



PRESS RELEASE



50 Valley Street, Providence, RI 02909-2459 | (401) 444-0600 | fax (401) 444-0635 | www.unitedwayri.org

Contacts: United Way: Michael J. Cerio | michael@ceriocommunications.com | (401) 743-8269
Centreville Bank: Danielle North | dnorth@centrevillebank.com | (401) 255-7082

Paola Fernandez Appointed Chair of United Way Board of Directors

A champion for lifting up and empowering our communities, Paola is senior vice president, community development officer for Centreville Bank

Providence, Rhode Island (Sept. 23, 2024) — United Way of Rhode Island has named a new chair of its board of directors, appointing Paola Fernandez to the volunteer leadership position. Fernandez is SVP, community development officer for Centreville Bank and succeeds Dolph Johnson, retired executive vice president and chief human resources officer of Hasbro, Inc., who recently completed his three-year term as chair.

Paola has a long history of involvement with Rhode Island’s nonprofit sector and a deep commitment to creating opportunities for all, especially for individuals and families from communities of color. In her current role, she is responsible for developing and leading Centreville Bank’s community development program, which serves Rhode Island and nearby eastern Connecticut. Prior to joining the banking industry, Paola spent more than 16 years at United Way as its director of public policy and research, and oversaw grant allocations in the focus areas of housing and homelessness.

“This is a full circle moment for Paola, and we are thrilled to have her lead our board, where her unwavering dedication to addressing the needs of Rhode Islanders will no doubt advance our life-changing work,” said Cortney Nicolato, United Way’s president and CEO. “Paola is a skilled professional, but she is an even better person and leader who uses her own life experiences and love for our community to lift up others.”

With more than two decades of experience in nonprofit, government relations, and finance, Paola is known for her collaborative and inclusive approach to developing community initiatives that center on social issues. In addition to her community development priorities, she represented Centreville Bank in the creation and implementation of Bank Forward. The new initiative empowers low- and moderate-income Rhode Islanders to pursue and then advance in a career in banking through focusing on community partnerships, financial literacy, and workforce development.

“To be appointed chair of the board of directors for United Way of Rhode Island is an incredible honor. Having previously worked within the organization, it is deeply humbling and one of the most rewarding experiences of my career,” said Paola. “I’m excited to work with the board and alongside a team that’s so passionate and committed to making a positive impact in our community.”

Along with chairing the United Way of Rhode Island Board of Directors, Paola recently served as a senior fellow at the Institute for Nonprofit Practice, is a member of the Champlin Foundation Distribution Committee, and sits on the boards of the Economic Progress Institute and the Rhode Island Grantmakers Council.

###

United Way of Rhode Island is uniting our community and resources to build racial equity and opportunities for all Rhode Islanders. As a member of the world’s largest nonprofit network, we bring together individuals, businesses, nonprofits,

community leaders, and government to tackle the root causes of inequity and achieve specific, measurable goals. Our programs include 211, the statewide front door connecting Rhode Islanders with social services, resources, and vital programs. Both directly and through grants to nonprofits, we are investing to build economic opportunity, advance childhood learning, expand philanthropy, and drive policy and participation. To learn more, visit unitedwayri.org, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#), or [YouTube](#).

About Centreville Bank

Founded in 1828 and headquartered in West Warwick, Rhode Island, Centreville Bank is a full-service mutual bank with over \$2 billion in assets and 21 locations throughout Rhode Island and eastern Connecticut. Centreville understands the unique financial needs of individuals, families and businesses and offers a wide range of personal banking and commercial banking products and services including checking accounts, savings accounts, CDs, money market accounts, mortgages, business loans and more. Centreville is committed to its employees and the communities it serves, always striving to help people make progress and achieve their financial goals. That is progress on purpose. Visit centrevillebank.com, follow us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#), or come into a branch or office to learn more.