



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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North Star Reach Welcomes Seasoned Nonprofit Leader J.J. Lewis as CEO

Howell-native brings two decades of experience to lead North Star Reach's mission

Pinckney, MI – North Star Reach, the ninth U.S. residential camp in the SeriousFun Children’s Network founded by actor and philanthropist Paul Newman, proudly announces the appointment of Howell-native J.J. Lewis as its new Chief Executive Officer. With over 20 years of nonprofit management experience, including involvement with North Star Reach as a donor and volunteer, Lewis will commence his role as CEO on Monday, April 22, 2024.

“On behalf of the North Star Reach Board of Directors and myself, I am thrilled that J.J. Lewis is joining NSR as our permanent CEO,” announced Sheri Mark, Board Chair. “J.J. is a proven non-profit executive whose enthusiasm, talent, and career experience made him a unanimous and enthusiastic choice of the Board. We are especially fortunate to have found a new leader with deep Michigan roots and a historical personal commitment to the mission of the organization. Our mission is compassionate, our vision inspiring, and our plans are in motion. Our community of children, families, donors, staff, volunteers and partners are excited to Keep the Campfires Burning under J.J.’s leadership.”

Lewis will take on the role from David Leckey, who served as the Interim CEO for the past 12 months. Leckey is an accomplished executive who has leveraged his breadth and depth of experience to help non-profits and communities navigate through change and build resiliency and opportunity for long term success.

“We also want to recognize and thank our Interim CEO David Leckey,” shared Mark. “David agreed to lend us his 35 years of career executive leadership during 2023 to help us build our vision and strategies for the future and conduct a thorough search process for our permanent CEO. Thank you for seeing us to this point, David!”

Currently serving as the Chief Philanthropy Officer for United Way of the Lakeshore, Lewis has demonstrated leadership in fundraising initiatives, including individual, major, and workplace giving, as well as strategic planning. Prior to his tenure at United Way of the Lakeshore, he held the position of Superintendent and CEO at Compass Charter Schools in California, where he received recognition for

his exemplary leadership, transparency, and vision. He also brings with him experience in communications, fundraising, and volunteer management through his previous roles at both Detroit Public Television and WRCJ 90.9 FM and ServiceSource.

Lewis's connection with the SeriousFun Children's Network began during his time at Central Michigan University as a brother of The Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity, as the Network is their national philanthropy. He actively supported North Star Reach's establishment, overseeing Phi Kappa Tau's National Community Service Event that aided in setting up camp facilities for its inaugural campers.

Reflecting on his appointment, Lewis remarked, "I have been a steadfast supporter of the SeriousFun Children's Network and North Star Reach since my collegiate years. Every child deserves the transformative experience of camp, and I am honored to lead an organization that embodies this belief."

In addition to his extensive professional background, Lewis is pursuing a Doctor of Education in Organizational Change and Leadership from the University of Southern California. He holds a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from San Diego State University and a Bachelor of Science from Central Michigan University in history and political science. Certified in Nonprofit Management and Fundraising, Lewis is an active member of various professional associations, including the Association of Fundraising Professionals and Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity.

"I am eager to collaborate with our dedicated team, supportive Board, and the wider community to expand North Star Reach's impact," Lewis expressed. "Together, we will continue to provide life-changing experiences for children facing serious health challenges, ensuring they have access to the magic of camp."

North Star Reach invites the community to participate in a Spring Work Weekend scheduled for May 3-5. Attendees will have the opportunity to volunteer alongside Lewis and partake in a welcoming campfire. For more details and to register, please visit [North Star Reach's website](#).

About North Star Reach

North Star Reach offers life-changing, year-round programs for children with serious health challenges and their families, free of charge. Situated on 105 acres in Pinckney, Michigan, North Star Reach has provided a medically-sound camp experience where more than 3,000 children have created lasting memories in a safe and supportive environment through over 8,000 life-changing camp experiences.

For more information, visit [North Star Reach's website](#) and follow them on [social media](#).

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Photos:



Headshot of J.J. Lewis.