

Contact: Anya Fredrickson
Communications, The PEAL Center
afredrickson@pealcenter.org
412- 281- 4404 ex. 213



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

December 7, 2023

PEAL Center Executive Director Leaves for New Position, Long-Time Director Will be Interim ED.

[Pittsburgh, December 7, 2023] Today, the PEAL (Parent Education & Advocacy Leadership) Center Board of Directors announced the resignation of Mary Hartley, who is leaving to become the President of The Arc of Greater Pittsburgh at Achieva. Cindy Duch, Director of Individual Assistance, who has been at the PEAL Center for 17 years will act as Interim Executive Director.

Hartley will leave her position mid-January but is committed to continuing support of the PEAL Center and its efforts. “The PEAL Team and Board are tremendous. Together we have grown the important work of reaching those families that need us most, supporting their education and empowerment -- and ensuring that PEAL will be here for years to come. It’s been a tremendous honor to support this critically important statewide organization.”

The PEAL Center was founded to support Western Pennsylvania in 2005 by parents of children with disabilities led by Liz Healey. It has since grown to support families and youth across the Commonwealth, providing individual assistance, training, leadership tools and information in healthcare and education for children with disabilities. PEAL has a staff of twenty-one diverse professionals supporting every county in Pennsylvania.

“We have gained ground and have increased diversity in our board and staff and have developed many new partnerships over the last three years. While we search for a new Executive Director, we are fortunate to continue this trajectory with Cindy Duch, a highly respected PEAL leader.” said PEAL’s Board President Paul Fogle, a professional advocate and one of the Founding Members of the Pennsylvania Youth Leadership Network. “Cindy lives our mission each day to educate and empower families to ensure that children, youth and young adults with disabilities and special health care needs lead rich, active lives as full members of their schools and communities.”

###

About the Parent Education & Advocacy Leadership (PEAL) Center

Since 2005, the PEAL Center had been committed to empowering families, children and young adults with disabilities, and the professionals who serve them. Today, PEAL is a Pennsylvania

statewide organization that continues to promote inclusion and access to education and healthcare. The PEAL Center offers free of charge support to those served through individual assistance, trainings, and leadership development.

The PEAL Center operates various programs and projects that align with its mission to educate and empower families to ensure that children, youth and young adults with disabilities and special health care needs lead rich, active lives as full members of their schools and communities. PEAL is Pennsylvania's Parent Center (PTI) and Family-to-Family Health Information Center (F2F) and collaborates with statewide partners on a variety of grants. To learn more visit: pealcenter.org

The PEAL Center serves all of Pennsylvania with offices in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, with staff across the Commonwealth. To Learn more visit the PEAL website: <https://www.pealcenter.org/>