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College Bound Recognizes a Decade of Leadership by Scott Baier

St. Louis, MO (August 23, 2022) – **College Bound**, the St. Louis-grown college access and success nonprofit organization recognized with the Award of Excellence from the National College Attainment Network, is recognizing 10 years of leadership by President & CEO Scott Baier, who will transition from his role in December. The organization’s Board of Directors has named Jenny Weber, VP & Chief Development Officer, Interim Executive Director effective September 1.

Scott Baier came to College Bound in a consulting role in 2013 after leading the St. Louis region’s Teach For America office through a period of significant growth. Shortly after he began, College Bound Founder Lisa Orden Zarin began working with the Board of Directors on a succession plan for her own role. After a rigorous process, Scott was selected to serve as College Bound’s first Executive Director. What he thought would be a temporary commitment became a decade of leadership through periods of significant growth, change, and impact in partnership with the students and families College Bound serves.

“As a former teacher, I was immediately drawn to College Bound because of what students said about their experiences here,” Scott said. “Those students – I could name so many of them today – have kept me here for 10 years, and to be honest, it’s impossible to truly say goodbye. Leading this organization has been an amazing honor and privilege. Being embraced by the St. Louis community since I moved here in 2008 is a gift as well. I’m looking forward to my next steps, and having worked with Jenny for over a decade, I know College Bound is in a fantastic position to continue its essential work alongside students and their families.”

College Bound’s first class in 2006 included 36 high school sophomores and grew to serve several hundred by 2013 when Scott joined the team. Today the organization works with over 450 students in two programs. College Bound students seek to be the first in their families to earn a degree and face significant barriers to graduation. Its flagship To and Through program supports students from sophomore year of high school until they earn a bachelor’s degree, and its CB@STLCC program established in 2017 works with new freshmen toward an associates degree or certificate, after which students are assisted with transferring to a four-year institution or a career. In St. Louis, students who are low-income and/or will be the first in their families to attain a bachelor’s degree do so at a rate of 16%. Since its founding, College Bound students have graduated at rate of 55%, on par with students from all income levels in Missouri.

“Seeing Scott build College Bound up from its strong foundation over the years has been a joy,” Lisa Zarin said in reflecting on his tenure. “I knew at the time we’d hired a rockstar. He doubled the size of our original program, and he started a new one with St. Louis Community College that has all the same hallmarks – it’s innovative, bold, and dearly needed here. As we were wrapping up our transition, I remember so clearly him saying “I got this” – and I’m so glad he did.”

Marilyn Dredge chairs College Bound's Board of Directors and shared the following reflection on this moment of transition: "Scott and I joined College Bound around the same time. At his core, Scott is driven by a strong belief in others' ability to reach their potential. This doesn't just apply to College Bound students. His belief has inspired many members of the community, myself included, to step up and help lead this work here in St. Louis."

"College Bound has always been holistic, relationship-based, and data driven. Scott institutionalized the things that made CB an award-winning organization while expanding the work to include more students and programs. The leadership and infrastructure is there to support that in perpetuity, and Jenny is in a great position to continue working toward the goals outlined in our strategic plan," Dredge added. Having joined the team in 2016 to lead fundraising, Jenny has secured millions of dollars from a broad and diverse donor base while serving as a member of the organization's leadership team. "Jenny shares Scott's steadfast commitment to students and the outcomes that will empower them, and my colleagues on the Board and I are eager to see where she takes the organization next."

Hiring College Bound alumni to join the organization's staff is a milestone Scott was proud to fulfill. Kelly Small, CB Class of 2009 and University of Missouri – St. Louis Class of 2014, recently joined the team. "In 2014, I had just graduated from college and thought I was concluding my time with College Bound," Kelly said. "Scott spoke to our class at a CB graduation celebration. He encouraged us to fill our lives with purpose, new experiences, and fun. Eight years later, I've had the pleasure to serve under his leadership as an AmeriCorps member and now, program staff at the very organization that helped me to and through. And this time, I get to offer him those same words: A life filled with purpose, new experiences, and fun."

The College Bound team, Board, and community will be wishing Scott the same in the months to come as we recognize the impact of his leadership since 2013 and celebrate the foundation he has helped build for enduring success alongside students and their families.

ABOUT COLLEGE BOUND:

College Bound is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Through an individualized, holistic, and multi-year commitment, College Bound empowers students from disadvantaged backgrounds to complete higher education and enter successful careers. Their goal is to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty through higher education. Since its founding in 2006, 100 percent of College Bound students have graduated from high school. Over 90% matriculate to college within six months of graduation, and they go on to graduate at five times the rate of their low-income peers. For more information on College Bound, please visit www.collegeboundstl.org.

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