

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

## **40-year-old inclusive education nonprofit rebrands to reflect mission of ‘faithfully building belonging’**

*CLC Network now known as All Belong Center for Inclusive Education*

**GRAND RAPIDS, MI – Sept. 4, 2019** – Effective this week, forty-year old faith-based organization CLC Network (4340 Burlingame Ave., Wyoming) has rebranded as [All Belong Center for Inclusive Education](#). The effort is a result of a yearlong process to create and communicate a brand that better reflects its work of providing support services and enabling inclusive education in Christ-centered schools and churches to ensure that persons of all abilities belong.

All Belong was founded as Christian Learning Center in 1979 and is widely known as the pioneer of inclusive education in Christian schools. The organization provided education to individuals with disabilities from greater Grand Rapids in three classrooms at Seymour Christian School. From there, the organization began offering “CLC Resource Rooms” at several area Christian Schools. In 2007, after recognizing that persons with disabilities were beginning to be welcomed at school, but not always at church, the organization began providing similar services to churches and Christian organizations. Changing its name to CLC Network in 2008, the organization transitioned away from teaching services and into nonprofit consulting and advocacy on a national scale. Today, All Belong partners with approximately 70 schools in eight states, helping them to operate inclusive education strategies.

Agency officials believe that the new name more clearly communicates its mission and positions the nonprofit to equip schools and churches to create a culture of belonging for persons of all abilities. The redefined, bold organizational identity clearly articulates the heart of All Belong’s mission—that persons of all abilities belong within Christ-centered community.

“As the organization’s services have evolved over the past 40 years, extensive research conducted in 2018 revealed that our brand was confusing and misleading to the communities we serve,” said All Belong executive director Elizabeth Lucas Dombrowski. “The new name allows us to wear our heart on our sleeve and clearly communicates our mission.”

For years All Belong leaders had regularly heard of the difficulty parents, ministry leaders, school administrators and disability advocate organizations had in finding resources and guidance to include individuals with disabilities within their church or school.

“Our new brand will be accessible, engaging and clear to the communities we serve,” Dombrowski added. “We’re excited to see what new doors open as a result of our new brand.”

Aside from the new name, the agency's new logo and tagline also share powerful messages of how faith is central to the mission.

"Our tagline 'Faithfully building belonging' professes that we work toward this mission of inclusion for persons of all abilities diligently and with the faith that God uses our efforts to transform communities," said Katie Barkley, director of marketing and communications, and leader of the rebranding effort. "Our new logo clearly conveys our beliefs about community: each person gathered together in interdependence, pointing toward Christ."

Grand Haven-based creative agency HAVEN assisted All Belong with the rebrand. Led by longtime West Michigan advertising agency veteran Bill McKendry, HAVEN worked with Barkley and other internal stakeholders to create the new identity, which will be implemented across all digital and print platforms over the next several weeks.

"It's a rare opportunity to rebrand a strong organization with a 40-year heritage," said Bill McKendry, chief creative officer of HAVEN. "But to create an identity and name that is an even better reflection of their organizational purpose and helps them to grow their results and impact is both meaningful and a blessing."

One of the more engaging aspects of the rebrand is the agency's new logo, and specifically, the "o" in "belong."

The different colors depicted in the "o" highlight people with different gifts and needs, supporting one another in interdependent community. "As the individuals in the circle surround one another, All Belong also comes alongside a community and walks with them to reflect God's kingdom," Barkley adds.

Specifically, the four components of the "o" represent the agency's core beliefs:

- We are ***inclusion innovators*** with a mission for mutuality between persons of all abilities in Christian community.
- We provide ***practical partnership*** and a biblical blueprint for community that promotes an exchange of gifts between all persons.
- Our clients receive ***informed advocacy*** based on our faith foundation.
- Ultimately, we strive to create ***kingdom communities*** that value all members of the body of Christ.

The nearly yearlong effort included input from more than 100 stakeholders. "The input and support we received from our core audiences was inspiring and so helpful to us and HAVEN," Barkley adds. "As a result, we believe that the entire brand identity, including the naming, messaging and visuals, better communicates our commitment to faithfully building belonging in churches and schools than ever before."

"I believe the organization's new name is very powerful, as it reflects our 'person-first' thinking," said All Belong board president Doug Rottman. "We use person-first language because we believe each individual is made in the image of God. As children with and without

disabilities embrace their individual identities within a faith community, it's beneficial for them to have a lens that emphasizes similarities instead of differences."

"People long for belonging, regardless of ability, race, ethnicity, background or socio-economic status," Barkley adds. "The culture All Belong seeks to create within Christ-centered communities fosters belonging for persons of all abilities and has the potential to transform how individuals see all people."

The rebrand will be celebrated at the organization's annual fundraising dinner, Circle of Friends, Oct. 1 at The Pinnacle Center in Hudsonville. More information on the event can be found at [Allbelong.org/dinner](http://Allbelong.org/dinner).

### **About All Belong**

[Allbelong.org](http://Allbelong.org)

All Belong Center for Inclusive Education is the leading catalyst for creating and maintaining inclusive communities for persons of all abilities. Through partnerships with Christ-centered schools and congregations, they work to faithfully build belonging for persons of all abilities within community.

### **Our Mission**

All Belong equips congregations and schools to glorify God through purposeful, innovative inclusion of persons with varied abilities.

### **Our Vision**

We envision a world where communities are marked by belonging for persons with varied abilities.

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