



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Splendido Garden Awarded National Wildlife Federation Certification
as Natural Habitat**

Tucson, AZ (March 1, 2018) – When residents Larry Abrams and Phoebe Olmsted first met at a pool volleyball class at Splendido, a Life Plan Community in Oro Valley, neither friend realized the other also shared an interest in gardening. Yet when the time came to work together to establish an award-winning garden that would benefit the natural habitat as well as residents at Splendido’s health center Sonora, neither friend could hide their green thumb, and a seed was planted.

“This was all Larry’s idea,” demurs Olmsted, who moved to Splendido about four years ago from her native New Hampshire. While the Sonora garden project is the first she’s been involved with since moving to Splendido, gardening has deep roots in Olmsted’s family. In fact, her late husband Richard was the grand-nephew of Frederick Olmsted, who is considered by many to be the father of American Landscape Architecture and was an early activist in the Conservation movement, having co-designed Central Park in New York City and the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair, among other notable accomplishments.

Abrams acknowledges he played a role in the Sonora at Splendido’s garden, but says it first came to his attention last July when his wife, Doris, moved to the health center. While spending time there, he noticed an Art Therapist was working to create a garden that would be a colorful respite for residents to sit and enjoy the sights and sounds of nature. Never one to shy away from a challenge, and an avid gardener himself for 30+ years prior as a Chicago area native before moving to Splendido, Abrams seized the opportunity to get involved.

“It started with a hummingbird feeder, and grew from there,” says Abrams about his efforts to work with Russo and Olmsted adding color, movement, and texture to create a welcome spot to sit with his wife and enjoy the peaceful setting, while also establishing an inviting and protected habitat for wildlife.

Once the garden was complete, Olmsted sought out The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) America’s largest wildlife conservation and education organization, for certification, in a process she was familiar with from her New Hampshire gardening days. In addition to being named a Certified Wildlife Habitat through NWF’s Garden for Wildlife program, the garden has also been co-certified with NWF’s state affiliate, the Arizona Wildlife Federation.

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“Over the last 40 years, more than 200,000 wildlife gardeners have joined NWF’s Garden for Wildlife movement and these individuals have helped restore wildlife habitat right in their own yards and neighborhoods,” said David Mizejewski, a naturalist with the National Wildlife Federation.

In a statement shared with Splendido, NWF wrote that they celebrated their efforts “to create a garden that improves habitat for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife by providing essential elements needed by all wildlife – natural food sources, clean water, cover, and places to raise young.”

The Garden for Wildlife program encourages responsible gardening that helps pollinators and other wildlife thrive. Sonora at Splendido’s garden includes bird houses and trees where birds can build nests to raise their young, and is home to a variety of native plants such as Ironwood Tree, Texas Ranger, Milkweed, Salvia, Blue Mist, Fairy Duster, and the Red Yucca. Some of the birds that have been sighted at the garden include, Anna’s Hummingbird, Costa Hummingbird, Broad Billed Hummingbird, Verdin (nested in the garden), Gila Woodpecker, Great-tailed Grackle, Mourning Dove, White-winged Dove, Roadrunner, Lesser Goldfinch, House Finch, House Sparrow, Cactus Wren, and the Gambel’s Quail.

“We’re very pleased the garden has been so well received, and proud to have the recognition of National Wildlife Federation,” said James Edwartoski, Experience Director, Splendido. “Maybe even more importantly though, we celebrate and are grateful for the teamwork of such committed and creative residents.”

ABOUT SPLENDIDO

Splendido is a joint venture of Mather LifeWays, a non-denominational, not-for-profit organization headquartered in Evanston, Ill., that creates Ways to Age WellSM for older adults, and the Plaza Companies, an Arizona-based leader in senior living communities and health care facilities. Splendido offers all-inclusive living for adults 55 years and better through the 10,000-square-foot Salut  Spa & Fitness Center, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, 24-hour concierge service, multiple restaurants and lounges, an 18-hole putting course and cinema. Its onsite health center, Sonora, offers assisted living, memory support, and Medicare-certified skilled nursing. To learn more about Splendido, call 878.2612 or visit www.splendidotucson.com.

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