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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact:

Vanessa Houser, Director

(814) 472-3920

Travis Mearns, Public Relations Coordinator

(724) 238-6015

## **VANESSA HOUSER NAMED DIRECTOR OF SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES MUSEUM OF ART**

Loretto – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art (SAMA) is pleased to announce that Vanessa Houser of Loretto will join the Museum as Director. Houser is a fundraising professional with more than ten years' experience, most recently as the lead on fundraising activities for the Western Region of Children's Miracle Network at Geisinger Health System. As the first female Director of SAMA, Houser is honored to have the opportunity to contribute to the Museum's success and the lasting impact it has on the quality of life in our region. She began her position at SAMA on August 6.



Houser comes to the Museum with a proven record of success. Her fundraising efforts at Geisinger have had a tangible effect, resulting in important funds for a pediatric emergency medicine program, pediatric transport ambulance, and specialized summer camps for patients with chronic illnesses such as pediatric cancer and spina bifida. Jim Cayce, President of SAMA's Board of Trustees, is pleased to welcome Houser to the SAMA family, and is confident that her many talents will ensure the Museum's continued success in the communities it serves.

Houser believes it is imperative to create a life through giving back to others. In her previous position, she provided state-of-the-art health care equipment, programs and services to the region. In her new role, she looks forward to continuing and enhancing art educational outreach programs in our local schools and raising awareness of the arts in our community.

"I am honored to join this highly talented, passionate group of staff and volunteers to ensure the future success and legacy of SAMA," said Houser.

A life-long resident of Cambria County, Houser is a Bishop Carroll High School graduate and earned a B.A. in journalism and public relations from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She lives in Loretto with her husband John Paul, seven-year-old son Sebastian, and three-year-old daughter Adelaide.

Houser will be the fifth director in the history of SAMA. She replaces outgoing director Gary Moyer, who announced his retirement earlier in the summer.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art has served the rural populations of central and southwestern Pennsylvania since 1976. The nation's longest running satellite museum system, SAMA operates five museums in Altoona, Bedford, Johnstown, Ligonier and Loretto. The Museum maintains a permanent collection of nearly 5,000 pieces and boasts a strong representation of Pennsylvania artists, as well as works by many of the nation's most acclaimed and influential artists. SAMA also oversees an ambitious education program that has provided critical arts programming to more than 100,000 children throughout Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fayette, Somerset and Westmoreland counties. Another outreach, the Museum Healthcare Partnership Program has benefitted more than 15,000 individuals suffering from physical pain and discomfort, as well as veterans and children with autism spectrum disorder. SAMA is accredited through the American Association of Museums and has been a partner of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts since 1998. For more information about SAMA, please call (814) 472-3920 or visit [www.sama-art.org](http://www.sama-art.org).