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Leadership Excellence at a Time When Compassion is Most Necessary During a Pandemic

For the first time, two female Board Chairs are leading both the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas and the YMCA of Metropolitan Fort Worth at the same time; reflect on Women's Equality Day

DALLAS (Aug 26, 2020) – Wednesday, August 26, 2020 marks Women's Equality Day, which is the date that commemorates women gaining the right to vote in America (1920). For the first time in its history, there are two female Board Chairs leading both the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas and the YMCA of Metropolitan Fort Worth at the same time. Jill Magnuson serves as Board Chair/Chief Volunteer Officer in Dallas and Julie Wilson serves as Board Chair/Chief Volunteer Officer in Fort Worth.

Jill Magnuson was asked what Women's Equality Day means to her, "This 100th Anniversary is not just reflecting on that historic moment, but about dedicating myself to the work I do through the YMCA to be about equality for all. It is a moment that we must look forward to be engaged in change, while honoring our past."

Both Jill and Julie are only the second women Board Chairs to serve in their respective organizations. Gray Mayes was the first woman Board Chair for the Dallas Y and Cindy Milrany served as the first woman Board Chair for the Fort Worth Y.

"The Y is continually evolving to help families meet new challenges in a new way of life." says Julie Wilson. "Arguably, women are generally the primary caregivers in most families. I love that the leader of the Dallas Y, Jill Magnuson, is so collaborative. We can not only talk together as Board Chairs, but as women, as working women, as mothers, and in my case as a grandmother, and help other women face today's realities and challenges."

Jill Magnuson serves as Director of External Affairs of the Nasher Sculpture Center, a world-renowned museum in the Dallas Arts District and Julie Wilson is President and CEO of The Reasons Group, a consultancy in Fort Worth specializing in marketing strategies and conflict management.

Jill Magnuson reflects that she is honored to serve and be surrounded by extraordinary volunteers on the Board. When asked about the timing, "I don't know if it was fate or not, but I will say that I think it was meant to be." Speaking on the challenging times of a global pandemic and continuing health crisis in North Texas, "I think our female leadership roles comes at a time where compassion is most necessary."

Both YMCAs have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and both volunteer boards, executive leadership and staff are rallying to continue to serve the growing needs of the community in new ways. All YMCA branches in North Texas were closed for several months during the beginning of the pandemic. During that time, staff, volunteers, donors and partners helped serve the community through food distribution, blood drives, grab-n-go meals, household essentials and childcare.

“Obviously, we had to close our facilities for a short period of time. We had to pivot how we keep up with our mission, keep serving the community while we couldn’t have people come into the Y,” Julie explains. “We’ve got members, staff, the board, volunteers, donors and the community at large, and they all need to know that the Y is still in business delivering on its mission in helping support our community.”

Please visit www.ymcadfw.org to learn more about these two dynamic leaders and how both the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas and the YMCA of Metropolitan Fort Worth support the community.

About the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas

The Y is one of the nation’s leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas serves thousands of men, women and children each year, regardless of age, income or background. Anchored in 21 North Texas communities, the Dallas Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. The Y ensures all people have equitable access to the essentials needed to become thriving members of the community. Daily, the Y bridges and fills individual and community needs as a catalyst for impactful change. The YMCA makes accessible the support and opportunities that empower people and communities to learn, grow and thrive, with three areas of focus: Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility. To learn more or get involved in improving our local communities, have opportunities to make an impact and support your neighbors, please visit www.ymcadallas.org.

About YMCA of Metropolitan Fort Worth

With 130 years of service to the Fort Worth area, the YMCA of Metropolitan Fort Worth serves more than 150,000 unique individuals on an annual basis. Its work impacts our community daily through programs that emphasize youth development, encourage healthy living, and empower social responsibility. The non-profit organization offers diverse family programs including youth sports, youth and government, camping, childcare, swimming and drowning prevention, wellness, diabetes management, and senior-specific adult programs in addition to fitness memberships. The Y has branches in Tarrant, Johnson, and Hood counties. Additionally, it owns and operates YMCA Camp Carter, a year-round facility offering both day-camp programs and residential opportunities for youth. It also owns and operates the YMCA Sports Complex in southwest Fort Worth, providing soccer, baseball, and other youth sports opportunities. To learn more or get involved, please visit www.ymcafw.org.

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