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Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Announces New Staff Hires in 2022
Foundation adds Liz Gordillo, Connie Kuo, Kate Partington, Mercedes Pergande, and Nena Taormino to staff; and promotes Amy Partridge

Detroit, MI – The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation today announced the addition of five new staff members in 2022. The new hires include two new program associates: Connie Kuo and Kate Partington; a communications associate: Mercedes Pergande; a senior learning officer: Liz Gordillo; and a grants management & operations assistant: Nena Taormino. These new hires bring the Foundation’s full-time staff total to 24 employees. The Foundation also announced the promotion of Amy Partridge from grants management associate to the role of grants manager.

With more than 10 years of evaluation experience, **Liz Gordillo** serves as the Foundation’s senior learning officer. She is responsible for facilitating effective learning and evaluation management to track the progress and impact of programmatic strategies and to gain insights to further inform the Foundation’s work. In her previous roles as a research manager and program manager with the Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University and as a learning officer with the Ruth Mott Foundation, she developed, implemented, and integrated learning with a variety of nonprofit organizations and foundations.

Serving as program associates for the Foundation, **Connie Kuo** and **Kate Partington** are responsible for supporting the program team with grantmaking activities, including due diligence on grant requests, writing, responding to internal and external requests for information on grantmaking interests, undertaking routine grant processing functions, and aiding in planning.

Kuo supports the Foundation’s youth sports & recreation and nonprofit support & innovation focus areas. She grew up in southeast Michigan and spent her early career working for local government in the writing and administration of specialty court grants. She spent the last five years in Taipei, Taiwan serving as the editor of an international ESL magazine and nonprofit partner of the Taiwanese government to promote a more bilingual Taiwan. Kuo has an extensive background in copywriting, editing, and teaching.

Partington supports the Foundation’s caregiver focus area as well as the workforce efforts in the young adults and working families focus area. In her previous work as a program specialist for the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, she was responsible for program and operations management. She has also spent time interning for the United States Senate and the City of Detroit. She has extensive experience in project management, grant writing, and liaising between agencies.

As communications associate, **Mercedes Pergande** provides marketing and communications support across all focus areas of the Foundation. Coming from the humanitarian protection agency Freedom

House Detroit, Pergande has extensive experience in policy driven and intercultural strategic communications. Her background in civic engagement, public relations, design, and program strategy will all work towards the Foundation's successful storytelling.

As the grants management & operations assistant, **Nena Taormino** brings her skills in customer satisfaction as well as her experience in multifaceted support roles to the Foundation. Initially beginning at the Foundation in a temp position in 2021, Taormino transitioned to a full-time position in 2022, supporting both the grants management team and assisting with operations, ensuring the smooth and efficient operation of the office, and supporting all departments on special projects as requested.

Amy Partridge has been with the Foundation since 2017, first joining as an administrative assistant, then as a grants associate and now her most senior role as the Foundation's grants manager. In her new role, Partridge will serve as administrator to the Foundation's grants management system and grants workflow, which includes creating, amending, and dispersing grantee contacts among other duties to ensure smooth processing of grant applications and grantee disbursements.

"We are thrilled to welcome each of our new staff and honored to have our current team continue to grow within the Foundation. Each person brings with them skills and experience that are integral to our grant making strategy. I look forward to witnessing their passion and innovation come to life in their new roles." Said David O. Egner, president & CEO, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation.

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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 the devotion of Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. to his hometown of Detroit and greater Buffalo, home of his beloved Buffalo Bills NFL team. Prior to his passing in 2014, Mr. Wilson provided 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. Based in Detroit, the Foundation began with 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.