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### **Walden Family Services Names Dr. Dori Gilbert New Chief Operations Officer**

***Gilbert steps into the role to strengthen the company's commitment to the  
community and expand the organization's impact***

**SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Aug. 26, 2026** — Walden Family Services expands its leadership team by naming industry veteran Dori Gilbert, Psy.D, LMFT, as the organization's new Chief Operations Officer.

As COO, Dr. Gilbert will ensure that children, youth, and families are treated with dignity and supported to heal, grow, and thrive while partnering with staff, families, and community partners to expand the organization's impact.

Dr. Gilbert brings more than 25 years of executive leadership in services for children, youth, families, and vulnerable communities. Most recently, she served as Chief Program Officer for Lifeline Community Services, where she led strategic and operational oversight across behavioral health, anti-human trafficking youth development, housing, and family support programs. Previously, she was Deputy Director with the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, overseeing regional operations and advancing trauma-informed systems initiatives in collaboration with community partners.

"It is exciting to join Walden at a time when it is thoughtfully shaping its future while staying true to its mission," said Dr. Gilbert. "I was drawn to its commitment to the people it serves, the quality of its work, and its willingness to continue growing. It felt like a place where my experience, values, and leadership could contribute in a meaningful way."

Throughout her career, Dr. Gilbert has led organizational growth and transformation, built high-performing teams, expanded community-based services, strengthened compliance systems, and implemented programs with measurable outcomes. Her expertise spans child welfare, foster care, adoption, behavioral health, public health, education, residential treatment, transitional housing, and government operations. She is recognized for integrating clinical expertise, strategic leadership, and operational excellence to advance mission-driven organizations.

“Most people in this field come up one of two ways, through direct care or through systems and operations. Dori’s done both,” says Teresa Stivers, CEO, Walden Family Services. “She sat on the clinical side of the table, the county-systems side, and the nonprofit-leadership side. That’s rare, and it’s exactly the vantage point Walden needs right now. We’re not just running programs anymore; we’re trying to influence how the whole regional system around kids and families works. Dori already knows that system comprehensively.”

For more information about Walden Family Services, visit <https://waldenfamily.org/>.

### **About Walden Family Services:**

Walden Family Services is a nonprofit human services organization with 50 years of experience supporting children, transitional-age youth, and families across Southern California. Founded in 1976 and headquartered in San Diego, Walden is recognized for its leadership in foster care advocacy and transitional housing for young adults.

Walden believes housing stability paired with financial readiness is one of the most powerful — and often overlooked — tools for preventing child abuse and breaking cycles of instability. Over five decades, the organization has evolved to meet the changing needs of children and families, with a growing focus on housing solutions for Transitional Age Youth, including young parents, who face housing instability through no fault of their own.

As Walden looks to the next 50 years, it is focused on expanding stable housing opportunities, strengthening prevention services, advancing kinship care practices statewide, and continuing to serve as a trusted partner to youth, families, landlords, donors, and government agencies across California.

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