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Sarah Callender hired as new Main Street executive director

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – Sarah Callender has been hired by the Main Street Board of Directors as the organization’s new executive director, replacing Kathleen Herzog, who is retiring.

“I am thrilled to continue the legacy of Main Street Murfreesboro by serving as the upcoming executive director,” Callender said. “I wholeheartedly agree with the vision of the Main Street national program, ‘that a community is only as strong as its core.’ Our downtown is the heart of our community.”

Since 2013, Callender has been the lead community relations specialist for Special Kids Therapy and Nursing Center in Murfreesboro. In this role, she successfully secured income from public and private grant foundations, naming opportunities, individual donors and sponsors. She also helped coordinate special events and communication and marketing strategies.

Before Special Kids, Callender was a lead preschool teacher at Belle Aire Baptist Church for seven years. Prior to that, she was a development writing adjunct instructor at Dyersburg State Community College and district executive director for Rutherford and Cannon counties for the Middle Tennessee Council, Boy Scouts of America. Callender has a Bachelor of Arts in Communication from Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia. She also holds certificates from the Center for Nonprofit Management in grant writing, leadership and fundraising.

“I see my role as executive director as one of collaborating with many partners, including the business owners, residents, MTSU, the arts district, and city and county government to make our community's core as strong as it can be,” Callender said. “Everyone deserves access to a vibrant neighborhood, and the Main Street program's goal is to support and encourage a downtown that has a thriving local economy, is rich in character, and features inviting public spaces that make residents and visitors feel that they belong. Main Street's purpose is to make sure everyone in Murfreesboro feels they are invited downtown.”

Main Street created a search committee to hire the new executive director. Every resume received was reviewed by at least eight board members. Bill Jakes, local real estate agent and this year’s chairman of Main Street, said, “After interviewing nearly half the applicants, we felt that Sarah Callender possessed the unique skill set needed to be the next Main Street executive director. No one will ever replace Kathleen Herzog, but we feel Sarah has the vision to move our organization forward with a renewed vision for downtown.”

Herzog began her Main Street career first as a volunteer and then as a part-time employee. She was hired as full-time executive director in February 2010. Callender joins Main Street on June 26.

The nonprofit Main Street Program is affiliated with the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s National Main Street Center and follows the tenets of that program. Main Street capitalizes on the unique character of the courthouse square and the surrounding business district with the goal of transforming it into the cultural, social, professional and retail center of Rutherford County ... in essence, the hub of community life.

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