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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Highlights 2017 Grants-to-Date**

*Foundation has committed nearly $24 million in grants across*

*40 organizations impacting its four areas of focus*

**Detroit, MI /Buffalo, NY (Oct. 19, 2017)** – Just one year after the launch of its official grant application portal, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation today highlighted nearly $24 million in grants awarded to 40 organizations throughout Western New York and Southeast Michigan since January 2017.

“Since opening the grant portal last year, our team has invested a significant amount of time learning about the many organizations that serve the Western New York and Southeast Michigan communities,” said David Egner, president and CEO, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation. “Many of the grants we made this year allow organizations to scale proven and successful programs, while some are helping to implement or pilot new programs in one of our regions.”

In addition to the learnings and findings that will come from these grants, the Foundation continues to conduct studies and scans to better inform its funding strategies within each of its core funding areas. Determined by its trustees, the four focus areas are consistent with many of Mr. Wilson’s philanthropic interests. They include:

* ***Children and Youth -*** *Focus is on strengthening young minds and bodies with early childhood initiatives, sports and recreation programs, and afterschool youth development programs.*
* ***Young Adults and Working Class Families -*** *Focus is on skills training and education initiatives that lead to sustainable career pathways and good paying jobs.*
* ***Caregivers -*** *Focus is on those caring for others – whether family members, friends or professionals – through efforts that provide needed skills, resources, education and respite. Early opportunities are primarily for those caring for older adults.*
* ***Livable Communities -*** *Focus is on contributing to strong and sustainable communities by supporting: community access and design to public spaces that support healthy living; non-profit support and innovation; and economic development levers that spur regional growth, innovation and equity.*

The following organizations, spread across all four focus areas, received grants between January and September 2017:

***Children and Youth:***

* **Allegany County Community Opportunities and Rural Development (ACCORD):** $100,000 to support ACCORD’s essential programming, while developing alternative sources of long-term funding for programs after its loss of 21st Century grant funding.
* **Aspen Institute:** $1,050,000 over three years, for continued investment in the expansion of quality youth sports opportunities in Western New York, Greater Rochester and Southeast Michigan.
* **Bing Youth Institute:** $200,000 to support the BINGO (Boys Inspired through Nuturing, Growth and Opportunities) Mentoring Program in Detroit.
* **Community Connections of New York, on behalf of the WNY Mentoring Collective:** $2.15 million to support the WNY Mentoring Collective, a cohort of nine mentoring programs collaborating to strengthen the youth mentoring field in WNY.
* **Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan:** $675,000 over three years, to implement the PEDALS (Positive Emotional Development and Learning Skills) early childhood program in Southeast Michigan.
* **Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan:** $580,000 over three years, to support its work sharing and applying the framework from the *State of Play* report to local communities across Southeast Michigan, in partnership with the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation and the Aspen Institute.
* **Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo:** $580,000 over three years, to support its work sharing and applying the framework from the *State of Play* report to local communities across Western New York, in partnership with the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation and the Aspen Institute.
* **Detroit PAL:** $575,000 over three years, to provide capacity support to transition the organization into a new and expanded facility.
* **Detroit Food and Entrepreneurship Academy:** $126,000 to expand the reach and depth of afterschool and summer programs and to support long-term strategic planning for Small Batch, its earned revenue business.
* **Diocese of Buffalo Department of Education**: $87,000 one-year bridge grant to support its afterschool programs, which have been compromised by recent cuts in funding to its 21st Century grant.
* **Independent Health Foundation:** $650,000 over three years, to support the expansion of the Soccer for Success program in Western New York.
* **Southeastern Michigan Health Association, on behalf of the Detroit Health Department:** $2 million over three years, to establish and operate SisterFriends, an effort to reduce preterm birth and infant mortality in the city of Detroit.
* **Teach for America:** $225,000 to support Teach for America’s effort to recruit and train early childhood educators who will lead some of Detroit and Buffalo’s highest need pre-kindergarten classrooms.
* **Women’s Sports Foundation:** $1 million over four years, to bring the Women’s Sports Foundation’s Sports 4 Life program to Western New York and Southeast Michigan to strengthen and grow eight local youth sports organizations in order to attract and retain more girl participants.

***Young Adults and Working Class Families:***

* **Ann Arbor SPARK:** $100,000 to support plans for the American Center for Mobility at Willow Run.
* **Buffalo Center for Arts and Technology (BCAT):** $150,000 to support increased enrollment and job placement of adult participants in its medical coding and pharmacy technician training programs.
* **Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation:** $1.5 million to support the transformation of the A. Philip Randolph Technical Education Center into a state-of-the-art construction and skilled trades training facility for youth and adults in metro Detroit.
* **Focus**: **HOPE:** $725,000 to support organizational restructuring and compensation for key new hires.
* **Macomb Community College Foundation:** $1,152,000 to support a workforce development training program in advanced manufacturing and information technology.
* **Operating Engineers Local 324:** $450,000 to support the purchase and deployment of six equipment simulators for both classroom and career event environments.
* **Say Yes to Education:** $800,000 over three years, to support Say Yes Buffalo and advance the city as a place of opportunity for boys and young men of color.

