

## The Center for Empowerment and Education Announces Kelly Rybczyk as New Executive Director

**DANBURY, CT, June 23, 2026** — The Center for Empowerment and Education (CEE) is pleased to announce Kelly Rybczyk as its new Executive Director, effective immediately. Kelly succeeds Ashley Dunn, whose leadership over the past four years has been instrumental in strengthening the organization and positioning it for long-term success. CEE extends its deep gratitude to Ashley for her dedication and meaningful contributions during a period of significant growth.

Following a comprehensive and inclusive search process, Kelly was selected for her deep commitment to the organization’s mission, her trauma-informed leadership approach, and her strong track record in nonprofit management and advocacy.

Kelly brings a wealth of experience in education and the nonprofit sector. She began her career as a teacher after earning her Bachelor of Arts in Child Study from the University of Saint Joseph. She later transitioned into nonprofit work, spending four years in development roles at educational organizations while earning her Master of Science in Strategic Fundraising and Philanthropy from Bay Path University.

Kelly’s passion for serving survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault (DV/SA) led her to Project SAGE, CEE’s sister agency, where she dedicated six years to advancing the organization’s mission. During her tenure, she held roles in fundraising, operations, and served as Interim Executive Director. While at Project SAGE, she became a Certified Domestic Violence Counselor and built strong partnerships with the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) and agencies across the state.

Most recently, Kelly worked at Community Access to the Arts in Great Barrington, supporting programming for individuals with disabilities. She now returns to the domestic violence and sexual assault field with a deep sense of purpose.

“I am honored to join the Center for Empowerment and Education and lead an organization whose mission carries such personal meaning for me,” said Kelly. “I am committed to fostering compassionate, accessible, and trauma-informed leadership, and I look forward to working alongside staff, survivors, and community partners to continue advancing this vital work.”

The Board of Directors conducted a rigorous selection process led by its Succession Committee. The process included multiple rounds of interviews, written submissions, in-person meetings, and candidate assessments. In addition to evaluating leadership and operational expertise, the Board prioritized mission alignment, collaboration, trauma-informed values, and the ability to build meaningful community relationships.

Staff voices also played a critical role in shaping the selection. Earlier this year, a staff survey helped inform both the Executive Director job description and the qualities identified as essential for CEE’s future. The Board is confident that Kelly embodies the leadership attributes and vision necessary to guide the organization forward.

“We are thrilled to welcome Kelly to CEE,” said Erin Byrne, CEE Board Chair. “Her experience, compassion, and dedication to ending domestic violence and sexual assault make her an exceptional leader for our organization and the communities we serve.”

As CEE enters this next chapter, the organization remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting victims and survivors through comprehensive, trauma-informed services. Under Kelly’s leadership, CEE looks forward to building on its strong foundation, deepening community partnerships, enhancing prevention education initiatives, and continuing to expand access to critical programs that empower individuals and promote healing across the region.

### **About The Center for Empowerment and Education**

Since founding in 1975, The Center for Empowerment and Education (CEE), formerly The Women's Center of Greater Danbury, has been a safe haven as the sole provider of services to victims of domestic and sexual violence in the Northern Fairfield and Southern Litchfield County areas. Each year, CEE serves over 22,000 individuals from area communities with confidential services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, and provided at no cost.

CEE provides support services in the form of crisis intervention and advocacy, counseling, and emergency shelter. Their advocates empower individuals to find their voice and choose their path toward healing as they rebuild their lives. CEE prevents and reduces interpersonal violence in the community through prevention education and awareness. CEE is reducing trauma by stopping violence from manifesting in the first place. CEE believes that everyone deserves to live a life free from violence.

All funds provided to CEE support their critically needed domestic violence, sexual assault, and resource services for adults and children in an 11-town service area, including: Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, Roxbury, and Sherman. CEE is a member of the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence (CCADV) and The Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence.

**NOTE TO MEDIA:** For further comment, please reach out to Samantha Flynn, Chief Development Officer of The Center for Empowerment and Education, at [samantha.f@thecenterct.org](mailto:samantha.f@thecenterct.org).

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