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## **Kaleidoscope Youth Center announces Leadership Transition**

### *Executive Director Erin Upchurch to Step Down After Eight Years of Transformational Leadership*

COLUMBUS, OH - Kaleidoscope Youth Center (KYC) today announced that Executive Director Erin Upchurch, MSSA, LISW-S will step down from her role at the end of this year after nearly eight years of dedicated leadership and service.

Under Upchurch's transformational leadership, she successfully steered KYC through COVID-19, quadrupled the organizational budget, established KYC's voice in advocacy, and built deep local and national community partnerships. Notably, Upchurch navigated the organization through a hostile socio-political climate while creating the first and only housing and behavioral health programs centered on the needs and experiences of LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults.

Following her departure from KYC, Upchurch will join the social work program at Capital University as adjunct faculty. She also looks forward to spending time being creative, practicing yoga, and deep diving into the world of astrology.

"While we're sad to see Erin go, we respect and appreciate her leadership and vision for the future of KYC," said KYC Board Chair Lee Tepper, LISW-S. "She joined the organization in early 2018, in the midst of a tumultuous time in the community following Pride in 2017. Her ability to strategically navigate community discord, care for staff, connect with youth, and pursue the possibility of a kinder, safer, and more affirming world is a gift that will be missed."

### **Interim Leadership Model Announced**

The KYC Board of Directors has selected Amanda Erickson, KYC Senior Associate Director of Programs and Operations, and Jennifer Kuhn, KYC Senior Associate

Director of Advancement and Strategy, to serve as Interim Co-Executive Directors through a nine-month tenure, beginning January 1, 2026. The co-executive leadership model will provide increased capacity, enhanced collaboration, and grounding for the youth, staff, and community at large.

Both Erickson and Kuhn bring eight years of experience with KYC and have demonstrated complementary strengths and a deep commitment to the organization's mission. They have steadily expanded their responsibilities and worked closely together, positioning themselves well to lead KYC through this transition period.

"Amanda and Jen have been with me since I started in 2018," said Upchurch.

"Witnessing the evolution of their leadership is one of the greatest joys of my role at KYC. Their collective commitment to our mission, and the lives of our young people is what the community needs as we continue to navigate the current state of affairs. I trust them deeply, and know that they are the best next step for the organization."

The search for a permanent executive director or co executive directors will begin in early 2026.

### **About Kaleidoscope Youth Center**

Kaleidoscope Youth Center (KYC) is Ohio's largest and longest-serving organization in Ohio solely dedicated to supporting LGBTQIA+ youth ages 12 - 24. Services include a Drop-in Center, community education and training, advocacy and civic engagement, health and wellness programs, and housing opportunities.

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