

# FAMILIES FORWARD

DIGNITY • EMPOWERMENT • HOPE



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## FAMILIES FORWARD SELECTS NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**IRVINE, Calif. (August 5, 2019)**– FAMILIES FORWARD announced today that Madelynn Hirneise has been selected by the Board of Directors to succeed retiring Chief Executive Officer Margie Wakeham. Formerly Senior Director at the organization, Hirneise will assume the new role effective October 1, 2019.

“After an exhaustive search led by the Board of Directors, along with executive search firm Morris & Berger, the board unanimously selected Madelynn,” said Gary Cohn, Chairman of the Board of Directors. “Madelynn has been an invaluable resource to Families Forward and proven her leadership ability. During this time of transition, the board feels there is no one better qualified to lead the organization and continue our vision to end family homelessness in Orange County.”

Madelynn began her career at Families Forward in 2012 as a Housing Resource Specialist. Over the next 7 years Madelynn has been instrumental in designing, developing and implementing Families Forwards’ strategic housing acquisition and partnership programs. Throughout her time at Families Forward, Madelynn has overseen the Housing Program, Prevention and Diversion, Career Services and Community Resources. Under her direction, Families Forward saw an increase of nearly 75% in their housing continuum while maintaining a high standard for quality care.

“I am incredibly honored and excited to take Families Forward into the future and to champion our mission for years to come,” Madelynn said. “I’m grateful to the board for the opportunity to lead this exceptional organization of passionate, dedicated, and talented staff that make a difference in lives every day.”

Over the past 35 years, Families Forward has become a county leader in family housing navigation and the administration of safety-net services to at-risk and homeless families. Beginning with five rented apartments, Families Forward now owns or is in partnership with 54 affordable housing units, defined as housing available to households with below median income. By 2021, Families Forward will have access to nearly 70 affordable housing units for families and provide supportive services to an additional 70 units.

“It has been my privilege to serve this organization, first as a board member, and then as the CEO for nearly 27 years,” said Margie. “Madelynn is a rising star in the nonprofit world and will lead Families Forward in a way that is consistent with the vision and values of the organization. She has proven her leadership and ability, and I am certain that with her in the role of CEO, along with our dedicated board, wonderful staff and the generosity of our donors, Families Forward will continue to flourish.”

**About Families Forward**

Since 1984, Families Forward has worked with families to help them achieve self-sufficiency through housing, food, counseling, career coaching, education, and other support services. Operating with a guiding principal of support with accountability, last year Families Forward improved the lives of 11,700 children and adults by providing safety-net services through the framework of our values: Dignity, Empowerment, Accountability, Community Spirit and Hope. For more information about Families Forward please contact us at 949-552-2727 or visit [www.families-forward.org](http://www.families-forward.org).

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