



For Immediate Release

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**First Place Global Leadership Institute Hires Director to Lead
Its Centers for Public Policy and Research**

PHOENIX (March 4, 2021) — The [First Place Global Leadership Institute](#) recently hired Maureen Casey to serve as the director of its centers for public policy and research to advance inclusiveness for individuals with autism and other neurodiversities.

Casey has 20 years of experience in the disability community as a professional and family advocate. She served as the senior advisor to the director of the Arizona Department of Economic Security, an assistant director at the department and the Arizona Early Intervention Program administrator at the department. She also served on the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System’s Autism Spectrum Disorder Advisory Committee’s Evidence-Based Treatment Work Group.

“Maureen brings a dedicated track record of creating collaborative partnerships among people with disabilities, their families and the professionals who support them,” says Denise D. Resnik, First Place AZ founder, president and CEO. “She is a recognized leader with an award-winning record of impacting public policy and transforming systems. We are thrilled to have her on our team.”

Developed by distinguished leaders in this highly specialized field, the First Place Global Leadership Institute is focused on pressing concerns for accessibility to more community, housing and independent living options for individuals with autism and other neurodiversities. It serves as a multidisciplinary, hands-on training center for professionals, educators, support staff and medical personnel, as well as a robust site for research and advancements in public policy.

Casey will lead the Global Leadership Institute’s Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation Center for Public Policy and Colonel Harland Sanders Center for Applied Research. She will focus on current and develop new programs to advance more supportive policies in Arizona and nationally.

“My personal passion is to enable people with disabilities to lead self-directed and inclusive lives,” Casey says. “I’m drawn to First Place’s big vision to create communities for individuals with autism and neurodiversities and I’m eager to find new and innovative ways to bring those ideas to life.”

Casey earned an M.A. from Fordham University in New York City and a B.A. from Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York.

For more information or to get involved, email info@firstplaceaz.org or visit firstplaceaz.org.

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About First Place® AZ

First Place AZ, a charitable nonprofit organization advancing innovative residential options for adults with autism and other special abilities, celebrates neurodiversity, independent living and the belief that housing and community options for people with autism and other special abilities should be as bountiful as they are for everyone else. First Place is creating replicable residential and post-secondary education models that promote collaboration among the public, private, philanthropic and nonprofit sectors. First Place–Phoenix, the nonprofit’s first new property, opened in 2018. Leasing opportunities are available. View PBS NewsHour’s two-part series about First Place at [“Giving Adults with Autism the Skills to Build Independent Lives”](#) and [“How Phoenix Became the Most Autism-Friendly City in the World.”](#) Read the much anticipated, groundbreaking report, [“A Place in the World: Fueling Housing and Community Options for Adults with Autism and Other Neurodiversities,”](#) developed in collaboration with ASU’s [Morrison Institute for Public Policy](#) and the [Autism Housing Network](#). Learn more at firstplaceaz.org.