



Students Rising Above Welcomes Elizabeth Jordan Devaney as Chief Executive Officer

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - December 12, 2019 - [Students Rising Above](#) (SRA), a Bay Area nonprofit empowering first-generation college students to access higher education and career-ladder opportunities, welcomes Elizabeth Jordan Devaney as Chief Executive Officer. Devaney succeeds Interim Executive Director Mike Loughlin.

Devaney comes to Students Rising Above with more than 25 years of nonprofit leadership experience in the field of human services. Her work in YMCAs across Wisconsin, Arizona, and California has yielded a variety of critical initiatives promoting youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility in diverse communities. As a homeschooling parent, Devaney has witnessed firsthand the obstacles faced by students in challenging situations, and believes that education must be made available and accessible through a variety of means if our society is to maximize the strengths of all of its people.

"We're excited to welcome Elizabeth as Chief Executive Officer of Students Rising Above. With a shared vision of the transformative power of education, Elizabeth understands why our work at SRA is so critical to the greater community and society at large," said Mike Loughlin, outgoing Interim Executive Director and SRA Board Chair. "Elizabeth brings to the team an exceptional combination of energy, strategy, and proven leadership in nonprofit human service organizations fighting socioeconomic poverty and its systemic effects. We expect Elizabeth to not only continue SRA's excellent programming, but to work with partners and funders to help lead the organization to its next stage of growth."

Devaney holds a Master of Public Administration with honors and Certificate of Public Policy from the University of Southern California, and a Bachelor of Science in Corporate Exercise Management from the University of Wisconsin. She is corecipient of USC's 2019 John Randolph and Dora Haynes Foundation Recognition Award for outstanding scholarly performance.

"I am absolutely thrilled to join Students Rising Above in this leadership role," said Devaney. "Access to education – especially at the post-secondary level – is a critical factor in the full economic participation of vulnerable populations. I am honored to join SRA in its mission to close existing opportunity gaps, ensuring all students break the cycle of poverty and achieve the American Dream of a better life through higher education."

Serving students from all nine counties of the San Francisco Bay Area, SRA has now supported more than 800 first-generation students to and through completion of college. Currently, there are over 400 students on the path to matriculation in the SRA Rising Stars program, and thousands of registered users on the SRA Hub, a social enterprise tool providing college and career readiness resources to students and educators nationwide.

Additionally, on the SRA programs team, Barb Hendricks, SRA Co-founder, has retired from her full-time role as SRA's Deputy Executive Director, and Lorna Contreras-Townsend has assumed responsibilities, overseeing SRA's programming. Hendricks continues to be a part of the SRA family as a Senior Advisor.

"On behalf of the SRA Board, staff, and all of our students and alumni, I would like to thank Barb for her many contributions to SRA over the last 17 years of service," said Mike Loughlin, outgoing Interim Executive Director and SRA Board Chair. "We're incredibly grateful for Barb and her deep commitment to our SRA student and alumni community and we look forward to Lorna carrying on in this fine tradition."



About Students Rising Above

[Students Rising Above](http://studentsrisingabove.org) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that empowers underrepresented students with drive and potential to achieve their life goals by connecting them to the tools, resources, and supportive community they need to excel and thrive on their college-to-career journey.

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