



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Shenandoah LGBTQ Center Welcomes New Executive Director

AnhThu Nguyen has been selected as the new Executive Director of the Shenandoah LGBTQ Center by the Board of Directors, a Staunton-based non-profit with a mission to strengthen the Shenandoah Valley LGBTQIA+ community through advocacy, education, programs and development of safe spaces. Nguyen will assume her new role beginning November 8, 2021 and follows the Center's founding Executive Director, Emily Sproul, who has held the position since 2018.

Nguyen joins the Shenandoah LGBTQ Center from a ten-year tenure leading the Genomics Core Facility in the Department of Biology, at the University of Virginia. She has nearly 20 years of experience in LGBTQIA+ advocacy work, spanning non-profit, community and activist organizations. She has been involved with the Shenandoah LGBTQ Center since its inception, serving as a founding Board Member from 2018-2020, and more recently as part of the Staunton Pride leadership starting in 2020. She is a passionate advocate for community and coalition building, and brings an intersectional social justice lens to her advocacy work.

The announcement comes as the Center has been experiencing unprecedented growth in the last year, with increasing requests for services, new community partnerships addressing direct needs of the LGBTQ community, and establishment of programs including a grant-funded program addressing youth homelessness in partnership with the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Valley Community Services Board. Additionally, the Center has expanded to include an outreach location in Harrisonburg, VA. The Friendly City Safe Space will open November 6th and is located on the second floor of the Ice House on South Liberty Street.

Emily Sproul will continue her work on youth homelessness and community outreach, as a Senior Manager. In this role, she will oversee the Hope House of the Shenandoah, a program providing rapid rehousing and rental assistance for young adults aged 18-24 who are experiencing or at-risk for homelessness. In addition, she will continue to strengthen client relationships and enhance support for LGBTQ elders. Emily said, "Increasingly, we are seeing a need to support youth, families, and educators as they navigate the coming out process. As a former educator and a parent, I'm passionate about helping young people grow up in a safe, supportive community."

As Executive Director, Nguyen will oversee management of the organization, including strategic development and community partnerships, fundraising, and expansion of the Center's reach and impact in the community. "I'm honored and thrilled to be joining the Center during such an exciting period of growth, and to be continuing such important work alongside Emily, the staff and committees as well as the Board of Directors. I'm excited for our future as an organization and as a community." Nguyen said.

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“The growth of the Shenandoah LGBTQ Center since its founding a few short years ago has shown us that the LGBTQ community here needs support now, more than ever,” said Christopher Wood, President and Founder, Shenandoah LGBTQ Center “and we are excited to bring AnhThu on as the new Executive Director to help us meet the need.”

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