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NEWS RELEASE

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Jodi Woessner Named Co-Chair of Regional Interagency Coordinating Council

The Belle Center's Executive Director to assume role in June

ST. LOUIS – [The Belle Center's](#) Executive Director, Jodi Woessner, has been named co-chair of the Regional Interagency Coordinating Council for the St. Louis / St. Charles region, effective June 1 (photo of Woessner available at <http://budurl.com/JodiWoessner>).

During Woessner's 30-month term as co-chair, she will lead the RICC in assisting the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the First Steps System Points of Entry (SPOE) in their evaluation of the First Steps system within the St. Louis / St. Charles region. Woessner's involvement with First Steps spans several years, as she played a vital role in the redesign and passing of Missouri First Steps legislation, serving on the First Steps Redesign Task Force and later as a First Steps supervisor for DESE. While at The Belle Center, Woessner worked closely with legislators to help write the legislation putting First Steps into state statutes, and she most recently served on a legislative committee for the RICC.

"The opportunity to continue to stay involved with the First Steps program through this new role excites me. I look forward to supporting SPOE in its efforts to increase awareness of the program and ensure its success not only in the greater St. Louis and St. Charles area, but across the state," said Woessner.

Regional Interagency Coordinating Councils (RICCs) have been organized throughout Missouri under the governor-appointed State Interagency Coordinating Council. RICCs meet every other month to discuss relevant issues concerning the Regional SPOE operation, especially child find, provider identification and recruitment, and promotion of First Steps across the SPOE region. The councils assist the SPOE in the development and implementation of a program to provide basic First Steps information and other public awareness activities such as brochures, public service announcements, etc., to a targeted audience. RICC membership includes family members of children with disabilities, service providers, community partners, and representatives of programs serving children and families.

Founded in 1984 by a group of parents of children with disabilities, The Belle Center promotes the rights and expectations of children with all abilities to be fully included in the community. The non-profit provides an inclusive, family-centered approach to education and community life that supports children with disabilities and helps them lead

richer, fuller lives. The Belle Center serves more than 300 children and their families through its three main programs, Outreach Program, Embedded Early Education Program, and Families & Community Partners Program. For more information about The Belle Center, please visit www.bellecenter.com.

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Editor's Note: Woessner is a resident of St. Charles, Mo 63376

The Belle Center is located at 10916 Schuetz Road, St. Louis, MO 63146.