



Maine Jewish Museum

CELEBRATING MAINE'S JEWISH ART, HISTORY AND CULTURE IN A RESTORED 1921 SYNAGOGUE

Maine Jewish Museum Appoints Executive Director at Pivotal Moment in its History

December 14, 2021

The [Maine Jewish Museum](#) (MJM) has appointed Dawn LaRochelle the fourth Executive Director in its history, at a moment when it recommits to its mission and looks to the future. Celebrating its bar mitzvah 13th birthday this year, the Museum was founded in 2008 to celebrate and honor the contributions and diversity of Maine's Jewish immigrants in the context of the American experience. Through exhibits, programming, and dialogue, the Museum seeks to build bridges of appreciation and understanding with people of all backgrounds.

“Dawn joins the MJM at the perfect time in her - and our - journey. Having spent the last 13 years establishing the Museum, this is a moment to empower an experienced and creative leader, committed to community, education and partnership, to fully realize our mission,” said Steve Brinn, President of the Board of Directors, who led a search committee of 5 board members.

Dawn, who graduated from Harvard Law School, brings an extensive background in education and nonprofit leadership with entrepreneurial expertise in establishing and leading innovative programs and services. Most recently at the Center for Women and Enterprise, Dawn launched a new educational program, developed and implemented a strategic plan, created referral partnerships, and developed the curriculum to provide resources, coaching, and funding for COVID-impacted small business, serving over 3,000 individuals and securing nearly \$1m in capital funding. Prior to that, Dawn was ESL Department Chair at the MacDuffie School in Granby MA, developing community engagement and management skills gained

as a restaurateur and caterer. At Perigee restaurant, Apogee Catering, and Bete Avon Kosher Catering where she was named Who's Who Restaurateur of the Year, Dawn went well beyond business ownership to create a culinary learning program and paid internship for disabled veterans, establish an innovative educational culinary immersion program, and coach students in the Pittsfield High School Culinary Arts Program. Dawn will move to Maine and assume her new post in April 2022.

“This is the role of a lifetime for me, weaving together my personal and professional experiences in a unique way. The Maine Jewish Museum is a very special place, with the potential to be a true bridge between past, present and future, and between people of all backgrounds and faiths,” says Dawn.

The Maine Jewish Museum is located in Portland's East End neighborhood, within the restored Etz Chaim Synagogue, a turn-of-the-century house of worship. The museum has been a venue for critically acclaimed contemporary art exhibitions featuring established, Jewish-connected, Maine associated artists for the past ten years. The museum also houses Jack Montgomery's photographs of Holocaust survivors who settled in Maine, a permanent exhibition of Maine Jewish History, and the Maine Jewish Hall of Fame Presented By Dorothy Suzi Osher in memory of Alfred Osher. The newest exhibit, [Maine Synagogues Past and Present](#), was celebrated with a virtual launch attended by nearly 300 people in November.

“I look forward to partnering with Dawn and introducing her to the community. She is a natural connector and communicator. Her enthusiasm and creativity will open doors, hearts, and minds,” said Gary Berenson, Founding Executive Director of MJM and Rabbi at Etz Chaim Synagogue.

The Maine Jewish Museum is located at 267 Congress Street and is open to vaccinated masked visitors Sunday-Friday 11-4. Please [visit our website](#) for current exhibition information.