Interfaith Community Services CEO Retires

By Zach Halper

Richard Batt will retire as chief executive officer at Interfaith Community Services (ICS), the organization announced Tuesday. The news comes nearly two years after he was hired by the Escondito, Calif.-based agency.

Batt, who was hired in September 2011, said that he made his decision to attend to family members who are in poor health. Associate Director Craig Jones was appointed by the ICS board of directors to be the interim CEO while an executive search begins. According to Jones, there is no specific timeframe for when the search needs to be completed.

 An attempt to reach Batt for comment on this article was not immediately successful.

Batt was only the second CEO in Interfaith’s 31-year history, taking over for Suzanne Pohlamn who headed the agency for its first 30 years. Though his tenure was brief, he oversaw significant changes to the organization. The most recent came this year when the organization secured Family Self-Sufficiency contracts from the County of San Diego for both Inland and Coastal North County. Previously, the agency serviced only the Inland area as a subcontractor.

“I’m well aware of the challenges in this position and greatly respect Rick for the energy and his vision that he bought when he was here,” said Jones.

The agency also launched an employment services department under Batt’s leadership, expanded its Recuperative Care program, which provides temporary housing for homeless veterans and other individuals with no place to go after hospitalization, and began a Teens Teaching Tech program in which high school students teach computer and technology skills to older Interfaith clients.

“Rick took on this task and during the last two years has brought some wonderful new staff on board. In working with me and the entire board he helped us redo our by-laws to bring them up to date,” said Christine Carrick, chairwoman of the ICS board of directors. “He was instrumental in establishing an amazing veteran’s program, a program we should be especially proud of. Rick accomplished a lot in a short time and he will be missed.”

In terms of the biggest challenges going forward for ICS, Jones said that the organization need to continue to make sure that fundraising remains stable so they can continue to meet the needs of the local community. He also mentioned that continuing to combat homelessness remains a priority, particularly the goal of ending veteran homelessness by 2016.

“We have many demands that need to be met,” explained Jones.

Since its establishment in 1982, ICS has provided a wide range of programs to help hungry, homeless, and low-income people in North San Diego County. Programs include food and basic needs, shelters and housing, employment services, family and social services, children and youth programs, senior services, veterans’ programs, and addiction recovery.

According to its most recent Form 990 filed in 2012, total revenue for the organization was $8.9 million, with $5.3 million coming from program services. Total expenses for that year were $9 million.