



NEWS RELEASE

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The Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation

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The Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation Announces Executive Director Transition

Founder and Executive Director Katie I. Ginsberg will retire after 20 years leading the organization, with new Executive Director Tara Stafford Ocansey joining from Columbia University

Valhalla NY, February 16, 2022. The Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELF) announced today that founder Katie Isaak Ginsberg, who has grown and led the organization tirelessly for the past 20 years, will at the end of the month retire her executive role to remain in an advisory capacity.

During Ms. Ginsberg's tenure, CELF grew from an organization primarily serving schools in the Lower Hudson Valley to one partnering with three of the country's largest public school districts and working with teachers around the globe through three core programs:

- The CELF Summer Institute in Education for Sustainability for K-12 teachers, administrators and non-formal educators held in NY, MA, CA and TX, and also virtually through a blended synchronous and asynchronous program
- CELF Civic Science: Inquiry to Action - developed in partnership with Mount Sinai Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit and CUNY School of Law Center for Urban Environmental Reform to increase students' civic engagement and data collection/analysis capacity, with improved access for underserved school communities



- Professional Learning and Whole Systems Change - place-based learning opportunities designed for schools in all communities to explore environmental and social challenges, develop learning partnerships with local groups or organizations, and pursue systemic change adopting the principles and practices of education for sustainability across the campus, curriculum and school culture

Ms. Ginsberg has been instrumental in developing programs that fill a critical need in K-12 education. Under her leadership, CELF has impacted over 15,000 teachers and administrators and nearly 2 million students, while helping to achieve significant milestones for CELF, including:

- Awarded the EPA's Region 2 Environmental Champion Award;
- Supported two districts in achieving the National Green Ribbon Award;
- Awarded Membership to the Clinton Global Initiative, during which time CELF completed its CGI Commitment to Action: a 3-year professional learning project with 30 NYC Department of Education schools to become models of Sustainable Schools;
- Established multi-year partnerships with National Geographic Society, Mount Sinai Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit, and Linde PLC
- Scaled CELF's operations from NY to CA and TX, where CELF is an official vendor of three of the nation's largest public school districts: NYC Dept of Education; Los Angeles Unified School District; and Houston ISD.

"I feel a deep sense of gratitude to have been part of this collective effort to help one another understand, navigate, and overcome the challenges we face," said Ginsberg. "I am in awe of the educators with whom I've had the privilege of working over the years, whose creativity and commitment to their students is testimony to the purpose of education. It has been an honor to lead an exceptionally talented and tenacious team. Our achievements are the result of support from CELF's experienced Board, program partners, generous funders and countless others who have shared this journey with me. I have the deepest appreciation for this experience and look forward to continuing to help CELF advance its mission in an advisory role." - Katie Isaak Ginsberg

CELFF is also excited to announce that effective January 18, Tara Stafford Ocansey has assumed the role of Executive Director.



Ms. Stafford Ocansey has an impressive background of promoting sustainability education, having spent over a decade with the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University's Earth Institute. During her tenure there, Tara led global education programs across the lifelong learning spectrum, collaborating with diverse stakeholders from government, non-profit, corporate, academic, and grassroots sectors. Her extensive experience securing and managing grants from government, corporate, foundation, and major gifts from individual donors was instrumental to the success of international and local initiatives that promoted education for sustainable development, global citizenship, and gender equality.

"In this pivotal moment in history, as our communities grapple with the intersecting challenges of a global pandemic, the climate crisis, and systemic inequalities, I am honored to be joining the incredible CELF team to carry forward the critically important work of supporting our educators and education systems to embed education for sustainability across K-12 curriculum for all students," said Stafford Ocansey.

"There is no level of thanks great enough for the energy, dedication, and impact which Katie has driven as the founder and leader of our organization over the past two decades," said Board Chair Maureen Brady-Atinsky. *"We are grateful to Katie for her vision and inspiration, and look forward to working with Tara on the next exciting phase for our vital mission."*

About the Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation

The Children's Environmental Literacy Foundation was founded in 2003 with the mission to make sustainability education an integral part of every child's K-12 learning experience. Through immersive and innovative professional learning programs for educators, CELF has reached nearly 2 million students, 15,000 educators, and over 5,000 schools across the country.

Media Contact:

Laura Steinberger

Director of Operations

laura.steinberger@celfeducation.org

www.celfeducation.org