THE STATE'S LARGEST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORGANIZATION HIRES NEW PRESIDENT/CEO

HARTFORD -- Mary-Jane Foster, a Bridgeport businesswoman and community activist, will be Interval House's new President and Chief Executive Officer.

Cheryl Pytel, Chair of the agency's Board of Directors, made the announcement today. She said Ms. Foster will formally start her new job in mid-January. She succeeds Interval House co-founder and longtime Executive Director, Cecile Enrico, who retired in the spring.

"I speak on behalf of all members of the Board of Directors when I say we are absolutely delighted to have Mary-Jane Foster as Interval House's President and CEO," Pytel said. "She is highly regarded and an ideal choice for us as we strengthen and expand our programs for the many people impacted by domestic violence in the 24 towns we serve in Greater Hartford. As 2017 approaches, we look forward to advancing the mission of Interval House with Mary-Jane's strong leadership and expertise."

Ms. Foster -- most recently Vice President of University Relations at the University of Bridgeport -- is also co-founder and former co-owner and CEO of the Bridgeport Bluefish, a minor-league baseball team in the Atlantic League of Baseball. As managing partner of Bridgeport Waterfront Investors, she co-developed the 5,500-seat ballpark in Bridgeport and was instrumental in the development of the nearby Webster Bank Arena.

Interval House is the largest domestic violence agency in the state. Founded in 1977, Interval House has made a positive difference in the lives of more than 225,000 women, men and children who have experienced psychological and physical abuse at the hands of a domestic or intimate partner. The nonprofit organization strives to prevent and break the cycle of domestic violence by providing victims with access to a 24-hour hotline, crisis counseling, emergency shelter, support groups, criminal and civil court advocacy, specialized services for the children, as well as community education and outreach.

"Mary-Jane Foster is an ideal chief to lead Interval House and its work to respond to victims of domestic violence at critical times in their lives", said Karen Jarmoc, president and CEO of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. "She offers the perfect mix of advocacy and strategic thinking which will be so important to Interval House and all domestic violence providers in the state as we collectively move forward to advance policy and practice to most effectively support victims and their families."

Foster has been an advocate for providing services to victims of domestic violence since 1989, when she began as a volunteer with the YWCA of Bridgeport and later as a family law attorney. She was instrumental in the founding of the Center for Family Justice in Bridgeport, the first family justice center in Connecticut. She has frequently advocated for increased funds and protections for victims of domestic violence in Connecticut's state legislature.

"I am honored and thrilled to have the opportunity to lead the Interval House on behalf of the victims of domestic violence and their children and families who need these services so badly," Ms. Foster said. "It is my privilege to stand with abused women, men and children in their struggle for safety and justice. I look forward to rolling up my sleeves and getting to work on their behalf."

The recruitment and selection process was guided by Third Sector New England, with generous support from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving's Executive Transitions Program.

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