

For Immediate Release
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Public Narrative says good-bye to Susy Schultz

CHICAGO (July 26, 2019) – Public Narrative’s Board of Directors announced today it has accepted the resignation of Susy Schultz, who will leave her position as president effective Aug. 16 to head the Museum of Broadcast Communication.

“We are very grateful to Susy for her six years of heading Public Narrative. It has been renamed, refocused and reshaped into an organization with a strong future,” said Carol Summerfield, chairman of the board. “We are sorry to see Susy leave but we are also very happy and confident that we are in good hands with Jhmira’s leadership. She will do a wonderful job in taking Public Narrative into the future.”

Public Narrative, which will be celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, is a nonprofit dedicated to enhancing democracy by teaching storytelling. Training neighborhood nonprofits and journalists, the staff teaches news literacy, engagement and communications to adults, high school and junior high students.

“Without question, Susy leading the Museum of Broadcast Communications is a big deal,” said Alexander, who has been co-president with Schultz for the last eight months. “I have enjoyed my partnership with Susy. So, I know we will find ways to collaborate with the museum. I can see tremendous educational opportunities for young media producers and users at the museum that will have great impact.”

In the short time Alexander has been with Public Narrative, she has grown the mission by adding her program Hashtags & Handles, which focuses on training youth to safely use social media and understand news literacy. She has set up programs with Chicago Public Schools’ After School Matters as well as the youth leadership program of the Chicago Police Department. And she is utilizing journalists — our Studs Terkel winners — in a series of talk backs to help public high school students better understand how journalism works.

“I am so lucky to have worked at Public Narrative and with Jhmira,” said Schultz. “I see what I will be doing at the museum as an extension of what Public Narrative does so wonderfully— asserting the vital role of journalism and community storytelling in shaping the future of our society.”

“I thank our board of directors, our chair Carol Summerfield, our leadership council, our founders Thom Clark and Hank DeZutter and the tens of thousands of journalists and community members who have come to us in the past six year looking to tell better stories — whether it’s their own or their organizations. But I am especially grateful to my friend and co-president Jhmira. She is a phenomenal woman.”

Past five years

In the last five years, Public Narrative has been intentional in growing its trainings of those working in neighborhood nonprofits. The organization has trained greater number of people of color and women as per its mission. It has also been told by an average of 94 percent of its clients in the past five years that they would highly recommend Public Narrative — a percentage that continues to trend upwards. The nonprofits we’ve worked with include Teamwork Englewood, Sweet Beginnings, Strengthening Chicago’s Youth, Options for Youth, StoryCatchers Theatre, College Possible and the A. Phillip Randolph Pullman Porter Museum.

We have held workshops for grantees of the McCormick Foundation, the Chicago Foundation for Women, Advocate Bethany Community Health Fund as well as developed messaging for the Metropolitan Planning Council’s Cost of Segregation Report.

In those same years, Public Narrative also expanded its journalism training reaching thousands of journalists across the country in online classes, newsrooms and one-on-one settings. It’s worked with the Washington Post, Univision, the Poynter Institute, members of the Institute for Nonprofit News (INN), Local Independent Online News publishers (LION) and the Center for Cooperative Media teaching social media strategy, engagement, beat reporting and storytelling.

Currently, the organization is working with the city’s community and ethnic media for the 2020 Census. It serves on the Illinois Count Me in 2020 council.

Public Narrative also honors journalists with its Studs Terkel Award. This year, it is looking forward to 25 years of celebrating storytellers who get it right on Oct. 17. Join us and nominate a journalist who knows that the stories of Chicago lie in its people, not just the voices of power.

Public Narrative funders include the McCormick Foundation, Polk Bros. Foundation, Driehaus Foundation, Forefront and the Chicago Foundation for Women