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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MentorStark Announces Retirement of Founder, Appointment of New Executive Director**

**Canton, Ohio** - The MentorStark Board of Directors announces a leadership transition, including the planned retirement of founder and executive director, Laurie Moline, and the appointment of Cassie Ausperk as the new executive director, effective May 25, 2026.

“MentorStark was born from Laurie’s ability to see a gap in our community and her determination to address it. She began by showing up each day and doing the work, and from that commitment, an organization took shape that will continue to carry her vision forward as leadership evolves and the needs of young people grow and change. Her impact has touched countless lives. On behalf of myself and the MentorStark Board and team, we thank Laurie for years of dedication and service,” said Justin Lepley, chairman of the MentorStark Board of Directors.

Since engaging as a mentor with high school students from Canton City Schools in 2011, Moline has been a driving force in the community, amplifying the importance of mentoring and the development of “webs of support” in the lives of young people. She founded MentorStark in 2020 as a website that highlighted local mentoring and youth programs and led bi-monthly meetings to support mentoring leaders navigating the challenges of the Covid pandemic. In 2021, she launched the MentorStark Opportunity Club to serve 15-27 year olds with career exploration and social capital skill-building. Joined by former mentee Isaiah Smith, MentorStark has built strong partnerships with schools and community organizations, and opened pathways to career exploration and postsecondary success for hundreds of youth.

“Founding and growing MentorStark with Isaiah has been one of the greatest privileges of my life,” said Moline. “I am proud of what our staff, Board, community and school district partners have built together, and I am excited for the vision Cassie will bring to take the organization to the next level.”

Ausperk, currently serving as MentorStark’s organizational advancement coordinator, brings strong experience in non-profit operations, sales, marketing, and event management. In her current role, a position funded by a grant from the William and Minette Goldsmith Foundation, a supporting foundation of Stark Community Foundation. Ausperk has played a key role in strengthening operations, expanding community engagement, and advancing MentorStark’s mission.

MentorStark  
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She takes the reins at an opportune time for MentorStark, following the successful completion of a comprehensive strategic planning process, funded by a grant from Sisters of Charity Foundation, that has positioned the organization for continued growth and long-term impact.

“Cassie brings the exact combination of skill, heart, vision and connection that MentorStark needs in leadership at this moment,” said Lepley. “Cassie’s commitment to young people, her collaborative mindset, and her understanding of our community, alongside Isaiah’s mentoring and career championing skills, makes them the ideal team to propel the organization forward.”

“I am honored to step into this role and continue to build upon the important work MentorStark is doing in the Stark County community,” said Ausperk. “With a clear plan of action from our strategic planning and an incredible network of supporters, I’m excited to work alongside our Board and team to fulfill the organization’s mission.”

Moline will work with the Board and team to ensure a seamless transition and continue to stay affiliated with MentorStark as an independent contractor supporting strategic initiatives and special projects.

### **About MentorStark**

MentorStark’s mission is to drive the mentoring and youth movement in Stark County and deliver innovative gap-filling programming that helps young people build the skills, confidence, character and connections that lead to opportunity. The organization’s initiatives include [MentorStark.org](http://MentorStark.org), a website that serves as a community hub to find local mentoring and youth programs and activities. MentorStark also serves local school districts, organizations and young people ages 15-27 by providing career exploration and social capital-building activities through the MentorStark Opportunity Club.