

“What Studio/E is doing is what I hope for the world. It’s that you can have many differences, but still find commonality because at the end of the day, we’re all human.”

- Liwanag Ojala  
Former CEO, CaringBridge

EXPLORATORY LEADERSHIP CASE STUDY:

LIWANAG OJALA



STUDIO/E

## *Exploratory Learning Community*

### **LIWANAG OJALA, FORMER CEO CARINGBRIDGE**

- **HEADQUARTERS:** Minneapolis
- **DESCRIPTION:** A nonprofit social network dedicated to helping family and friends communicate with and support loved ones during a health journey.
- **WEBSITE:** [caringbridge.org](https://caringbridge.org)

When Liwanag Ojala became CEO of CaringBridge, she was tasked with reinvigorating an organization at the juncture of digital, health care and nonprofit. Since inception, CaringBridge has existed to ensure that no one goes through a health journey alone, and Liwanag was intent on honoring and activating the community at its core.

A key principle of Exploratory Leadership is to participate within a multi-dimensional exploratory learning community with diversely experienced individuals. By surrounding ourselves with people who know things we don’t, we can expand our own thinking, leading to greater possibility and growth.

Liwanag recognized that if CaringBridge was about activating communities, then a healthy community must exist internally first.

In order for the small but mighty organization to support the 200,000+ daily website visitors (over 30 million annually), having a diverse combination of skill, will and desire was essential. Liwanag intentionally prioritized the nurturing of the unique abilities that each individual brought to the team. Fostering a dynamic organization with a broad range of experiences and specialization has allowed for a culture that puts people first, built on trust.

Leading with this approach to community helped Liwanag and her team grow the company’s customer base and nearly double the donor base, expand partnerships, including one with GoFundMe, and launch a relationship with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. It has also allowed CaringBridge to further its purpose in uniting communities around their humanity first, embracing one another’s differences in order to extend love and support to those in need.