

PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

2019 MOST ADMIRABLE CEO

Marian Baldini

KenCrest

Marian Baldini's first job after grad school was as a direct support professional at a KenCrest community home. Many years later – including the 14 she spent as chief operating officer at Jewish Employment and Vocational Services of Philadelphia – Baldini returned to KenCrest as CEO. The company supports people with developmental or intellectual disabilities in Pennsylvania, Delaware and Connecticut. Since taking the top job in 2015, she's led a major corporate reorganization and launched a new business subsidiary called IndeTech Solutions LLC, which develops assistive technology. With an eye for what culture and processes can do for the human services sector, Baldini also served as an adjunct faculty member of Widener University.

“Corporate Reorganization” isn’t a term that necessarily evokes warm feelings. Any pearls of wisdom to share with others going through, or soon to go through one? Big change is scary and requires courage. Courage is not the absence of fear; it is a clear vision that the WHY requires you to lead through it. Keep WHY in mind every minute, and the fear fades into the background.

Why was IndeTech Solutions needed? Many people with disabilities have extraordinary challenges in daily life which would disappear if they had enabling technology. Our biggest barrier to making that happen is our mindset; we aim to change that mindset.

Is there anything you know now that you wish you knew when you were in the classroom teaching? I recently read a book called “The Coaching Habit.” I think I would have been better at asking students to think critically about how to learn on the job if I had read this book before teaching.

What’s the best decision you made this year? I decided to participate in a Gap International program called Leveraging Genius. I discovered my strengths in a new way and came away with a stronger sense of purpose and goals.

