

WATERFIRE PROVIDENCE

– CREATIVELY TRANSFORMING OUR CITY



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 5, 2023

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WaterFire Providence Announces Changes to Senior Leadership Team

Kris McKenzie Announced as the Interim Director of Events and Operations, Paul “PK” Kochanek to Depart after 23 Years

Providence, RI WaterFire Providence announces the appointment of Kris McKenzie as the Interim Director of Event and Operations in light of the departure of WaterFire’s Director of Event and Operations for 23 years; Paul “PK” Kochanek. In this capacity, Kris will oversee and lead the events and operations team and all logistics for the planning of each WaterFire lighting. Kris has been an integral part of the events and operations team since 2018, demonstrating exceptional leadership and dedication.

“As one of WaterFire’s longest employees, PK is the mastermind behind all logistics that make WaterFire happen. PK’s impact on the organization will leave a lasting legacy on how future generations of WaterFire staffers will plan and execute WaterFire lightings.” says Barnaby Evans, Creator, Executive Artistic Director + coCEO of WaterFire Providence. Peter Mello, Managing Director + coCEO adds, “We are grateful for Kris’s leadership during this transition and have tremendous faith in her experience as we gear up to plan the 2024 season.”

Mission-minded and driven, Kris McKenzie brings over 20 years of management experience in the nonprofit sector and joined the WaterFire Events and Operations team in 2018. Her diverse work experiences range from events and marketing to hospitality and community outreach programming, with most recently serving as the Director of

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Communications and Marketing at the Rhode Island SPCA. Her core passion, expertise, and commitment to nonprofit work are grounded in a deep belief in community, connection and collaboration. As a graphic designer, Kristina volunteers and offers pro bono work to local and national nonprofit organizations that are close to her heart. When not living happily in Barrington with her partner, daughter, dog and free-roaming rabbit, President bun bun, you will find her camping in the white mountains looking at the stars.

As Interim Director of Event and Operations, Kris will play a pivotal role in the planning for WaterFire's 2024 Season. Kris's leadership will ensure seamless operations and the continued pursuit of WaterFire's mission to create world-class art installations and continue to revitalize the urban experience in Providence.

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About WaterFire Providence

WaterFire Providence® is an independent, 501(c)3 non-profit arts organization whose mission is to inspire Providence and its visitors by revitalizing the urban experience, fostering community engagement, and creatively transforming the city by presenting WaterFire for all to enjoy. Each year nearly 1 million people come to downtown Providence to experience WaterFire contributing over \$149,000,000 to the local economy, generating over \$9,000,000 of direct tax revenue for the State of Rhode Island and supporting 1,294 jobs for community residents and strengthening Providence's Creative Capital and Rhode Island's State for the Arts brands. For information about WaterFire Providence and the WaterFire Arts Center visit <https://waterfire.org/>.

About the WaterFire Arts Center

WaterFire Providence purchased the Art Center in 2012 and began rehabilitation for the vacant, historic, industrial building in the underserved Olneyville/Valley neighborhood of Providence. The 37,000 sq. ft. multi-use arts center has become WaterFire's first permanent home in the community and serves as its headquarters, production complex, and a multi-purpose arts venue as well as a social enterprise platform strengthening the organization's long-term financial sustainability. Exhibitions presented at WaterFire Arts Center will further the organization's agenda of providing arts and culture opportunities and experiences for all, regardless of social, cultural, or economic background. For more

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information about the WaterFire Arts Center including rental inquiries, please visit:

<https://waterfire.org/wfac>