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SECOND STORY'S CEO JUDITH DITTMAN ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT AFTER 30 YEARS

The nonprofit leader also announced her successor as Second Story Executive Vice President Jade Leedham who will assume the CEO Role in January 2025

VIENNA, VA, Oct. 23, 2024 – During Second Story's annual Beacon of Hope Breakfast, CEO Judith Dittman announced that she'll be retiring at the end of the year. Second Story, a nonprofit providing safe havens and opportunities for youth and families in need in the Northern Virginia region, was founded more than 52 years ago. Dittman has served the organization for more than 30 of those years. Every program the nonprofit operates, with the exception of its initial program Second Story for Teens in Crisis, started under Dittman's leadership.

"Even though Second Story will always be a part of me, I believe it's time for me to step down," said Dittman. "While I still believe in the mission strongly, I also recognize it's time for someone with fresh ideas, fresh vision, and fresh energy to take the helm. We are fortunate to have someone who fits the bill to a tee in Jade Leedham."

Leedham has been with Second Story for 15 years. She started as a volunteer, then quickly joined the staff as a part-time program coordinator, and later served as Vice President of Development for 10 years. "Last year, we created the Executive Vice President job specifically for Jade so she can seamlessly step into the role of CEO, when I step down at the end of the year," Dittman said. "I've worked side-by-side with her, and it's clear Jade has the vision to lead the organization for the next 30 years and beyond."



Leedham acknowledged Dittman’s contributions. “You have made an enormous impact on this community,” said Leedham. “Your advocacy has created lasting change. Your dedication to our mission has inspired everyone who has had the pleasure of working with you. And your personal touch has made a difference in thousands of lives. Second Story wouldn’t be what it is today without you.”

Leedham also announced the organization’s inaugural “**Judith Dittman Legacy Award**,” given to an individual or group exemplifying a strong commitment to empowering youth and creating change in our community. “Through this award, we hope to continue Judith’s lasting impact, inspire others to follow in her footsteps, and contribute to the mission she has passionately championed for decades,” said Leedham.

Second Story’s Youth Council received the award for their commitment to inspiring change in their community. As Leedham said, “Their peers respect them. County officials learn from them. Our organization is proud of them. And our community is lucky to have them.”

The future CEO also mapped out her vision as head of the nonprofit. “I’m excited to be moving into a future where the young people in our programs play an important role in informing our approach to effectively work with our youth and families,” said Leedham. “It’s their input, their voices, and their lived experiences that will help us continue to meet the changing needs of this community.”

Second Story’s leadership team has dedicated 70 years and counting to the organization and Second Story’s Board of Directors has contributed 137 years of service. Second Story Board of Directors President Kevin Davis honored both leaders. “As a result of Judith’s impact, local youth experiencing homelessness or another crisis have a place to turn and families in need can receive help,” said Davis. “Because of Judith, countless lives and policies have been changed for the better and this community is grateful for her service. Thankfully, Judith with leave Second Story in great hands with Jade Leedham.” Dittman will continue to serve as CEO through the end of 2024.



About Second Story

Second Story is a nonprofit organization based in Northern Virginia. Since 1972, Second Story has been transforming the lives of local children, youth, and their families by providing safe havens and opportunities to grow and thrive at critical turning points. They serve the community through four programs: *Second Story for Teens in Crisis*, *Second Story for Homeless Youth*, *Second Story for Young Mothers*, and *Second Story in the Community*. Second Story also serves as the lead agency for the Bailey's Crossroads area as part of Fairfax County's Opportunity Neighborhoods initiative. **Visit second-story.org** for more information.

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