



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Side by Side Announces Planned CEO Transition; Denisse Mendoza Named Interim CEO

SAN ANSELMO, Calif. — Side by Side today announced that Chief Executive Officer Christine Garcia will step down from her role effective December 4, 2026, after accepting the position of President & Chief Executive Officer at Lifehouse, a nonprofit serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Marin and Sonoma counties.

Garcia has led Side by Side through a period of growth and innovation, strengthening services for children, youth, and families throughout the Bay Area.

“Christine’s leadership has guided Side by Side through an important chapter in our organization’s history,” said Side by Side’s Board president, Deanna Brock. “Her commitment to expanding access to care, strengthening organizational excellence, and remaining focused on the needs of young people has left a lasting mark on our organization and the communities we serve.”

During Garcia’s tenure, Side by Side expanded services throughout Alameda County, successfully completed two Joint Commission reaccreditation reviews, and strengthened coordination across programs to provide more integrated, trauma-informed care.

To ensure a seamless transition, the Board of Directors has appointed Denisse Mendoza, Side by Side’s Chief Programs Officer, to serve as Interim Chief Executive Officer beginning December 4, 2026.

Mendoza brings more than 13 years of experience with Side by Side, serving in leadership roles across the organization. She led the creation of Raíces Unidas, the organization’s award-winning program serving Latinx communities in the North Bay, and has helped sustain and expand services through partnerships with counties, foundations, advocacy organizations, and community leaders.

“Denisse is a highly respected leader whose commitment to our mission, staff, and communities is unwavering,” said Brock. “We are confident in her ability to guide Side by Side during this transition and continue advancing our work on behalf of children, youth, and families.”

“Side by Side is strong,” Garcia said. “I leave with deep gratitude for the staff, Board, volunteers, supporters, and community partners who make this work possible. Most

SIDE BY SIDE

300 Sunny Hills Drive, San Anselmo, CA 94960



importantly, I leave knowing that our mission and values are carried forward by an extraordinary team dedicated to helping children and young people heal, grow, and thrive.”

About Side by Side

Side by Side provides mental health, special education, housing, and community-based services that support children, youth, and families throughout Marin, Sonoma, Napa, and Alameda Counties. Through trauma-informed and culturally responsive care, Side by Side helps young people heal, grow, and build bright futures. www.sidebysideyouth.org

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