

August 8, 2022

## Announcement of New CEO

The Exceed Enterprises Board of Directors is thrilled to announce that Nadja Sailesman will join the organization as CEO on August 8th. Sailesman succeeds Stephen Achilles, who is stepping down as CEO after five years and moving out of state to be closer to family. The pair are working closely together in support of a smooth transition.

“Stephen and Nadja are both amazing people who bring different skill sets to the table,” said Aaron Goff, President of the Exceed Enterprises Board. “Stephen built a strong foundation during his time as CEO through organizational systems and IT. Nadja’s background is in lifting people up and building community, and that’s the skill set we need right now.”

Sailesman brings more than 20 years of experience in the non-profit sector to her new role as CEO, specifically in the areas of program development, operational leadership, and education advocacy. Over the course of a long career grounded in mission-driven work, Sailesman has served as Director of Program Operations at the Mission Society of New York City, and as leader of operations, strategic planning, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives at Success Academy Charter Schools.

“We conducted a three-month search for our next CEO,” said Jay Jones, Exceed’s Board Secretary-Treasurer, who led the search. “We wanted someone who was organized and intentional, but also soft enough to meet an associate, manager, or parent where they are. We wanted humility. We found that in Nadja.”

Outgoing CEO Achilles added, “Nadja is very attuned to people and culture. She recognizes that we have built something special here at Exceed, and I am confident that she is absolutely the right person to take it to the next level.”

In recent years, Exceed Enterprises has expanded its services outside of the Portland metro area to offer a variety of development programs for clients with diverse abilities in Marion and Lincoln counties for the first time. In the next three years, the organization aims to expand into even more counties throughout Oregon. Sailesman says equity will be at the heart of all expansion efforts.

“Centering folks with diverse abilities is important, and equitability is important,” said Sailesman. “We need to make sure that everyone starts with a level playing field.”

Sailesman is proud to be the first woman and the first person of color to lead Exceed Enterprises as CEO in the organization’s 54 year history. She immigrated to the U.S. from Jamaica with her family at the age of eight and lived in New York City before moving to Portland in 2021. As she begins her journey as CEO, she says her first priority is to listen and learn from the internal staff, clients, and network of community partners and supporters who have empowered Exceed to be where it is today.

“I am passionate about creating an organizational culture that is positive and rewarding so that we can be the best for our clients,” Sailesman said. “I’m ready to get to work.”

*Supporting individuals  
with diverse abilities.*

*Their vision is our mission.*

5285 SE Mallard Way  
Milwaukie, OR 97222

P : 503 652 9036

F : 503 652 0458

W : [ExceedOregon.com](http://ExceedOregon.com)