

## **The Belle Center Hires First Chief Development Director**

Vengerflutta Smith brings nonprofit experience from Boston to St. Louis

July 1, 2009—ST. LOUIS: The Belle Center—a nonprofit organization that serves children with disabilities and developmental delays—recently hired Vengerflutta Smith as its first Chief Development Director. Smith will bring a wide range of fundraising, marketing and communications experience to this organization.

The Belle Center hired Smith to increase its fundraising efforts, especially with individual donors. These exciting plans stem from The Belle Center's new partnership with Deaconess Foundation. As a Deaconess Impact Partner for the next four years, The Belle Center has a new capacity-building plan to create long-term sustainability.

"This is an exciting time of growth and development for The Belle Center," says Smith. "As some non-profits struggle, it is wonderful to have an opportunity to collaborate with leadership and professional staff who are visionary and pragmatic in this economic climate."

Smith joins The Belle Center from Fenway Health, a nonprofit organization in Boston. She served as Leadership Annual Gifts and Campaign Officer, Leadership Gifts Officer and Annual Fund Manager. Prior to Fenway Health, Smith's experience includes working for Whole Foods as a Marketing & Community Relations Director. She served as a lead trainer and motivational speaker in the Boston area.

Smith has a B.S. in Employment Relations, a B.S. in Sociology, and a M.A. in Educational Administration from Michigan State University in East Lansing. She earned Professional Fundraising Certification from Boston University. In Boston, Smith participated in several professional associations, including Association of Fundraising Professionals, New England Association of Healthcare Philanthropy, Planned Giving Group of New England, Sisters in Development and Women in Development.

The Belle Center's mission is to ensure that all children with disabilities and delays—and their families—are fully included within their schools and communities. The nonprofit's three programs—Center-Based Preschool Program, Outreach Therapy Program and Families as Partners Program—annually serve more than 300 children with special needs in St. Louis City and County.

Founded in 1984, The Belle Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides early intervention services for children with disabilities and their families. The Belle Center was the first organization in the Midwest to provide a full inclusion preschool program where children with and without disabilities could learn and play together. Of more than 200 invited organizations, Deaconess Foundation in St. Louis selected The Belle Center as one of its eight Impact Partners for a four-year capacity building grant. The organization has won two consecutive Stellar Agency Awards from Variety the Children's Charity of St. Louis, and meets all 20 Standards of Charity Accountability through the Better Business Bureau (BBB). For more information, visit [www.bellecenter.com](http://www.bellecenter.com).