

For Immediate Release

July 9, 2019

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YWCA Central Alabama Board of Directors select an industry veteran to lead the longtime Birmingham agency.

Nashville YWCA executive is “honored and excited” to build upon YWCA’s 116-year history of impact in Central Alabama



**LaRhonda Magras, CEO-Elect,
YWCA Central Alabama**

The Board of Directors of the [YWCA Central Alabama](#) is delighted to announce that LaRhonda Magras, EdD., has been elected CEO of the organization, effective September 1, 2019.

Currently Senior Vice President, Program & Operations with [YWCA Nashville and Middle Tennessee](#), Magras succeeds Yolanda Sullivan, who retired as CEO late last year. Patricia Hoban-Moore will continue as Interim CEO through August 2019.

Margaret (Maggie) Brooke, community volunteer and chair of YWCA Central Alabama’s Board of Directors, summarized the board’s endorsement: “For her entire career, LaRhonda has been an advocate for women and children, and her commitment to eliminating racism and empowering women, core to YWCA’s purpose, is lifelong. We are indeed fortunate that she will now be leveraging her talents in Central Alabama.”

Paige Daniel, Managing Director at Highlands Associates and chair of the eight-person search committee, reflected on Magras’s fit with the search committee’s mandate. “We knew all along that we wanted an engaging and inspiring CEO, an innovative leader who could build on the YWCA’s extraordinary past while leading

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the organization to an even more impactful future,” said Daniel. “From the very first meeting,” Daniel continued, “LaRhonda impressed us with her clarity of purpose, her warmth and authenticity and her passion for serving marginalized populations. We believe she will be a wonderful addition not only for our strong team tackling such important work every day but also for the leadership fabric of the entire region.”

Reflecting on her new mandate, Magras was enthusiastic about the opportunity. “Formally part of the YWCA family for just a few years, I have been a supporter and champion for far longer, and I have experienced first-hand the difference the YWCA can make in the lives of women and children, whether in crisis situations or simply in need of a consistent, caring, safe and dependable resource.”

Continued Magras, “YWCA Central Alabama is well known for the quality of its staff, the effectiveness of its programs, the engagement of its Board, and the deep support it enjoys across the larger community. As the needs of the area’s women and children continue to grow, I feel privileged indeed to join such an important force, and I am humbled by the Board’s confidence.”

Speaking of the recruitment process, search committee chair Daniel observed, “The YWCA’s prominence among nonprofits in the area and its visibility nationally made this role very appealing. The five-month process encompassed over 185 sources and prospects in at least 18 states and the District of Columbia. LaRhonda Magras was unknown to us at the outset of the search, but she proved captivating at every stage of the process. We are thrilled that someone of her caliber with direct experience in a sister YWCA will be our next CEO.”

The CEO search for YWCA Central Alabama was conducted by an eight-person committee consisting of Paige Daniel, Chair; Dalton Blankenship; Maggie Brooke, Chair of the Board; Tammy Fincher, Kay Kornmeier, Lisa Q. Miller, Kim Rogers, and Erin Stephenson. The committee was advised throughout by Sam Pettway and Laura Lovelace of [BoardWalk Consulting](#), a national executive search firm focused on the leadership and governance of nonprofits and foundations.

Board chair Brooke and search committee chair Daniel were effusive in their praise for the many hours their colleagues devoted to the executive search process. “We

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also want to thank the YWCA’s leadership team and staff for maintaining such impressive momentum during the transition period. Special thanks go to Pat Hoban-Moore for her steady hand as Interim CEO.”

LaRhonda Magras is a native of Chicago who made her home there for four decades. Over the years, she held positions of increasing responsibility with nonprofits in Chicago, Phoenix and St. Croix before moving to Nashville in 2011. She spent three years as VP of Youth Development with [Martha O’Bryan Center](#), where she managed large teams, before being tapped by Mayor Karl Dean to be the Director of Children & Youth Initiatives for the [Metro Government of Nashville and Davidson County](#).

When Mayor Dean’s second term ended in September 2015, Magras joined [YWCA Nashville & Middle Tennessee](#) as VP of Community Programs; she was subsequently promoted to SVP of Program Operations. At the Nashville YWCA, Magras is responsible for several service lines, including Domestic Violence Services, Girls, Inc., the Family Learning Center, and Dress for Success.

The first in her family to graduate from college, Magras holds a BA in Sociology from Chicago State University, an MS in Human Services Administration from Spertus Institute, and an EdD in Leadership and Professional Practice from Trevecca Nazarene University. She is the mother of three sons, ages 19 to 28. She and her husband, Marvin Magras, will be relocating to Birmingham in late August.

About YWCA Central Alabama

Since its founding in 1903, YWCA Central Alabama has provided hope and healing to thousands of women, children and families. Some of these come to the YW at the lowest point of their lives, perhaps fleeing an abusive relationship or simply looking for a safe, affordable place to call home. Others may be seeking a strong foundation for their children or a way to help make their schools and communities more inclusive and fair for all.

Regardless of how they arrive, these women and families soon experience what the larger community has known for years: YWCA Central Alabama is a consistent, caring and dependable resource for women and children in crisis.

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YWCA Central Alabama is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. We work every day to respond to the needs of women and their families through four primary program areas: End Domestic Violence, Social Justice, Child Development and Housing.

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