

Caritas Family Solutions Hires New Executive Director Of Child Welfare

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BELLEVILLE – Caritas Family Solutions has hired Hope Carbonaro as its first-ever Executive Director of Child Welfare. Carbonaro comes to Caritas with more than 30 years of clinical and child welfare experience in the public and private sectors.

Caritas Family Solutions CEO Gary Huelsmann said, as the second-largest provider of foster care services in the state, Caritas created the new position to support the agency's growth in services to children and families in Southern Illinois. The nonprofit currently serves 1,700 foster children on a monthly basis in addition to its other service lines.

"We selected Hope because she arguably is one of the foremost experts in child and family welfare," said Huelsmann. "She has very extensive experience at DCFS and has worked for several private agencies including 11 years at Caritas Family Solutions as our Director of Foster Care. Her vast experience and tremendously positive reputation and attitude will bring great value to the children and families that we serve."

Carbonaro spent four years working at the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS), most recently as the Deputy Director of Intact Family Services. She also previously owned her own private therapy practice in Southern Illinois and spent several years working as the Director of Foster Care for Caritas before moving to the state level.

"In many senses, this position feels like I am coming home," said Carbonaro. "Caritas is considered one of the best in Southern Illinois in terms of performance history and I know first-hand that their team shares my passion for this work. I have spent my entire career focused on child welfare and foster care. This position will allow me to use all of my experience and apply it towards our ultimate goal, which is helping children find safe, permanent homes and heal from the trauma they have experienced."

Carbonaro said that some of her goals in the new position include finding new solutions to reduce the length of time children stay in the foster care system and developing different levels of therapeutic and evidence-based programming options. Carbonaro added that as the State of Illinois is currently facing a social worker shortage, her goal is to also help incoming social workers experience the same passion and sense of fulfillment that she received from the profession.

Carbonaro completed her Masters of Social work with a Child Welfare specialization from SIU Carbondale. She lives in Mt. Vernon with her husband of 30 years, Mike. They have one daughter, Hannah, who was married in May and also resides in Mt. Vernon with her husband, Ryan.

About Caritas Family Solutions:

Founded in 1947, Caritas Family Solutions strengthens the social and emotional well-being of individuals and families in order to create healthy relationships, loving homes and strong communities. Caritas provides services across Southern Illinois from offices located in Belleville, Carterville, Sparta, Mount Vernon, Olney, East Alton, Highland and Effingham. For additional information, visit www.caritasfamilysolutions.org.