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Starfish names Detroit Institute for Children's top exec as its next CEO

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Roxanne Brinkerhoff

Starfish Family Services has named Roxanne Brinkerhoff, CEO of the Detroit Institute for Children, as its new CEO.

Brinkerhoff will join the Inkster-based human services and early childhood education nonprofit on Jan. 17, succeeding longtime CEO Ann Kalass.

Kalass **announced in May that she will retire** after leading the organization for the past 15 years. Brinkerhoff brings more than 20 years of leadership experience at nonprofits providing services for children to the new role, the last four leading the Detroit Institute for Children.

Prior to that, she was COO of the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan for nearly two years and served for 14 years as senior director at the Guidance Center, a peer agency to Starfish.

At the Guidance Center, Brinkerhoff oversaw the operations of the Center for Early Childhood, Children Advocacy Center, Autism Center and the Center for Excellence.

The search committee for Starfish's next CEO interviewed a diverse pool of candidates as part of a national search, Starfish Chair Carla Burney Jones said. Brinkerhoff "was a standout right from the beginning for us," she said.

Brinkerhoff is a seasoned professional in early childhood and behavioral health and wellness, Jones said. She brings unmatched experience in Starfish's program areas, shared values and inspiring commitment, along with great energy, openness and an authentic leadership style, said Jones, who is vice president of global audit services at Southfield-based Lear Corp.

Nearly 60 percent of Starfish's clients in Head Start, behavioral health and other programs are children younger than 6 years old.

Brinkerhoff has dedicated her career to early interventions to support brain development and mitigate any traumas or delays at the earliest stage of life, Starfish said in the release.

"We feel very fortunate to hire someone with such meaningful expertise and who is already deeply respected in the community for her leadership and impact," Jones said.

Brinkerhoff has a bachelor of arts in psychology, biology and education from the University of Michigan. She is a member and past vice president of Great Start Collaborative-Wayne, a collaborative of parents, service providers and professionals working to ensure a coordinated system of services for young children

"I am incredibly honored to welcome Roxanne to the CEO role at Starfish," Kalass said in the release. "Our pathways have crossed for more than a decade, and I have witnessed Roxanne to be an unrelenting advocate for families, community, and innovation."

The role is deeply personal to Brinkerhoff, a former Head Start parent herself, according to Starfish.

"This is an incredible opportunity to build on decades of accomplishments and trust and ensure that inclusion and equity are woven into the fabric of our daily action and long-term planning," Brinkerhoff said.

Starfish operates 16 early childhood education centers and behavioral health clinics across Wayne County and employs 430 people.

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