CEO of 23 years leaves behind a stable, balanced organization

Find out about our transition plans
See our progress over two decades
Meet our board and leadership team

INSIDE
Interview with Kris Engelstad McGarry
TRANSITION TO A NEW PRESIDENT/CEO

“...transition committee are dedicated to overseeing a thorough search to find a visionary CEO who is the right fit to lead CVIC into the future...”

– Darla Adams
CVIC Board Member

1 BUILDING A STRONG TEAM & ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE
Kristi has helped to create an environment where staff is encouraged to stretch beyond their perceived boundaries, becoming leaders in the field and taking part in national initiatives and cutting-edge programs. The culture at CVIC is one that not only prizes innovation but also focuses on the strength of our clients and the joy of helping them break free of violence and heal from trauma.

2 ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY
Kristi has devoted much of her career toward building community partnerships that provide a system’s response to violence, rather than looking at each situation individually. The Coordinated Community Response (CCR) Project began in 1998 to enhance victim safety and offender accountability through the use of data compiled from tracking cases through the system, identifying gaps in our response, developing new policies and protocols, and engaging in cross-agency collaboration among the criminal justice system, healthcare, victim advocacy, offender treatment and other partners to work through issues and improve our response. CCR partners have since initiated the Lethality Assessment Project, in which hundreds of law enforcement officers and advocates were trained to assess the risk of lethality at the scene of 911 calls and to ensure a timely link to safety services. Partners have also initiated the Sexual Assault Response Team, providing a coordinated, trauma-focused response to victims of sexual assault. The largest community collaboration, begun in 2011, was the CVIC-led Safer Tomorrows Project, one of eight initiatives chosen for federal funding and involving key partnerships with Grand Forks City, Grand Forks Public Schools, and Lutheran Social Services, as well as 40 other organizations. The project, which implemented strategies to end children’s exposure to violence, ended in 2016. CVIC has since taken the project to a new level as the Safer Tomorrows Road Map, a research-based plan focused on safety, evidence-based therapy, and prevention education in every school in the county toward virtually ending violence in two generations.

3 EXPANDING PROGRAMS TO REACH BEYOND THE CRISIS
Kristi believed in listening to our clients and keeping them at the center of our decisions as we grew our programming. Over 23 years, many services were added and some expanded. We now offer therapy, legal representation, criminal justice advocacy, shelter, transitional housing, career counseling, child visitations/exchanges, children’s services, and an offender program to prevent violence at home. As mentioned above, we also spearhead innovative collaborative projects that improve clients’ lives.
WHAT INSPIRES YOU TO INVEST SO SIGNIFICANTLY IN CVIC?

We really like the idea of partnerships. We don’t look at Band-aiding situations. It’s a little like dating—we had our first date (by funding the new shelter), and things went really well, and we realized we wanted to keep seeing you. It was very similar to that, and we trusted you and liked what you did with the first gift.

WHAT SERVICES ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT IN REGARD TO THE IMPACT CVIC IS MAKING ON THE COMMUNITY?

I always equate everything back to two things—mental health and the family unit, whatever that family unit looks like.... It’s really the encouragement for your clients to participate in their family and in their community. I am guessing that their circumstances usually make them more isolated, and the more isolated you are the fewer people are going to know you. I think that’s something you are doing really well—incorporating them back into life. They may be hopeless, ashamed or afraid, but they’re getting the chance to know themselves well enough to say, this isn’t right. I’m not going to do to this anymore or have my kids live this way. I’m really respectful of the strength it takes to walk away when you don’t have any resources.

HOW DO YOU FEEL CVIC IS UNIQUE? DO YOU FEEL CONFIDENT IN OUR ABILITY TO MOVE FORWARD WITH STRENGTH?

I think our confidence is measured directly in the dollar amount we give. As we gain confidence and are ready to invest with you—and it’s really an investment in human hope—if our confidence isn’t that, or if you’re unproven in your area, then our dollar amount equals our confidence, and it will be less.

You have continuity and stability and, especially given the clients you serve, it’s important to demonstrate that. That’s pretty unique as far organizations go.... One person doesn’t make a change in the entire organization. You’re set up to succeed—we feel confident in that.

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Edie Dahlen

• Edie is CVIC’s current Director of Community Investment. She will serve as the interim president/CEO until a new CEO is hired.
• Edie has 26 years of experience in the field of domestic and sexual violence, development and organizational finances and management.
• She has presented nationally on the Safer Tomorrows Road Map, our innovative community-wide plan to virtually end local violence in two generations, and on our fundraising plan along with others on our team.
• She has guided CVIC’s development plan over two decades, growing revenues 1,000 percent.
• She oversees 1,500 donors and 50 grants, including federal, state and local government and private foundation and corporate grants.
• She coordinated our recent capital campaign to build our shelter, raising $3.1 million.
• She has served on a statewide committee to end child abuse and neglect and other efforts.

Laura Nash Frisch

• Laura is CVIC’s Director of Advocacy and Empowerment. She is a master’s level Licensed Certified Social Worker.
• Laura has 21 years of experience in the field of domestic and sexual violence.
• She is a member of a national cohort developing best practice tools for child visitation services.
• She oversees CVIC’s legal services, safe child visitations and exchanges, and criminal justice advocacy services reaching 1,600 people.

Therese Hugg

• Therese is our Director of Victim Services. She is a master’s level Licensed Professional Counselor.
• Therese has 12 years of experience in the field of domestic and sexual violence.
• She is trained in evidence-based therapies for adults and children.

Kari Kerr

• She oversees CVIC’s crisis, shelter, stability, and therapeutic services reaching 2,000 people.
• Kari has 26 years of experience in the field of domestic and sexual violence, education and professional training.
• She oversees CVIC’s prevention education reaching 11,000 people.
• She helped to develop the state’s first Domestic Violence Court in Grand Forks.
• She has trained in 25 states for three national organizations on violence and trauma.
• She supervises staff helping to implement the national Athletes as Leaders pilot project in local high schools.
• She supervises staff serving on a national advisory council that trains law enforcement on lethality assessment best practices.

“As the interim president/CEO, I have the utmost confidence in our leadership team, board of directors and transition committee to provide stability and direction as we identify the ideal candidate for CEO and carry on our vision to end local violence.”

– Edie Dahlen

85 combined years of experience
Work on the state and national levels

CVIC Leadership Team
An interview with Kris Engelstad McGarry
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HOW DOES YOUR
GENEROSITY TO
OTHERS IMPACT
YOUR OWN LIFE?

I think the biggest gift my dad could have left me was to make a very fulfilled, rounded life.... I grew up with a lot of people who had means, and I’ve watched their lives. I don’t know how fulfilling it is once your needs are met to buy a house and a bigger house and a better car. At some point those purchases feel like excess to me. I don’t see where the fulfillment comes from.

We hear stories on a regular basis about people whose lives have taken a different turn. It’s often happenstance, the things that happen to them. I think about that often, and I don’t know that if it was my circumstance that I would exhibit the grace that some of these people do. I’m continually awed at how someone perseveres, and even more importantly, for the sake of their children, finds a way to change something that’s generational. That takes a lot of strength.

Thank you, Kris, for taking the time to share your thoughts with us!