

New Delaplaine Foundation executive director excited to learn, bolster organization's mission

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Michele Corr never would've thought about leaving her role at Friends of Catholic Education if she hadn't been approached about leading the Delaplaine Foundation.

Corr, who was recently announced as the Delaplaine Foundation's new executive director, said the opportunity to interview for that position came directly from Marlene Young.

After more than 20 years of working at the foundation, Young, its current president and CEO, will officially retire in June, although she'll still serve as the president for the Board of Trustees.

Corr will officially begin working as the executive director on Jan. 6 — a brand new role at the organization.

Her previous role was the executive director for Friends of Catholic Education, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting Catholic education in Frederick County. She will continue to be on that organization's board of trustees.

Earlier this year, Corr said, she and Young went out for lunch, during which Young said she was planning to step back from the foundation and search for an executive director.

Corr told Young she couldn't imagine who would take Young's place at the helm of the foundation—and Young asked Corr if she'd be interested.

Corr said she was surprised by the question, but after a lot of thought and consideration, she decided to pursue the executive director role.

She said that over the years she's worked in Frederick County at the nonprofit Friends of Catholic Education, she has kept up with the Delaplaine Foundation's work in the local community.

The organization is a private family foundation based in Frederick that gives grants to hundreds of groups. Corr said she has admired what the foundation does and how it makes tangible impacts for different nonprofits and the Frederick community.

“I'm just so incredibly grateful for the opportunity and honored to have been chosen,” she said.

A RETURN TO FREDERICK

Corr was born and raised in Frederick, but she moved out of the area in ninth grade to Maryland's Eastern Shore.

She graduated from Spring Hill College in Alabama, and said she was a stay-at-home mom before she went back to work in 2007 at Saint John's Catholic Prep.

She started out as a photography and publications teacher and worked in other roles at the school, including director of development.

While working at Saint John's, Corr joined the Board of Trustees for Friends of Catholic Education.

After about a decade of working at Saint John's, Friends of Catholic Education asked Corr if she'd be its executive director.

Under Corr's tenure at Friends of Catholic Education, the organization provided more scholarships and block grants to help lighten the financial load of Catholic schools' tuitions on students.

She believes her previous career experiences — which include cultivating relationships with school communities and donors, as well as maintaining relationships in Frederick County, even when she didn't live here — will serve her well at the Delaplaine Foundation.

Corr said she often hears that she has “big shoes to fill” following Young — but she said those shoes can never be filled.

Young has led the foundation since its inception in 2001, helping to build the organization's infrastructure and operations.

Rather than trying to replace Young, Corr said, she wants to continue from the foundation Young built to keep the organization going strong.

"I'm going to bring my own shoes and walk alongside of her," she said. "... I want to be able to take the Delaplaine family's vision and execute it."

Corr wants to learn as much as possible in her first few months as executive director, especially while Young is still working until June.

She's also looking forward to getting to meet so many new people and organizations, as well as connect groups with one another, so they can work together to better serve people in Frederick County.

She loves making new friends, and she loves Frederick. Her new job at the Delaplaine Foundation will only strengthen that love.

"I'll be getting to be able to meet so many new people, and that is making me very happy ... being able to expand on that and finding out and meeting people that have a common goal, which is to be able to give back and to help people and to volunteer," Corr said.

"There are a lot of people in the nonprofit and philanthropic world trying to help people have a better life in Frederick County and I'm happy to be part of it."