

# THE SANCTUARY FOR INDEPENDENT MEDIA

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### **New Leadership Announced at The Sanctuary for Independent Media In Troy NY**

Troy, NY - The Sanctuary for Independent Media is pleased to announce the appointment of Kristen Holler as the organization's next executive director. Kristen succeeds Sanctuary co-founder Steve Pierce, who continues in a consulting role as special projects coordinator.

Media Alliance Inc. is the non-profit organization that owns and operates The Sanctuary for Independent Media. Board chair Aileen Javier, who began her involvement with the Sanctuary as a volunteer radio producer, sees this as a very exciting time in the organization's history.

"The first time that I walked into the Sanctuary, I knew that I found my niche within a hub where people create, grow and learn from each other to build our community! I am honored to be serving as the board chair. I am very excited and looking forward to working with KP. Her experience at Albany Barn & Electric City Barn has given her the skills to realize our vision for what is possible at The Sanctuary, and she values collaboration, engaging the community, and creative problem solving - all of which are important to how The Sanctuary operates. I am confident KP can expand on what we already have built and lead us on to a great future!"

The organization began in 2000 as a collective of anti-war artists and activists that coalesced under the name Hudson Mohawk Independent Media Center (HM IMC), part of the Indymedia movement supporting international opposition to corporate globalization. The HM IMC opened The Sanctuary for Independent Media in an abandoned church in North Central Troy in 2005. Under Pierce's leadership, The Sanctuary has grown to include a campus of indoor and outdoor spaces for multimedia production, live performance, artist and educator residencies, and community-integrated art, research, and advocacy projects that advance freedom of expression and social and environmental justice.

The COVID-19 pandemic inspired the Sanctuary—like so many other arts and cultural organizations—to make radical changes to its operations, including implementing virtual and hybrid programming to keep audiences engaged. These shifts created a natural opportunity for changes in leadership, and allowed time for the co-founders, staff, and board to strategize about leading the organization into its next phase. Of the transition, Pierce says,

“We started The Sanctuary for Independent Media in 2005 with funds raised from our Iraq War documentary “Independent Media in a Time of War,” figuring we might make it a year or so before the money ran out. Pinch me! The Sanctuary is still going strong almost two decades later, with new energy and vision in place to carry us forward many more years to come. It’s a thrilling moment for everyone involved!”

Kristen “KP” Holler brings passion for the arts and community engagement and more than a decade of experience as a non-profit administrator to the Sanctuary. Holler was the first-ever executive director of Albany Barn, Inc., a non-profit organization that offers affordable housing, work space, technical assistance, and professional development for artists and creative entrepreneurs across the Capital Region. In her time with The Barn, Holler played a key role in public art initiatives like Capital Walls and spearheaded the development of the Schenectady-based makers’ space, Electric City Barn, which opened in late 2018. When asked about the new role Holler said, “To lead an organization like The Sanctuary for Independent Media is a dream. The mission and programming are rich and complex, but at their core relate back to empowering people to be active in the pursuit of knowledge and in the creation of a more just and equitable world through scientific discovery, creative expression, and the exchange of information and ideas.” She sees tremendous potential to build upon the Sanctuary’s legacy adding, “The Sanctuary has been strengthened and sustained by leveraging strategic collaborations. The result is an enviable network of artists, educators, and ambassadors who believe in the organization’s mission and actively make strides to move it forward.”

Holler and Pierce will work collaboratively through the early spring to ensure a smooth and thorough transition of the immense institutional knowledge and vision for the future that Steve - along with co-founders and current board members Branda Miller and Kathy High - have for the organization. A celebration of this exciting moment in the organization’s history is being planned for late spring 2023. “We will gather to celebrate all the achievements during the 18 years of Steve’s leadership and welcome new beginnings with KP leading The Sanctuary forward! Changes are exciting and this one is major for us!” said Aileen Javier, board president of Media Alliance.

### **About The Sanctuary for Independent Media:**

The Sanctuary for Independent Media is owned and operated by Media Alliance, a 501 (c)(3) organization. The Sanctuary Campus is located in North Central Troy and includes indoor and outdoor presenting and production facilities (the Sanctuary and

Freedom Square), a [radio station](#) (WOOC 105.3 FM), [community gardens](#) (Collard City Growers), [a STE\(a\)M learning and wellness center](#) (NATURE Lab with People's Health Sanctuary), and [youth programs](#) (Uptown Summer and Youth Media Sanctuary). Hundreds of original productions on the Sanctuary Radio and Sanctuary TV channels reach close to 100,000 subscribers, with millions of listeners and viewers. For more information, visit the website: [www.mediasanctuary.org](http://www.mediasanctuary.org).