

Project Hope Executive Biographies

Mary Jo Bane, Interim Executive Director



Mary Jo Bane, a Project Hope board member, became Interim Executive Director in June, 2017. Mary Jo is Thornton Bradshaw Professor of Public Policy and Management Emerita at the Harvard Kennedy School, where she has taught and conducted research in the areas of public management, poverty, welfare, and social policy. She has served as assistant secretary for Children and Families at the US Department of Health and Human Services and as Commissioner of the New York State Department of Social Services.

Sr. Margaret A. Leonard, LSA, Founder and Strategic Advisor



Project Hope's mission is to partner with families as they move up and out of poverty. Sister Margaret Leonard is the founder who designed the strategies to make that happen. She served as the Executive Director of Project Hope for 30 years and continues to provide strategic advice and vision to the agency.

From her appointment as Executive Director in 1985, Project Hope grew from being an Emergency Shelter serving 8 homeless families, to a multi-service center with an array of educational and economic empowerment programs serving families in the Dudley neighborhood of Dorchester and Roxbury.

In addition to fostering internal growth, Sister Margaret has been a catalyst in forging strategic alliances, partnerships and collaborations at local, city and state levels that create a continuum of care and support for low-income families in the movement from crisis to stability. Sister Margaret has long served on the Boards of the Pine Street Inn, Homes for Families, and the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative.

Sister Margaret has been honored for her achievements throughout her career. In 2008 she received an honorary doctorate of humane letters from her alma mater, Assumption College, for her lifelong commitment to improving society - one person, one family and one community at a time. In 2009 she received an additional doctorate in humane letters from UMass and another in Public Service from Tufts University. She was also selected as a Barr Fellow in 2009, an honor bestowed on outstanding leaders in the non-profit world. In 2014, she was honored with the Robert M. Coard Distinguished Leader Award from Urban College in Boston, MA.

Christine Dixon, Deputy Director



Christine joined Project Hope in January 2011. She is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker with a Master's degree in Social Work from Boston University and a Bachelor's degree from the College of the Holy Cross. She has worked in the field of Human Services for over 18 years. Her experience is primarily in working with children and families around issues of homelessness. Prior to joining Project Hope, Christine worked for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health with families placed in hotels, motels and scattered site shelters by the Department of Housing and Community Development. Prior to this, Christine worked nearby at the Dimock Community Health Center in Roxbury, where she was the Mental Health

Specialist in their Head Start and Early Head Start programs providing play therapy services to children, technical assistance to classroom teachers and training for staff and parents.

As Deputy Director, Christine works hand in hand with the Executive Director to chart Project Hope's future growth and strategic response to an ever-increasing demand for the organization's services. She has both internal and external responsibilities, ranging from program management and development to administration roles within the agency.

Carol Ann McAuliffe, Chief Financial Officer



Carol Ann McAuliffe joined Project Hope's Board of Directors in 2003. For the past eight years, she served as the Treasurer of the Board. In November 2011, she joined Project Hope's staff as the Director of Finance. Prior to joining Project Hope's staff, Carol Ann worked for 20 years at Fidelity Investments. She most recently held the position of Vice President in the operations area at Fidelity. She is highly skilled in the areas of accounting, operations management, project management, new product implementation and business planning. Carol Ann has an undergraduate degree from Boston College and an MBA from Boston University.