



# NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Mary Siwierka  
Human Resources Director  
(440) 930-4127  
msiwierka@avonlake.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 11-21-2022

## **Two Avon Lake Representatives Receive Awards from Cleveland State University's Leadership Academy**

Cleveland State University's Leadership Academy is a nationally-certified program comprised of state and local government leaders. Now in its 30th year, Cleveland State is one of the first universities in the country to implement a program of this type. Mayor Greg Zilka notes, "What is interesting about this program is that you have city employees, administrators, and department heads working with elected officials."

This year, two representatives from Avon Lake received awards. Human Resources Director, Mary Siwierka, was named "Leadership Academy 31 Outstanding Fellow." Mayor Greg Zilka was honored with the "2022 William M. Denihan Legends of Leadership Award."

Ms. Siwierka completed the Cleveland State University Leadership Academy, and was voted by fellow classmates as the outstanding fellow for Class 31, which recognizes an outstanding fellow who has gone above and beyond in their role. Each year's class spearheads a community outreach project. Class 31 selected Cleveland Christian Home as their community outreach project. This organization works with children and families who are struggling with mental illness, abuse, and neglect. Ms. Siwierka led a team of her classmates, and divided up the support in three areas. A team lead oversaw support of the Home's annual golf outing (which netted over 100k); another team supported a spring clean on the grounds of the home, and a third team raised funds and donated hundreds of toiletry products. These products went into brand new duffle bags (purchased by the cohort or donated by individuals) that were gifted to the children of the home. These "dignity bags" will be in their permanent possession and used for overnight visitation and/or easing their homelessness conditions.

The Cleveland State University Leadership Academy's "Legends of Leadership Award" was recently renamed the "William M. Denihan Legends of Leadership Award" in honor of Mr. Denihan's outstanding civic engagement. Avon Lake's Mayor Greg Zilka is the first recipient of this newly renamed award for his full career to public service.

Mr. Rob Zioli, Director, Center for Public & Non-Profit Management at Cleveland State University, states, "Mayor Zilka is a Stalwart of the Leadership Academy. The Legend of Leadership is a lifetime achievement award bestowed on folks that have dedicated their career to public service and the Leadership Academy program."

In addition to Mayor Zilka and Ms. Siwierka, past academy participants from Avon Lake include Council President Martin O'Donnell, Council Member Jennifer Fenderbosch, and Council Member David Kos.

###