



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 22, 2023

**CONTACT:**

**Gail Carroll**

VP, Marketing & Communications

[gcarroll@unitedwaycfc.org](mailto:gcarroll@unitedwaycfc.org)

203.526.6776 (cell)

203.339.6321 (office)

**Sarah Lehberger**

Content Marketing Manager

[slehberger@unitedwaycfc.org](mailto:slehberger@unitedwaycfc.org)

(646) 425-7696 (cell)

**UNITED WAY ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BRIDGEPORT PROSPERS**

Katerina Vlahos to Lead Cradle to Career Impact Initiative in Bridgeport

**(Bridgeport, CT, February 22, 2023)** United Way of Coastal Fairfield County and Bridgeport Prospers Cradle to Career are excited to announce that Katerina Vlahos has been named Executive Director of Bridgeport Prospers, a cradle to career collective impact movement.

According to Margo Amgott, United Way’s Interim President and CEO, “Katerina Vlahos was selected for her insight, compassion, and deep experience in addressing the challenges facing the Bridgeport community. Her 15 years of work improving outcomes for area children and families make her ideal for the role.”

Since 2019, Vlahos has served Bridgeport Prospers as the Director of Community Impact. In this position, she expanded the Resilience mental health and wellness initiative statewide to become the Connecticut State Task Force on ACES and Resilience (CSTAR), which she leads. Additionally, she has worked to improve maternal health and health equity by advocating for adding doula care to routine maternal care, as a member of the Doulas4CT coalition. She has directed the United Way’s community engagement initiative (Community Messengers), and currently co-chairs the Child Wellbeing Task Force of the area’s Health Improvement Alliance. In 2020-21, she was chosen as one of ten fellows in the US to develop a community engagement tool for StriveTogether, the national network of collective impact movements of which Bridgeport Prospers is a member.

“I’m excited to see Bridgeport Prospers continue to thrive and grow its systemic efforts to improve outcomes for our children under Katerina’s leadership. Her deep community ties, passion, and commitment to this work will serve her and our community well,” said Pablo Colon, long-time member of the Bridgeport Prospers Core Leadership Team who participated in candidate search and interviews.

Vlahos was named Executive Director after an extensive search that yielded qualified applications from seven states, ranging from Connecticut to Texas and California.

“We interviewed some remarkably talented applicants,” added Margo Amgott. “In the process, we realized that the most talented was already in—and from—our own backyard.”

Ms. Vlahos has deep ties to the community. Having immigrated to Bridgeport at age 11, she experienced first-hand the systemic challenges faced by residents who are marginalized or under-resourced. As a result, she has worked diligently since 2006 to improve outcomes in the community.

Before joining Bridgeport Prospers, Vlahos coordinated the local GEAR UP initiative to increase the numbers of low-income students entering college. She also helped conduct the Mothers’ Stress and Coping Study for Yale New Haven Health. At Caroline House, she designed a multi-sensory, parent-led curriculum to increase English language, STEM learning, and life skills for parents and children.

Part of Ms. Vlahos’ vision for leading Bridgeport Prospers is to engage community deeply in the initiative. “To be successful, we must work in true partnership, grounding our efforts in the expressed needs of residents, youth, and community partners,” said Vlahos. “We must also ensure that the youth and families we serve have a dedicated voice in our decision-making.”

Ms. Vlahos is well known for her collaborative approach to the work. According to Milagrosa Seguinot, long-time United Way Community Messenger and Executive Director of the Community Health Workers Association of Connecticut, “There’s no one better for this position. Katerina’s commitment to community engagement and her deep cultural sensitivity will make her a wonderful leader for Bridgeport Prospers.”

Ms. Vlahos holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Sacred Heart University (the first in her family to graduate college). She is certified by the Trauma Resource Institute as an educator in the Community Resiliency Model. She lives in Stratford with her husband and dog Apollo, and she enjoys travelling, spending time with her two adult children, caring for her elderly parents, and walking on the beautiful local beaches.

Vlahos assumes the role on March 1st. She succeeds Allison Logan who has moved on to advance the Pre-Natal to Three initiatives previously launched by Bridgeport Prospers onto the state and national levels.

###

### **Bridgeport Prospers**

The mission of Bridgeport Prospers is to advance equitable change and promote the well-being of Bridgeport's children, youth, and families through authentic partnerships with civic, community, and organizational leaders. Our vision is that all children and families have an equitable opportunity to thrive, leading to stronger communities. Learn more at <https://unitedwaycfc.org/the-work-of-bridgeport-prospers>

### **United Way of Coastal airfield County**

United Way of Coastal Fairfield County’s mission is: “Together, we empower people to improve their lives.” We do this by working innovatively with partners to tackle the most pressing issues in a community. Our vision is that all children and families will thrive in school and life. UWCFE serves the towns of Bridgeport, Darien, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, New Canaan, Norwalk, Stratford, Trumbull, Weston, Westport, and Wilton. Find out more at <https://unitedwaycfc.org/>