



Kathleen S. Caliento Named Cara Collective President & CEO

New leader brings two decades of work in urban education, poverty, and equity to 30-year-old Chicago organization

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Chicago – Cara Collective’s Board of Directors is honored to announce **Kathleen S. Caliento** will assume [the role of President & CEO](#) for the Chicago-based workforce development enterprise, effective July 6, 2021.

Caliento has spent two decades committed to urban education and student success. In her outgoing role as the Chief Learning and Design Officer at the Academy Group, she has worked to help people rise above the effects of poverty, while demonstrating a professional commitment to access and equity.



Cara Collective’s next President & CEO, Kathleen S. Caliento

Before joining the Academy Group, Caliento held several leadership positions at Spark, including Executive Director of Spark Chicago. Prior to Spark, she was Chief Program Officer for Project Exploration, Director of Program Investments for The Chicago Public Education Fund, and a teacher in New York City Public Schools.

The appointment comes as former President & CEO **Maria Kim** transitioned earlier this month into her new role as President of REDF, a national venture philanthropy based in California, following 15 years of service to the Cara enterprise. Caliento was selected from a national search conducted by Koya Partners. Over the course of four months, Koya vetted dozens of candidates from a multitude of industries and worked in close partnership with Cara Collective’s Board and staff to identify the best candidate.

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“Kathleen’s professional experience, passion, and commitment are in direct alignment with the mission and values of Cara Collective,” said **John Walden, Chair of Cara Collective’s Board of Directors**. “She has worked tirelessly to help people rise above the effects of poverty, while demonstrating a professional commitment to access and equity. We are thrilled to have her at the helm of this new era for the organization.”

A published author, Caliento earned her Master of Arts in Secondary Science and her Doctor of Philosophy in Science Education from Columbia University. She earned her Bachelor of Science from State University of New York at Stony Brook. Caliento serves on the Boards of Adler University, Skender Foundation, 826CHI, and Leadership Greater Chicago LFA Board. Additionally, she attended the Civic Leadership Academy at the University of Chicago and is a Fellow of the 2020 class of Leadership Greater Chicago.

“Cara Collective has such an incredibly rich, deep history in Chicago and beyond. Since my first experience in Motivations, I have been impressed and inspired by its focus on not just helping someone find a job, but helping them find their voice and their purpose,” said Caliento. “I am excited to link arms and work alongside the incredibly committed and gifted staff and community, who are motivated and passionate about this work. I cannot wait to see where we go next as an organization.”

Caliento is joining Cara Collective at an exciting inflection point for the enterprise as they are in the midst of celebrating 30 years as a premiere workforce development provider. Further, they are poised to close the fiscal year exceeding performance and revenue targets, including placing more than 900 jobs for their participants. Additionally, Cara Collective’s three business lines remain healthy. Social enterprises Cleanslate and Cara Connects are hitting all-time highs in invoiced revenue, impact, and geographic reach, and Cara Plus is seeing an influx in registrations for their training Institutes, where employers and organizations from across the country lean on three decades of expertise and insight to help build a more inclusive economy.

About Cara Collective

Cara Collective seeks to fuel a courageous national movement to eradicate relational and financial poverty. Through their four entities – Cara, Cleanslate, Cara Connects, and Cara Plus – they engage job seekers, employers, and other organizations across the country to break the cycle of poverty through the power and purpose of employment. Since 1991, they’ve helped more than 7,300 people get placed into more than 11,500 jobs and get started on their path to real and lasting success. To learn more, please visit www.caracollective.org.

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