

Learning Bridge Early Education Center announces Bernice Mahan as its next Executive Director

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EVANSTON, IL, UNITED STATES, January 4, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Learning Bridge](#), a community-based, nonprofit early education center founded in 1944 as the Child Care Center of Evanston, has selected Bernice Mahan as its next Executive Director. Assuming her new role effective January 3, 2024, Mahan will build on its past, strengthen mission expansion, and create a stronger and more dynamic future for families served in Evanston, IL, and the surrounding neighborhood communities. Leading the search efforts included President and CEO Heather Eddy, Executive Search Manager Yoo-Jin Hong, and Project Manager Megan Taylor of [KEES](#).



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Bringing over 28 years of experience in early childhood education as a licensed daycare provider for children from birth to five years as well as experience as an Adjunct Professor for National Louis University, Mahan is a passionate advocate for children and families who strives to establish a positive and effective learning environment for all children regardless of race, cultural identity, or socioeconomic status.

"As Learning Bridge proudly celebrates 80 years of dedicated service to the community, we are thrilled to announce the appointment of our new Executive Director," said Deb Schlies Board President. "Bernice is a positive cultural influencer who leads with transparency and is ready to represent and empower our staff to create an environment of excellence. On behalf of the Learning Bridge community, we welcome Bernice and thank the KEES team for their expertise throughout the search process."

In her previous role as Founder and Director at Tender Loving Daycare, Mahan managed all

aspects, from curriculum development to staffing and financial oversight. Lauded for an inclusive approach, Mahan integrated Action For Children subsidized payments into Tender Loving Daycare's payment options to increase accessibility to high-quality early childhood education for financially disadvantaged families with parents unable to work due to a struggle with mental health issues. Charged with developing yearly and long-term program goals along with establishing evaluation mechanisms, Mahan tracked progress toward strategic goals as well as program participation, quality, and effect while supporting teachers and parents.

As an Adjunct Professor at National Louis University, Mahan teaches online courses in early childhood education to a diverse student population. A people-centric nature has enabled Mahan to develop excellent communication skills which she utilizes to work collaboratively with Academic Advisors, students, and faculty to ensure student engagement and success.

"In my 28 years in the early childhood education field, I've consistently prioritized building strong relationships and advocating for practical, hands-on experiences with principles that align seamlessly with Learning Bridge's mission," said Mahan. "I am thrilled to have been selected as the next Executive Director and look forward to partnering with the Board to foster an inclusive school culture at Learning Bridge that promotes the well-being and academic success of the entire community – children, teachers, and staff alike."

Leading the search efforts included Search Committee Chair Nikki Jarvis and Search Committee Members Ellen Collar, Candace Corr, Katerina Forbis, Liz Holding, Deb Schlies, and Mary Watt.

Learning Bridge retained KEES, a premier executive search firm specializing in searches for top nonprofit executive roles, with experience in the early childhood space, earlier this year after reviewing several competitive proposals. A comprehensive search was launched, and Mahan was ultimately selected from a passionate, diverse, and talented pool of regional finalists.

Mahan holds a bachelor's degree in early childhood and a master's degree in early childhood education from National Louis University in Chicago, IL. She additionally holds an Aim 4 Excellence National Director Credential.

"With a balanced perspective on administration, teaching, community engagement, and policy advocacy, Bernice will undoubtedly successfully create innovative solutions and proven outcomes that will resonate with Learning Bridge's mission and goals," said Yoo-Jin Hong, Executive Search Manager of KEES. "We are proud to have been selected as the search partner of choice for Learning Bridge and thank the entire board for their partnership. Congratulations to all on this exciting news!"

About the Partners

Learning Bridge Early Education Center

Learning Bridge Early Education Center (formerly Child Care Center of Evanston) is a community-

based, not-for-profit organization that began as a daycare for 3-to-5-year-old children in 1944 during World War II. Providing equitable access to high-quality early learning in a caring and safe environment, Learning Bridge believes in affordable and accessible childcare and preschool education for children of all socioeconomic backgrounds so that every child thrives. Learning Bridge is licensed through the Department of Children and Family Services and accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and has earned the ExceleRate's Gold Circle of Quality. Gold Circle programs are actively engaged in continuous quality improvement and have met the highest quality standards in three areas: learning environment and teaching quality; administrative standards; and staff training and education. Learning Bridge is additionally a recipient of ExceleRate's 'Award of Excellence for Preschool Teaching and Learning'. For more information, visit www.lbeec.org.

KEES

KEES (formerly Alford Executive Search) is a nonprofit executive search firm that builds diverse teams with dynamic leaders in the nonprofit and public sectors. Our collaboration with Learning Bridge adds to our portfolio of Early Childhood Education partnerships and commitment to the success of ECE nonprofits and clients. Previous placements include Cornerstone Children's Learning Center, Concordia Place, Louisiana Policy Institute for Early Learning, and multiple Educare sites across the nation. A woman owned and operated firm, KEES offers a full array of nonprofit consulting services including executive search, leadership development, interim staffing, and HR support. For more information, please visit www.kees2success.com.

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