

Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc., Board of Directors President Leonard Wellman announces the retirement of Executive Director Kathleen Hemmens, MSW, and the appointment of Eric Grims as Interim Executive Director.

Hemmens, who is retiring at the end of June, joined NKHS in December of 1999 as the Executive Director. Under her direction, NKHS expanded its programs and services in the Northeast Kingdom while improving its culture and financial underpinnings. While continuing her residence in Hardwick, Hemmens will act in an adjunct capacity to NKHS and looks forward to consulting to other programs and agencies.

Hemmens earned her MSW from State University of New York at Albany, School of Social Welfare, and her Bachelor's degree from Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York. Her experience spans more than forty years and includes research and directorships at Taylor Institute in Chicago, family counseling and treatment foster care programs in New York state, consultancy in social welfare in Illinois and New York, and various responsible positions in state and national government offices for social welfare program and policy development. Hemmens authored a number of articles dealing with job training, welfare to work transition and evaluation of social programs.

Grims is working with Hemmens to assume the Interim directorship until the Board of Directors names a new Executive Director. Most recently the Director of Developmental Services Division of NKHS, Grims witnessed a broad spectrum of change in the field and growth of the agency since becoming a staff member in the fall of 1975.

West Chester State University in Pennsylvania awarded Grims his Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences. His work with developmentally disabled began in 1973 where he started to improve the living of individuals and families through instruction in daily life activities and case management. During Grims' tenure as Division Director he has overseen a \$10 million budget of consumer and family-oriented services for over 350 children and adults with developmental disabilities and autism spectrum disorders. He and his staff developed services with a Standing Committee of community, consumer membership to ensure that services meet individual and community needs. Grims' responsibilities included overall management of budget and revenues, new program development, quality assurance, licensure and facilities oversight, and liaison with all state agencies and payers.

Northeast Kingdom Human Services, Inc., a not-for-profit agency with approximately 450 staff, provides services for residents of Caledonia, Essex and Orleans counties in the areas of mental health, substance abuse prevention and recovery, and daily living for developmentally disabled and those with severe and persistent mental illness. Since 1960 the Board of Directors, which includes a majority of consumers and consumer advocates,

has overseen the development of around the clock services for mental illness crisis intervention, of outreach programs for children and families, and of support services in daily living in small group homes, work settings and nursing homes. Tri-County Substance Abuse Services and Children's Mental Health Programs cooperatively work within the schools as well to provide services convenient to the consumers and their families. Primary offices are located on Duchess Avenue and Seymour Lane in Newport, and on Railroad and Summer Streets in St. Johnsbury. Services are offered through a satellite office in Hardwick and smaller office sites in Newport and St. Johnsbury, school placements throughout the Northeast Kingdom and various small residences in Orleans and Caledonia counties.

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