



Gary Wagner, Founder and President of Sedona Lago Gardens

Before launching Sedona Lago Gardens in 2022, Gary Wagner served as the President of Rainbow Acres for more than 25 years. Now, as the Founder and President of Sedona Lago, he brings his experience of funding and running successful nonprofit organizations to this exciting, innovative nonprofit.

Under his leadership, Rainbow Acres became a state-of-the-art residential and educational community for adults with developmental disabilities. Wagner has over 50 years of experience in public relations, marketing, and fundraising for higher education at Phillips University in Oklahoma, Alderson Broaddus College in West Virginia, and Bacone College in Oklahoma. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Education and Sociology from the University of Sioux Falls in South Dakota and a Master's of Divinity in Pastoral Care & Counseling from Colgate Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, New York. He has done advanced studies in Christian Organizational Development at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California.

Wagner has been an active member of the Association of Fundraising Executives. Gary's name has appeared in *Who's Who in Education*, *Who's Who in the South*, and *Who's Who in America*. Wagner is a past President of the Camp Verde Kiwanis Club and has served on the Camp Verde Chamber of Commerce board. In 2022 Rev. Wagner celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination and standing in American Baptist Churches USA. Gary and his wife, Jussara, have a son, Isaac, and a daughter, Abigail.

Throughout his career, Wagner has worked with adolescents and young adults in college admissions, youth groups within a Church, and a Continuing Care Residential Community for adults with developmental disabilities.

Gary's counseling skills were developed in Clinical Pastoral Education at Rock Hill Baptist Hospital, Kansas City, MO, and Strong Memorial Hospital, Rochester, New York. He is an empathetic and active listener, provides gentle, honest feedback, and assists each person in discovering their own answers. Wagner immediately identifies with Parents and Guardians and their experience with Neurodiversity because he is a parent of an adopted son with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. He prided himself in having personal and professional relationships with many of the Rainbow Acres' parents and guardians.

Wagner believes there is more than one solution to any challenge or problem. He likes to think "outside the box" and is an innovator, as evidenced at Rainbow Acres. He secured the first Clavinova Music Lab for the residents, Adopt-A-Rancher (financial assistance plan), and created a chaplaincy program utilizing volunteer retired Ministers and comforting individuals going through loss and grief.

Wagner will take a personal interest in each young adult becoming involved at Sedona Lago Gardens and their Pathways to Independence.