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SAFE ALLIANCE ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP CHANGE AS IT LOOKS TO THE FUTURE UMBRELLA CENTER

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - Safe Alliance announced today that President & CEO Karen Parker will be stepping down on June 30, 2023, after 21 years with the agency, including almost nine years as President & CEO. During Ms. Parker's time at Safe Alliance, the agency served over 150,000 survivors of domestic and sexual violence, expanded programs to offer the comprehensive services survivors need most, and intentionally focused on dismantling systems and beliefs that sustain poverty, racism, and gender-based violence.

On behalf of Safe Alliance's Board of Directors, Chair Markita Payne expresses deep gratitude for Ms. Parker's leadership stating, "Karen has truly made a lasting impact on Safe Alliance and how we provide hope and healing for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in Mecklenburg County. We are so appreciative of her visionary leadership and commitment to trauma-informed care over the last two decades."

Safe Alliance is embarking on an incredibly exciting time as it partners with Mecklenburg County, the City of Charlotte, and local nonprofits to build The Umbrella Center, Charlotte-Mecklenburg's family justice center. The Umbrella Center will transform the way victims of abuse receive support by co-locating service providers in one location to streamline case investigations, mitigate access barriers to effective care, and support survivors' healing. The Safe Alliance Board of Directors wholeheartedly embraces this effort and made it their top priority to appoint a new President & CEO who has the knowledge, experience, and passion to carry forth this important project and all of the critical Safe Alliance programs.

Therefore, Laura Lawrence, current Chief Operating and Legal Officer will become President & CEO on July 1, 2023. During her 12-year tenure at Safe Alliance, Laura strongly championed The Umbrella Center, became highly involved in all facets of Safe Alliance programming, and demonstrated a true heart for this work. District Attorney Spencer Merriweather says "Since conversations first began six years ago, Laura's tireless efforts have brought this community to the cusp of the family justice center our county badly needs and deserves. Laura has remained committed to improving the way abuse victims receive support and begin to heal, and the Safe Alliance Board was wise in their decision to appoint her. As The Umbrella Center becomes a reality, I know Laura will be the impactful leader needed, both for Safe Alliance and for our greater community."



About Safe Alliance

The mission of Safe Alliance is to provide hope and healing to those impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault. We care for the neighbors we serve through a continuum of life-saving services and programs such as the Clyde and Ethel Dickson Domestic Violence Shelter, the Sexual Trauma Resource Center, Victim Assistance Court Program, the Greater Charlotte Hope Line (980-771-4673), and the Survivor Resource Center, the precursor to The Umbrella Center. We help families in crisis rebuild lives of dignity and strength.

About The Umbrella Center

Since 2017, public and private partners have been working to establish a family justice center in our community, known as The Umbrella Center. The Center will work with victims of sexual assault, child abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking and elder abuse. Safe Alliance, Pat's Place Child Advocacy Center, and the Jamie Kimble Foundation for Courage have committed to lead a capital campaign to raise private dollars with public investment contributions from both Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte. Safe Alliance will be the administrative lead. A location in East Charlotte has been secured with the goal of opening in 2024.

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