



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT

Mary Sheely
msheely@nwcenter.org
(206) 285-9140

Laura Kneedler named Chief Mission Officer

Kneedler is promoted from Vice President, Education & Therapy Services to Chief Mission Officer to lead both Northwest Center Kids and Northwest Center Employment Services

SEATTLE – Northwest Center is pleased to announce the promotion of Laura Kneedler, M.Ed., to Chief Mission Officer. Kneedler, who joined Northwest Center in 2013 as Director of Early Learning, has held the position of Vice President of Education & Therapy Services on the Northwest Center executive team since 2016.

As Chief Mission Officer, Kneedler will guide the strategic plan for all Northwest Center's mission services provided through Northwest Center Kids and Northwest Center Employment Services. These include Early Supports for children birth to 3, Northwest Center's two inclusive early learning centers in downtown Seattle and Greenwood, the IMPACT™ program that provides inclusion training to childcare centers throughout King County, Employment Services across Washington state and in northern Idaho, and related employment programs including School-to-Work.

In her previous role of VP of Education & Therapy Services, Kneedler led a team of 100 therapists, educators, and support staff to directly serve more than 600 children annually with programs of therapy and education. Under her leadership, Northwest Center Kids exponentially expanded its reach by launching programs such as IMPACT (Inclusion Mentorship Program for Increasing Access in Childcare Team), providing training to childcare centers across King County so they can welcome children with special healthcare needs. Since its launch in 2018, IMPACT has made inclusive early learning available to more than 22,000 children in King County. Kneedler also led Northwest Center Kids as they navigated the COVID-19 pandemic: quickly establishing new safety protocols for our early learning centers and pivoting Early Supports to effective teletherapy services that continue today.

"With Northwest Center Employment Services recently expanding into Idaho, and particularly as the adult clients we serve re-enter the workforce as pandemic restrictions begin to lift, I can think of no one better suited to lead both our Kids and Employment Services divisions as capably and creatively as Laura Kneedler," says President & CEO Gene Boes. "Her deep understanding of the benefits of disability inclusion at all levels of the community, combined with her innovative thinking and steadfast support of her team members, have yielded positive



growth and results throughout her tenure with Northwest Center Kids. We look forward to continued growth and success of both our mission programs under her leadership.”

Prior to joining Northwest Center, Kneeder worked in a variety of settings including public schools, therapeutic childcare centers, and as an early childhood classroom teacher for more than 10 years. She holds a master’s degree in Special Education from Concordia University and a bachelor’s degree in Education/Health & Human Development from Montana State University.

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About Northwest Center

*Northwest Center is a nonprofit founded in 1965 by a group of mothers who later went on to write and pass historic civil rights legislation guaranteeing access to public education for disabled children. Northwest Center is now a leading voice in advancing equal opportunities for children and adults with disabilities providing early learning and school age programs, employment and job placement services and vocational training. **Learn more at nwcenter.org.***