

## PRESS RELEASE

### GRACE ACADEMY NAMES PRINCESS HYATT AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF SCHOOL

Matt Fitzsimons, currently Head of School, to leave at the end of the 2021-2022 academic year

HARTFORD, Conn., June 1, 2022 - Grace Academy, an independent, tuition-free middle school for girls from underserved families in the city of Hartford, announced today that the Board of Directors has named Princess Hyatt as its next executive director and head of school, effective August 18. Hyatt succeeds Matt Fitzsimons who is leaving Grace Academy to establish a tuition-free middle school for underserved students in Bridgeport.



“Princess’s experience and track record of achievement working with underserved students positions her well to lead Grace Academy,” said Michael Bergin, chair of the Grace Academy Board of Directors. “When we embarked on this search, we described our ideal candidate as someone passionate about Grace’s mission, a relationship builder with a proven track-record of successful fund development, experience working with young people from underserved communities and in an academic or nonprofit setting; we found all of these things and more in Princess.”

Hyatt currently serves as the Executive Director of Horizons at The Ethel Walker School, where she is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Horizons’ Pre-K through Eighth Grade program -- an award-winning academic and enrichment program dedicated to reducing the learning gap often experienced by students in vulnerable communities.

Princess is a Hartford native. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Pine Manor College, a Master of Science degree in nonprofit management and philanthropy from Bay Path University, as well as a Professional Fundraising Certificate from Boston University. She has been a classroom mentor at Jumoke Academy through the Starbase CT program, is a current and active member of the Urban League of Greater Hartford and The African American Development Officers (AADO) Network, and a 2020 Quest Alum of Leadership Greater Hartford.

“I am honored and humbled to be selected as Grace Academy’s next executive director and head of school, a role that aligns with my passion for and experience helping young girls from underserved communities get the support they need to achieve their full potential and purpose,” said Hyatt. “I am eager to begin the transition process and look forward to engaging with the Grace community over the months ahead as we work together to break the cycle of poverty through education.”

Fitzsimons, who has served as Grace Academy’s head of school since its founding 13 years ago, leaves a legacy of accomplishments, which include a curriculum that has enabled graduates to attend an impressive roster of college preparatory schools, a graduate support program that monitors and supports graduates through high school and college, and the recent relocation of the school to its new location at 457 Main Street in Hartford.

“Matt leaves Grace Academy with a strong financial position, exceptional faculty and staff, engaged parents, a committed Board of Directors and loyal donors,” said Bergin. “We are forever grateful for Matt’s leadership and indelible impact on our school and community.”

**ABOUT GRACE ACADEMY**

Grace Academy is a Hartford-based tuition-free middle school for girls in grades 5-8. The school was founded in 2010 to provide girls from underserved neighborhoods with a high-quality education. Modeled after the NativityMiguel Network of Schools, Grace Academy offers small class sizes, an extended school day, significant parental involvement, and a highly personal approach to education which encourages independent thinking and responsible decision making. For more information about Grace Academy, visit <https://www.graceacademyhartford.org>