

# SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN

## LANL Foundation director to step down, take new role at Anchorum

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The head of [the LANL Foundation](#) is stepping down at the end of the year to take a new job helping oversee a major local health nonprofit's philanthropic efforts.

Jenny Parks plans to leave the education nonprofit to pursue a new position as senior vice president of strategic philanthropy at [Anchorum](#), the nonprofit arm of Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center.

She has been the LANL Foundation's president and CEO since 2015, succeeding original executive director and now-state Rep. Susan Herrera, who had headed the organization since its founding in 1997. Before the LANL Foundation, Parks was president and CEO of the New Mexico Community Foundation.

"I was just very impressed with how the [LANL Foundation], while it was a foundation, it also did a lot of program work," Parks said in an interview Friday. "And that's really where my heart is — working on the ground with the community."

In a news release, the LANL Foundation lauded its progress under Parks' leadership, saying the organization awarded \$7.28 million in scholarships to 1,466 Northern New Mexico students during her tenure and more than 1,000 grants totaling \$9.9 million to schools, school districts, tribes, pueblos and nonprofits.

“Under Jenny’s tenure, LANL Foundation expanded its Early Childhood programs; created a College, Career and Community Pathways program; and prioritized our advocacy efforts to effect positive change in New Mexico,” LANL Foundation board Chair Kathryn Harris Tijerina said in a statement. “Though we will miss her terribly, the achievements under her leadership live on in our work here at the Foundation.”

The foundation also credited Parks with “dramatically increasing LANL Foundation’s annual grantmaking, creating a Research and Evaluation department, opening a Santa Fe satellite office and substantially increasing LANL Foundation’s income by more aggressively pursuing outside funding.” The foundation has grown from 15 employees when she started to 34 now.

Parks said the increase in grant writing and fundraising during her tenure helped expand the foundation’s work in K-12 schools to focus on teacher and principal growth and professional development. The foundation also partnered with the eight northern pueblos to develop early childhood education plans for each and has been focusing on social-emotional learning in schools and increasing the number of Native American teachers and counselors.

Parks said Herrera “did an incredible job of building” up the LANL Foundation, leaving it well-positioned to expand when she took the reins.

“I kind of lucked out in a way,” Parks said. “It was at a point where it was ready to go to the next level.”

Anchorum recently reached a deal to transfer its half-ownership share of Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center and other local holdings to Christus Health. As a result, Anchorum has a lot more money to spend on other community needs. Parks will help oversee how that money is spent on helping with homelessness, hunger, housing and educational attainment in Northern New Mexico.

“They’re defining health as way more than being sick and in the hospital,” Parks said.

The board of directors plans to form a search committee to find Parks' successor, who will then need to be approved by the board.

Parks said her advice to her successor would be to trust the people who work at the foundation.

“The LANL Foundation has just a spectacular staff,” she said. “Very talented individuals. We’ve been able to attract such talent, and they’re very rooted in our communities. I really feel like they’re leaders in their fields.”