundreds of families and businesses in Punta Gorda, Port Charlotte and Charlotte County.



VOLUNTEER of the Year: JUDITH HARRIS

Here's what the person who nominated her said:

I am nominating Judith Harris, C.A.R.E. Board Chair, because she cares very deeply about helping victims and survivors of violence. Judi is a vocal and committed advocate in our Charlotte County community dedicated to making sure services and resources are always available to ensure safe shelter, and that an informed, compassionate

ear is always available to listen to survivors. Judi spends much of her personal time engaged in fundraising activities devoted to C.A.R.E. Judi serves as a vocal advocate to make sure the public knows that services for domestic abuse and sexual assault survivors are available 24/7 and that C.A.R.E. is ready to help men and women who are victimized. Due to her supportive efforts as Board Chair,

additional funds are also available to educate the public about healthy relationships, consent and respect for personal boundaries. I am fortunate to have such a caring partner to assist in guaranteeing that survivors have what they need to heal and thrive in their personal and family lives. Our work together ensures that services provided by our agency are always free-of-charge for survivors.

COMMUNITY LEADER of the Year: NANCY JOHNSON

Here's what the person who nominated her said:

Nancy Johnson has served as volunteer CEO of TEAM Punta Gorda since 2013. She has been active in TEAM since 2005. Under Nancy's leadership, TEAM has collaborated with public and private partners to ensure that the Greater Punta

Gorda area remains a wonderful place to live, work and play.

One particular project is noteworthy because it resulted in the successful development of the City of Punta Gorda's revised Master Plan. The 2019 event, Journey to the Future, is reflective of what Nancy Johnson's

leadership brings to complex issues facing our community. Nancy was an original participant in the creation of TEAM's 2005 Citizens' Master Plan, developed in the wake of Hurricane Charley. By 2018 the city was ready for an updated plan.



RISING STAR: ZARITA MATTOX

Here's what the person who nominated her said:

Zarita simply lights up your life. She is very active with the Punta Gorda Chamber and steps up to sing at our meetings, gathering a fan base very quickly. She works

through her church to help young girls reach their full potential by never putting them down or denying them opportunities for success. Most recently she formed a team with Christine Carey of Valerie's House and John Wright

at the PG Chamber to bring a fun fundraiser to the Gulfshore Theater on October 16th to raise funds for vital non-profit work in our community. Just being around her raises your spirits.

Congratulations to each Winner!

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