



Katie Vela, Executive Director, of SARAH posing with her "House Hands" to launch the #WESAY Movement to House All Youth and Young Adults.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SARAH Names Katie Vela as Executive Director and Announces Launch of New Brand

October 26, 2020 (SAN ANTONIO, TX) – South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless (SARAH), the lead Continuum of Care (CoC) agency for San Antonio and Bexar County, announced today that its Board of Directors has appointed Katie Vela as Executive Director. Along with this appointment comes the launch of a new logo and tagline that aims to more strongly highlight the organization's mission and vision.

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"As we all try to adapt to unprecedented circumstances, homelessness has emerged even more clearly as one of the most important systemic issues we must address as a community. The Board is confident that Katie has the experience, knowledge, and skills to elevate SARAH's impact on homelessness. Katie will generate results by leading with an emphasis on collaboration, equity and data-driven decision making." – Leilah Powell, Board President, SARAH.

Katie Vela, San Antonio native and dedicated nonprofit leader, has served as a director at SARAH since its inception as a standalone agency in 2015. Vela has vast knowledge and experience working across complex systems with diverse stakeholders to enact systems change. Serving as the Director of Operations has prepared Vela to transition into this role, as SARAH continues to grow and expand its impact on our community.

Vela's hiring comes as the nonprofit implements a new brand and tagline, SARAH – Alliance to House Everyone, emphasizing their commitment to guide communitywide planning efforts that strategically allocate resources and drive change to ensure everyone in San Antonio has a place to call home. SARAH is dedicated to finding sustainable solutions, recognizing that strong collaboration and cross-system coordination is necessary to help individuals and families facing housing insecurity and homelessness.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to lead SARAH, an organization that I have had the privilege of serving for over five years. As an organization, we are poised to further develop our vision and build on the tremendous momentum we have experienced as we continue to grow and evolve. I look forward to the future of SARAH and the positive impact we can have on our families, friends and neighbors who are without stable housing.” – Katie Vela, Executive Director, SARAH.

As the Alliance to House Everyone, SARAH coordinates with stakeholders invested in preventing and ending homelessness by addressing the many causes and challenges that contribute to homelessness – housing, mobility, mental health, etc. SARAH’s key responsibilities include allocating \$13M annually to service providers, managing our community’s coordinated access program Homelink, and completing reports and conducting research for the community and HUD on the state of homelessness. SARAH is committed to building a homeless response system that is focused on equity and ensuring those with lived experience are involved in decision making.

“Katie began her career serving the community here at Haven for Hope where she accumulated an abundant knowledge of the very complicated business of homelessness and developed a skill for convening partners and promoting teamwork. Her new role as Executive Director of SARAH marks the critical continued collaboration between SARAH, Haven for Hope, and the other important service providers. These partnerships will continue to promote San Antonio’s position as a local, statewide and national leader in providing innovative, collaborative and comprehensive homeless intervention services.”
– Kenny Wilson, President and CEO, Haven for Hope.

One of Vela’s first priorities will be to launch the #WESAY Movement to House All Youth and Young Adults. Community members are encouraged to join the Movement and show their commitment to housing all youth and young adults in San Antonio and Bexar County by signing their name at sarahomeless.org/movement-to-house-all-youth/. Share the Movement by posting “House Hand” photos on social media, tagging SARAH and using the hashtags #WESAY, #HouseAllYouth and #YABSA. Visit SARAH at sarahomeless.org and please join the Movement!

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About SARAH

SARAH is the lead Continuum of Care (CoC) agency for San Antonio and Bexar County. As the CoC, SARAH secures and distributes funding for direct service providers in the housing and homeless community and provides guidance to strengthen policies and programs. SARAH is responsible for collaborating with, listening to, and collecting data from the housing and homeless community to ensure everyone has a place to call home.

