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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Liberty Announces New Chief Operating Officer**



**Caption:** Liberty's new Chief Operating Officer, Candace Opalka.

AMSTERDAM – Liberty's CEO-elect, Michael Decker, announced that Candace Opalka has been appointed to the position of chief operating officer. Opalka brings more than 25 years of experience administering supports for adults and children to the position with a total of 15 years in supervisory and administrative roles within Liberty.

Decker said the choice was made after an "extensive national search" and interviews with many well-qualified applicants.

Opalka's past accomplishments include supporting Liberty in their accreditation with The Council on Quality and Leadership while she was Residential Director at Liberty from 2001-2006. She left Liberty for a short while in 2006 to assume a role of Regional Director at Liberty's sister chapter, Lexington ARC. Liberty welcomed her back in 2010 to her current position as Director of Residential Programs and Medical Services where she became a key contributor in the agency's new planning process, "What Really Matters." Opalka also oversees the Day and Residential programs at Liberty's Choices for Community Living in the state of Delaware.

In looking ahead to her new role with Liberty, Opalka said, "I am honored to have been chosen as Liberty's Chief Operating Officer. Liberty is progressive and innovative and I share their commitment to creating excellence throughout our organization. The key to our success is the dedication and extraordinary vision of our teams and I am excited to be a part of this creativity and positive energy. The heart and soul of our organization is in seeing the growth, success and richness of life of the people we support."

Opalka received her Bachelor's degree in Counseling at the State University of New York Empire State College in Saratoga, and is currently working towards her Master's in Forensic Mental Health at Russell Sage College.

Decker said, "Liberty is lucky to have Candy in this pivotal role. She brings a balance of enthusiasm, commitment to excellence, and teamwork to the pursuit of Liberty's critical mission."

Founded in 1957 by local parents and family members of people with disabilities, Liberty is a not-for-profit, member chapter of NYSARC, Inc. a statewide organization serving over 60,000 individuals throughout New York. Liberty is the largest provider of services to people with developmental disabilities in Montgomery County, offering day, residential, vocational, family support and health-related programs to over 650 individuals with disabilities and other persons with special needs in our community.

**Caption: Liberty's new Chief Operating Officer, Candace Opalka.**