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ST. JOSEPH CENTER PRESIDENT & CEO TO LEAVE AGENCY FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICE

Dr. Va Licia Adams Kellum will join Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass's administration to help lead Inside Safe and then become head of the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

VENICE—After 15 years of service to St. Joseph Center, Dr. Va Licia Adams Kellum will leave the agency effective February 5, 2023 to join the administration of Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass. Dr. Adams Kellum will lead the Mayor's Inside Safe initiative and then transition to the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) as its new Chief Executive Officer.

"It was a difficult decision to leave the people and mission that I love," said **Dr. Adams Kellum**. "We have accomplished tremendous things together and we have so much to be proud of. But our success here at St. Joseph Center has prepared me to stay in my purpose and take on this hugely important effort. I am full of gratitude to Mayor Bass, Chairwoman Hahn, and LAHSA Chair Greuel. It means a great deal for all three of them to be locking arms to make change happen for our unhoused neighbors. It is a privilege to help realize the goals of Inside Safe and create a reimagined, reinvigorated LAHSA. I thank each of these extraordinary women for the opportunity to meet these challenges. I am humbled by this opportunity and also clear-eyed in the urgency of this moment. Business as usual is unacceptable."

Dr. Adams Kellum joined St. Joseph Center (SJC) as its Executive Director in early 2008. Under her leadership, first as E.D. then as President & CEO, the Center's impact has grown significantly. The number of people assisted annually, the scope of services offered, and the geographic reach of the agency have all increased tremendously. The year before she arrived, St. Joseph Center served 6,000 people. By 2022, the agency reached 13,000 people. From a local agency with a staff of 100 and a budget of \$5 million, it has become a major regional social service provider employing nearly 400 people with a \$50 million budget.

St. Joseph Center's Board Chairman Kevin McCardle praised Adams Kellum as a true visionary. "Va Licia managed the transformation of every aspect of St. Joseph Center while always staying true to our mission of serving the dear neighbor without distinction. Mayor Bass is getting the absolute best possible person to galvanize Inside Safe, and LAHSA will get a systems-level thinker and agent for change. All of us at St. Joseph Center will miss her terribly, but we know that she is making the right choice at this extremely critical moment, when the city and county are ready to work together to address the crisis of homelessness."

During summer 2021, Adams Kellum and her team led a collaborative effort with City and County partners on Ocean Front Walk in Venice that moved 213 unhoused people into housing and eliminated major encampments at the beach. Outreach teams offered immediate housing in motels paired with a path to permanent housing, and the overwhelming majority of people living on the beach and boardwalk said yes to coming inside. Today, 70% of the people previously living on the beach remain housed.

“In Dr. Adams Kellum, we are bringing new leadership to LAHSA that is completely aligned with the new spirit of unity and urgency that the City and the County are bringing to our crisis of homelessness,” said **Mayor Karen Bass**, noting that Dr. Adams Kellum led the recent addressing of encampments in Hollywood and Venice through the City’s new Inside Safe strategy. “With more than 40,000 unhoused people within the City of Los Angeles and more than 67,000 across the County of Los Angeles, a unified approach is the only way we can make a difference, and that’s exactly the road we’re on.”

“This is another example of the County and the City locking arms, and pushing the reset button in how we are addressing homelessness,” **Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors**. “I will admit I have had my doubts about LAHSA’s work. What LAHSA has done and, frankly, what our County and the City have done so far to address the homelessness crisis, has not worked. But Va Licia Adams Kellum has been tapped as the new head of LAHSA because she is someone who has risen to meet the homelessness crisis in a bold way. She has my full support.”

“Our dual state of emergencies is already breaking down barriers among the County, City, LAHSA, and the community that has held us back in addressing our homelessness crisis,” said **Supervisor and LAHSA Commissioner Lindsey Horvath**. “I appointed myself to the LAHSA Commission to ensure we meet this moment with the urgency it requires. Simply put, Va Licia is fearless, committed, and brilliant. I am incredibly excited for this new moment.”

LAHSA (the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority) is the lead agency in the Los Angeles Continuum of Care, which is the regional planning body that coordinates housing and services for homeless families and individuals in Los Angeles County. LAHSA coordinates and manages over \$800 million annually in federal, state, county, and city funds for programs that provide shelter, housing, and services to people experiencing homelessness.

“I am proud of the work LAHSA has been able to accomplish over the last few years, including making more than 64,000 housing placements over the last three years. I’m excited that Dr. Adams Kellum will join us to lead a new era of unity and cooperation,” said **LAHSA Commission Chair Wendy Greuel**. “Many of us have been working for years to create more regional alignment, and I know the selection of Dr. Adams Kellum is a huge step in the right direction.”

St. Joseph Center’s seasoned executive leadership team and dedicated Board of Directors will guide the agency through this time of transition. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

founded St. Joseph Center in 1976, and their current representative on SJC's Board, **Sr. Barbara Anne Stowasser**, noted that, "The Center's staff are the beating heart of the mission and at the core of our vital work. We will miss Va Lecia, but our wonderful and dedicated employees will continue to change lives every day by inspiring people to choose hope, just as St. Joseph Center has done for over 45 years."

"We are proud to have supported Dr. Adams Kellum since the start of her tenure at St. Joseph Center, partnering with her as she led a transformative approach to ending homelessness in Los Angeles County," said **Peter Laugharn, president and chief executive officer for the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation**. "With a focus on investing deeply in the dignity of a permanent home for people who are unhoused, the public sector gains a powerful advocate and leader in Dr. Adams Kellum who brings together people, agencies and organizations. We look forward to collaborating with Dr. Adams Kellum in her new role and remain committed to St. Joseph Center as a valued partner during this time of transition."

Reflecting on her transition, Adams Kellum said, "I simply could not do this without the support of my husband Ed and my daughters, Alexis and Ashley. It is a lot to take on and I have to thank them for making it possible. When I started at St. Joseph Center, I honestly never imagined I would one day be joining the first female Mayor of Los Angeles to implement a program as critically important as Inside Safe and also be leading transformational change at LAHSA. I appreciate the confidence and trust that Mayor Bass, Chairwoman Hahn and the County Board of Supervisors along with Chair Greuel and the LAHSA Commission are placing in me. I am also incredibly grateful to everyone at St. Joseph Center, who are the most dedicated, mission-focused people I have ever worked with. The entire staff and board brought us to where we are today. Hope is part of St. Joseph Center's DNA, and I could not be more hopeful or confident about SJC's future."

McCardle, whose service on the Center's board began in 2004, was clear on the agency's path forward. "Va Lecia has ensured that everyone at St. Joseph Center, from the most senior board member to the newest member of the staff, is united in their commitment to providing excellent, best-practice service to our most vulnerable neighbors, and to treating all those we encounter with dignity, equity, and compassion. She has also put in place a management structure that will carry us through this difficult transition. With the backing of our many dedicated supporters and partners, St. Joseph Center will continue serving our most vulnerable neighbors and empowering them to thrive."

About St. Joseph Center

St. Joseph Center is an independent, nonprofit 501 (c)(3), community-based organization. St Joseph Center's mission is to provide working poor families, as well as homeless men, women and children of all ages, with the inner resources and tools to become productive, stable, and self-supporting members of the community. The agency reached nearly 13,000 individuals last year through a variety of integrated programs. To learn more about St. Joseph Center's comprehensive services, please visit www.stjosephctr.org.

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