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Norwalk ACTS Appoints AnaVivian Escalante, LMSW, JD, as Chief Executive Officer

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Norwalk, CT - After an extensive executive search in partnership with The Strategy Group, LLC., Norwalk ACTS's Board of Directors enthusiastically announces the appointment of AnaVivian Escalante as its new Chief Executive Officer. A seasoned human services and legal professional, Escalante brings over two decades of experience in systems change, nonprofit leadership, and equity-driven community development.

AnaVivian Escalante is a well-known, trusted leader in the Norwalk community, having worked alongside Norwalk ACTS for several years to strengthen collaboration between nonprofits and municipal projects. Her leadership has been instrumental in advancing collective impact initiatives, including serving on the Norwalk ACTS Implementation Team and the Steering Committee for the Social Emotional Health Initiative, while supervising and collaborating with staff engaged in the Early Childhood Development and College & Workforce Development sectors.

In recognition of her deep commitment to community transformation and equity, Norwalk ACTS awarded Escalante the Ubuntu Award in June 2024 for her leadership and collaboration to enhance the lives of Norwalk families and children.

"AnaVivian brings an outstanding record of successful collective impact and systems change work in both nonprofit and municipal leadership roles. She also brings a unique blend of personal warmth, authenticity and lived experience as a member of the Norwalk community. Her professional skills and personal qualities will enable her to work effectively with our partners to improve the lives and futures of Norwalk's children and youth," said Charlie Allred, Norwalk ACTS Board Chair.

Currently serving as Director of Human Services for the City of Norwalk, Escalante has implemented innovative procedures and rebranded resident-facing programs, such as the Community Resource Hub, resulting in a 903% increase in program reach and securing additional funding. The Community Resource Hub received the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities Municipal Excellence Award 2024 for its success in connecting residents with essential services.

"I am truly honored and grateful for the trust placed in me by the Board of Directors and the Nominating Committee. Norwalk ACTS is an exceptional organization, known for its commitment to transforming systems, data driven solutions, and remarkable team. I'm excited to bring my experience to the table and contribute to the organization's ongoing success and impact. I've long admired Norwalk ACTS for its unwavering dedication to the wellbeing of every Norwalk child and young person," said Escalante.

In addition to her practical leadership experience, Escalante brings a strong academic background with a Master of Science in Social Work from Columbia University and a Juris Doctorate from Pace Law School. She is a licensed attorney in the State of Connecticut and has offered pro bono services in partnership with Connecticut Legal Services and McCarter & English through a Pardons Clinic.

“Her combined legal and social work background equips her well to navigate complex systems and advocate for policies that promote social equity. AnaVivian’s commitment to public service and her strategic approach to program execution have made her a pivotal figure in Norwalk’s efforts to provide accessible and effective human services to its residents, and will no doubt serve her well as she transitions into leading Norwalk ACTS,” Kate Repen, Chair of Search Committee, Ex-Officio Board Member, Outgoing Board Secretary.

Escalante’s tenure as CEO will officially begin on July 28, 2025. The Board extends its sincere gratitude to Jesse Buccolo for his steady leadership as Interim CEO during this pivotal transition, ensuring continuity and forward momentum in Norwalk ACTS’ mission. He will resume his role as Deputy Director upon the new CEO’s arrival.

For more information about Norwalk ACTS and its work to drive collective impact, visit www.norwalkacts.org.

Norwalk ACTS is a non-profit, cross-sector, cradle to career partnership of over 200 civic leaders, educators, organizations, and individuals who want Norwalk to be a connected and equitable community where every child and young person thrives academically, physically, and socially-emotionally from cradle to career.

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