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**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA SCIENTIST
CONDUCTING INNOVATIVE RESEARCH WITH NEW FUNDING
FROM THE ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION**

ATLANTA, GEORGIA. August 10, 2021 – Exciting research that seeks to develop a student-delivered virtual respite program to support family caregivers will be explored by Dr. Tiffany Washington, associate professor at the University of Georgia School Of Social Work, recipient of a 2021 Research Grant Award from the Alzheimer's Association.

This new funding will aims to improve quality of life for people living with Alzheimer's or other dementia, and their caregivers.

The grant award provides Dr. Washington \$150,000 over three years. This study is a community-university partnership to support a gerontological social work student-delivered respite program, the Houseguest Program (Houseguest). Houseguest was designed using a community-engaged scholarship model of integrating research, teaching, and service.

The Alzheimer's Association is the largest nonprofit funder of Alzheimer's research in the world. The Association is currently investing over \$250 million in more than 730 active projects in 39 countries spanning six continents.

Attracting more brilliant and innovative scientists to the Alzheimer's field is a major goal of the Alzheimer's Association Research Grant and Fellowship Awards, including the Clinical Scientist Fellowship. The program funds primarily early-career scientists working on new ideas in Alzheimer's research. The hope is these projects will generate exciting new data and strategies that will lead to future grant applications to government and other funding sources, including larger grants available through the Alzheimer's Association. The Association makes it a high priority to support researchers from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

“The only way we will achieve a world without Alzheimer's is through research. Funding Dr. Washington not only supports this critical project but is part of a broader Alzheimer's Association effort to keep the best and brightest scientists working on this disease,” said Linda Davidson, Executive Director, Alzheimer's Association, Georgia Chapter.

Dr. Washington is regarded as one of the leading researchers in the role aging has on overall mental and physical health. In particular, she designed a dementia caregiving service-learning course that relies on an engaged scholarship approach that integrates research, teaching, and service to understand the impact of dementia on individuals, families, and communities.

She also has focused much of her work on designing and implementing culturally targeted social and behavioral interventions aimed at reducing the burden of health disparities.

Prior to her academic endeavors, she tallied five years of practice experience in medical social work, which laid the foundation for her work to better understand social work practice in health care settings. Dr. Washington, who also is the director of UGA's Ghana Studies Away program, has received several research and training grants, including the John A. Hartford Doctoral Fellow

“Respite services are an essential part of the caregiving process, enabling caregivers to take a much-needed, self-identified, self-care break,” said Washington. “Houseguest enables our students to provide a unique form of respite, while they also learn about the impact of dementia on family systems, and the need to reach families with more support services. These experiences also will inform our ongoing research, allowing us to collect vital data and information about the feasibility of virtual respite to address the unmet needs of the caregivers and their care receivers.”

The Research Grant and Fellowship Awards are part of the broader Alzheimer's Association International Research Grant Program. Alzheimer's Association funding has led to some of the most important research breakthroughs, including the first Alzheimer's drug studies, the ability to visualize amyloid plaque buildup in the living brain, and advances toward a simple blood test for Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's is the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States. It kills more Americans than diabetes and more than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined. More than 6 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, according to the Alzheimer's Association *2021 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures*. By 2050, the number of people with Alzheimer's is projected to increase to 12.7 million, barring the development of medical breakthroughs to prevent, slow or stop the disease. In Georgia alone, there are more than 150,000 people living with the disease and 334,000 caregivers.

For more information, visit the Alzheimer's Association at alz.org.

About the Alzheimer's Association

The Alzheimer's Association is a worldwide voluntary health organization dedicated to Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to lead the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia — by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Visit alz.org or call 800.272.3900.

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