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The Arc Jacksonville Announces New President/CEO Kari Bates

Jacksonville, FL, October 7, 2021: The Arc Jacksonville has announced new President/CEO Kari Bates to lead the organization when Jim Whittaker retires at the end of 2021.

Kari began working for The Arc of Putnam County in 2015 and has served as Executive Director since 2019. During her tenure, she implemented several programs to support individuals with complex differences, including a palliative care and occupational therapy program. In addition, The Arc of Putnam County received a 5-year grant to develop a comprehensive plan to hire and train at-risk youth for employment. In 2020, she became President of The Florida Conference of Executives, a group of dynamic leaders from The Arc of Florida membership who collaborate and share best practices. Kari is passionate about improving the lives of individuals with developmental differences and believes communities are transformed when people of all abilities are valued for their unique contributions.



Prior to joining The Arc, Kari worked in acute-care hospitals, managing a variety of programs. She received both her bachelor's and master's degrees in Health Administration from the University of Central Florida. In 2018, Kari was named "40 under 40" by the Palatka Daily News and in 2021 she received the University of St. Augustine Force for Good Award.

"Through the selection process, Kari was identified as the best candidate out of more than 150 highly qualified and diverse applicants from across the country. We are excited to work with her in the future and continue to move The Arc Jacksonville forward," says John Cooksey, 2021 Chairman of The Arc Jacksonville Board of Directors.

Jim Whittaker's retirement was announced at the end of June. He has served as President/CEO of The Arc Jacksonville since 2000 while simultaneously leading The Arc Putnam, where his career began in 1975 and continued through 2018. Kari will join The Arc Jacksonville team on November 1.

About The Arc Jacksonville

The Arc Jacksonville serves and advocates for individuals with intellectual and developmental differences to achieve their full potential and to participate in community life. Through incredible partnerships within the Northeast Florida community, The Arc Jacksonville, a local nonprofit, provides a full complement of residential, educational, training, work readiness, employment, mental health, and community inclusion initiatives.

Editor's Note: The Arc Jacksonville is not an acronym and Arc should never be in all capital letters. When referring to the organization, please use The Arc Jacksonville, not The ARC, The ARC Jacksonville or ARC. The Arc Jacksonville should be considered as a title or phrase. Please refer to the individuals as having "differences" and not "disabilities."

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