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The Women's Edge and The Boston Globe Name Melmark to Top 100 Women-Led Businesses in Massachusetts

Melmark President and CEO Rita M. Gardner highlighted for a 7th consecutive year for her significant impact on the state's economy.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANDOVER, Mass. (November 7, 2024) - [The Women's Edge](#) together with its partner [The Boston Globe](#)



announced Melmark was ranked #25 on its annual list of the Top 100 Women-Led Businesses in Massachusetts. Melmark President and CEO Rita M. Gardner, M.P.H., LABA, BCBA, CDE® and other honorees were recognized during a celebratory breakfast event. The 100 organizations honored generated over \$124 billion in total revenue in 2023, demonstrating that women leaders continue to be key drivers of the state's economy.

As the President and CEO of Melmark, a \$125M non-profit, multi-state human services provider with premier private special education schools, professional development, training, and research centers, Gardner leads the operations and management of Melmark's service divisions in New England, Pennsylvania, and the Carolinas with over 1,200 employees who serve 700+ individuals across 12 states. The organization's clinically sophisticated, evidence-based programs serve individuals with the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders, acquired brain injuries, medical fragility and severe challenging behaviors.

"The organizations on this year's diverse list are driving \$124 billion of revenue into the MA economy and innovation across the country, from increased manufacturing capacity to breakthroughs in clinical care and therapeutics" said The Women's Edge Chief Executive Officer Elizabeth L. Hailer. "We are honored to celebrate the Top 100 women leaders and hope it inspires others to drive for success here in our region and beyond."

Gardner, who is the co-founder of Melmark New England and Melmark Carolinas, is an accomplished legislative advocate, and her work has helped hundreds access their rights to free and appropriate public education (FAPE) and increase access to sophisticated services for individuals diagnosed with autism throughout the United States. One of her most notable accomplishments as an advocate is her work analyzing pay equity in the field of human services and actively working to reduce the wage gap direct support professionals face in direct services.

"I am honored to be recognized by The Women's Edge for a seventh consecutive year and am inspired by all of the accomplished women who are leading the way and making an impact in their respective industries across the state and country," said Gardner. "This recognition is a wonderful honor but I stand

on the shoulders of many women and men at Melmark who are committed to the mission and vision of our organization.”

This is the 24th year that The Women’s Edge – a Boston-based nonprofit organization devoted to advancing women in leadership positions — created the list through a nomination process and reviewed both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, and the 12th year that the list was created in collaboration with The Boston Globe. In addition to revenue or operating budget, factors considered in the evaluation included workplace and management diversity, board makeup, and innovative projects. The full list was published in the Globe Magazine’s recent *Women & Power* issue at bostonglobe.com/magazine.

About Melmark

Melmark is a multi-state non-profit human service organization providing clinically sophisticated evidence-based special education, residential, vocational and therapeutic services for children and adults with autism spectrum disorders, developmental and intellectual disabilities, acquired brain injuries and other neurological and genetic disorders. All specialized special education services are based on the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) and are designed based on each student’s individual needs.

Recognized as one of the leading providers in the country, Melmark has a combined staff of over 1,200 at its service divisions in Pennsylvania, New England, and the Carolinas and serves 700 individuals from across the country. To learn more, visit www.melmark.org.

About The Women’s Edge

The Women’s Edge is a non-profit organization that propels women leaders to achieve professional and personal success and deliver positive impact within their business and community. Founded in 1997, The Women’s Edge achieves this mission by collaborating and connecting extraordinary women at all stages of their careers — from next generation leaders to CEOs; continually building a pipeline of high performing women leaders; delivering relevant leadership programs, events and perspectives, with actionable insights; incorporating diversity, inclusion, and belonging to foster gender and racial equity; and leveraging technology to expand reach and amplify impact. Visit <https://thewomensedge.org/> for more information.