

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

MOUNT VERNON, Illinois - The board of trustees of Cedarhurst Center for the Arts has announced the appointment of Courtney Kabat as the museum's new Director of Visitor Engagement.

"We are thrilled to have Courtney joining our staff. Her past work experience in public relations and marketing and her time abroad will bring great perspective to our team and to our community," said Hillary Esser, Executive Director of Cedarhurst. "Courtney's excitement is contagious, and her personality will be an asset in developing our membership program and planning events."

Kabat, a native of southern Illinois, has been living in Spain teaching English as a second language. She is moving back to the states and will assume her new position on October 1.

"I remember the inspiration I felt as a child being exposed to the arts (at Cedarhurst)," Kabat said. "I am thrilled at the opportunity to come back to my hometown to give back and bring the skills I have acquired to continue and expand Cedarhurst's impact."

In addition to her time teaching in Spain, Kabat has spent time managing properties in Chicago and building client relationships at Maritz Travel Co. in St. Louis. She also gleaned valuable work experience during marketing internships with the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce in Mt. Vernon and Black Diamond Harley-Davidson in Marion, and developing corporate sponsorships for the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Italy, one of the oldest musical institutions in the world.

"I've been blessed with some wonderful opportunities that have allowed me to grow and challenge myself, but I've never forgotten that all of them started here in southern Illinois. It is full circle to return, and I'm honored and excited to join an institution that is so focused on community, culture, and learning," Kabat said.

Kabat grew up in Jefferson County and graduated from Waltonville High School, earning the Student of the Year title and scholarship in 2013 from the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce. Kabat then attended Southern Illinois University - Carbondale, where she earned a Bachelor's Degree in Communication Studies with emphasis in marketing and public relations. Courtney is the daughter of Mark and Lori Kabat, of Scheller.

Cedarhurst, located in Mt. Vernon, offers the region many art engagement opportunities, programs and events, as well as art classes for all ages. Five galleries in the Mitchell Museum and Shrode Art Center feature intriguing art exhibitions as well as prominent works of art from the museum's permanent collection. The outdoor gallery, the Goldman-Kuenz Sculpture Park, features over 70 large scale sculptures. Cedarhurst is open to the public Tuesday through Sunday throughout the year.