

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Southington Resident Named New Director of Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington**

#### *Long-Time Resident Joanne Kelleher Takes Reins as Dr. Mary Yuskis Moves On*

**Southington, Conn., July 6, 2016** – The Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington (ECCS) has named long-time Southington resident Joanne Kelleher as its new director following the recent resignation of Dr. Mary Yuskis, who after two years at the helm is moving with her family to Florida.

Kelleher, who started her new position on July 1, comes to ECCS with an extensive background in business operations and administration, project management, marketing, grant writing and community engagement. She and her family, including two sons who are products of the Southington school system, have resided in Southington since 1992.

“In hiring Joanne, the Collaborative believes that we have found the ideal successor to Mary Yuskis,” said Michelle Slimak, Chair of the Collaborative. “Joanne’s knowledge of and commitment to the Southington community, and her outstanding experience in administration, management, marketing and grant writing will help ECCS position itself in the future for further growth and even greater success serving Southington’s children and families.”

Yuskis joined the Collaborative in July, 2014 and over the past two years has been the driving force behind the Collaborative’s Community Plan for Southington’s Young Children.

“Mary has played an instrumental role in raising the profile of ECCS here in Southington, working with stakeholders and seeing through to completion our exhaustive Community Plan for Southington’s Young Children,” said Slimak. “We will miss her terribly and wish her nothing but the best in her new pursuits.”

“As a long-time Southington resident and someone who has raised her children in this community, I’m excited about this opportunity and looking forward to continuing on with the foundation that Dr. Yuskis has established,” said Kelleher. “The Early Childhood Collaborative represents an opportunity for Southington families to become involved in this wonderful community through their children’s education, and it is a privilege for me to be part of it.”

Added Jim Williamson, president of the Collaborative’s lead funder, the Community Foundation of Greater New Britain, “Under Dr. Yuskis’ guidance the Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington has made great strides in bringing to fruition its vision for Southington’s young children, and we are pleased and proud to continue our support as the Collaborative enters a new era of leadership. We thank Dr. Yuskis for her fine work, and look forward to our continued partnership with ECCS under Ms. Kelleher’s guidance.”

Kelleher most recently served as Vice President of Operations at SecureRF Corporation, focusing on operations and administration including recruiting, grant writing/administration and logistics. She was formally the company’s Director of Marketing. She previously served as Director of Marketing at Imaging Solutions, Inc. and as Director of Marketing and Human Resources at Pinnacle Decision Systems, Inc. She

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also has experience as a project manager, systems trainer and user systems analyst at a Travelers Insurance Company.

Kelleher has been active in the Southington community and is currently the Moderator of the First Congregational Church of Southington. She is an Assistant Scoutmaster at Boy Scout Troop 32 and was formerly Cubmaster of Pack 8 at Derynoski Elementary School and Communications Chair for the Sleeping Giant District of Boy Scouts of America. She recently completed two three-year terms on the Executive Board of the Southington Band Backers as Publicity Chair and then Vice President of Student Administration; she now serves as a team captain. Through her work with Literacy Volunteers of America, New Britain/Bristol (now Literacy Volunteers of Central Connecticut) as a tutor and Board member, she has experience working with adult students who did not learn to read, write or speak English in their youth.

Kelleher earned her Master's in Business Administration in Finance, and her Bachelor of Science in Management Information Systems from The University of Connecticut.

The Early Childhood Collaborative of Southington is a group of committed educators, community leaders, parents, healthcare providers, childcare providers and members of the community who are deeply invested in the growth, development and academic success of young children in Southington. The Collaborative's mission is that "all Southington children will enter school ready to learn." ECCS is dedicated to three goals: 1) Advocating for high quality preschool and childcare; 2) Empowering parents and families through workshops and educational programs; and 3) Being a wide ranging resource for community members on the subject of early childhood care and education. For more information, and to review the Community Plan for Southington's Young Children, visit [www.southingtonearlychildhood.org](http://www.southingtonearlychildhood.org). Visit ECCS on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ECCSouthington/>.

Established in 1941, the Community Foundation of Greater New Britain is "Where Good Begins" in Berlin, New Britain, Plainville and Southington. The Foundation works to inspire philanthropy, manage permanent charitable assets effectively, and partner to address key community issues through strategic leadership. For more information, visit [www.cfgnb.org](http://www.cfgnb.org).