***Caregivers:***

* **Altarum Institute:** $175,000 over two years, to support the evaluation of caregiver grants to help shape the Foundation’s grantmaking strategies.
* **Alzheimer’s Association Greater Michigan Chapter:** $240,000 to support informal and professional caregivers by funding the development of the ‘train-the-trainer’ model.
* **Hearts and Hands:** $31,000 to provide general programmatic support during a capacity building process and review.
* **Hunter’s Hope:** $25,000 to support the 2017 Family and Medical Symposium.
* **Livingston County Catholic Charities:** $90,000 to support the operations of four programs that provide resources and respite to caregivers.
* **Research Foundation at SUNY (UB):** $135,000 over two years, to connect occupational therapist graduate students with caregivers to provide them with practical, customized solutions for their unique caregiving challenges.
* **Rochester Presbyterian Home:** $151,000 to support the implementation of a new professional development curriculum designed to empower staff and improve quality of life for residents.

***Livable Communities:***

* **Causewave Community Partners:** $150,000 to support strategic development and marketing for nonprofits with missions serving the Foundation’s four focus areas in Monroe, Genesee and Orleans counties.
* **Council of Great Lakes Governors:** $50,000 to support the Council of Great Lakes Governors’ and Premiers’ 2017 Leadership Summit.
* **Council of Michigan Foundations:** $60,000 to support and expand Learning to Give, a K-12 program that teaches philanthropy as part of daily curriculum in Wayne County.
* **Detroit Economic Growth Association:** $2,003,745 to support comprehensive design and construction planning for the remaining unconstructed segments of the City of Detroit’s Inner Circle Greenway.
* **Detroit Economic Growth Association:** $175,000 to support development of a Sustainability Action Agenda for the City of Detroit’s new Office of Sustainability.
* **Detroit Riverfront Conservancy:** $345,000 over 18 months to support a design competition for West Riverfront Park.
* **Fair Food Network:** $1,500,000 over three years, to expand Double Up Health Food Incentives through innovative technology and communications in Southeast Michigan and Western New York.
* **German Marshall Fund “BUILD” Conference:** $30,000 grant for its BUILD conference, a unique transatlantic urban and regional policy and leadership conference, that will take place in the U.S. for the first time this November in Detroit.
* **Independent Sector:** $100,000 to support the Independent Sector 2017 National Conference this October in Detroit.
* **Invest Detroit:** $250,000 to support the Accelerate Michigan Innovation Competition to create jobs and support high-growth company development in Southeast Michigan.
* **National Comedy Center, Inc:** $3 million to support the development of the National Comedy Center to increase tourism and economic development in Western New York.
* **43North:** $250,000 to support the prototyping and refinement of a strategic partnership project in connection with the Western New York-based startup competition.
* **NY Funders Alliance:** $50,000 to support its bienneial NYS Funders Conference in Buffalo this November.
* **Research Foundation for the SUNY (UB):** $70,000 to the University of Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning to support Turning the Corner, a national pilot research effort combining national expertise with local knowledge base, to assess neighborhood change and inform action in post-industrial city neighborhoods.

“Our staff continue to review incoming applications and will also be gearing up to advance another round of grants planned for the remainder of this year,” said Egner. “On the operations front, the Foundation will reach another significant milestone in our limited life, as we move into our new headquarters in Detroit by the end of this month.”

Grant applications are accepted through the Foundation’s website on an ongoing basis. The web-based application allows for an easy, transparent and efficient grantmaking process from start to finish. For more information on the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation and its giving policies, visit [RCWJRF.org](http://www.rcwjrf.org/)

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**About the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation:**

*The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation is a grantmaking organization dedicated primarily to sustained investment in the quality of life of the people of Southeast Michigan and Western New York. The two areas reflect Ralph C. Wilson, Jr.’s devotion to his hometown of Detroit and greater Buffalo, home of his Buffalo Bills franchise. Prior to his passing in 2014, Mr. Wilson requested that a significant share of his estate be used to continue a life-long generosity of spirit by funding the Foundation that bears his name. The Foundation has a grantmaking capacity of $1.2 billion over a 20-year period, which expires January 8, 2035. This structure is consistent with Mr. Wilson’s desire for the Foundation’s impact to be immediate, substantial, measurable and overseen by those who knew him best. For more information visit* [*www.rcwjrf.org*](http://www.rcwjrf.org)*.*

**Media Contacts:**

Kailey Kolozsvary

Martin Davison Public Relations

585-705-8618

kkolozsvary@martingroupmarketing.com

Carly Strachan

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation

313-460-8100

carly.strachan@rcwjrf.org