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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

International Mentoring Program Hires First Executive Director

ST. LOUIS – (December 13, 2023) - [The International Mentoring Program](#) ("IMP") proudly announces the appointment of Laura Wilson as its first Executive Director, emphasizing the organization's dedication to making mentorship meaningful – a purpose at the core of its existence.

In this newly created role, Laura will guide the organization's growth, identify new opportunities and partnerships, and raise awareness as IMP expands its reach within the St. Louis region. A St. Louis native, Laura brings a wealth of experience and a profound commitment to the community, having previously served as the as the Vice President of Development at Mission: St. Louis and later as Chief of Development at Epworth Children and Family Services.

A graduate of Michigan State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Comparative Cultures and Politics, Laura's educational background equips her with a broad understanding of societal dynamics. Her participation in [FOCUS St. Louis' Leadership St. Louis](#) further showcases her dedication to continuous personal and professional growth.

Annie Schlafly, IMP co-founder and board president, expresses excitement about this significant milestone: "We are thrilled to announce the appointment of our first Executive Director, Laura Wilson. Her wealth of experience positions her as the ideal leader to drive our organization forward. Welcome aboard, Laura!"

In addition, Susan Gobbo, co-founder of IMP, assumes the role of Program Director. Gobbo's dedication over the past seven years has been instrumental in shaping IMP's mission and impact. In her new capacity, Gobbo will bring operational excellence, event management prowess, and deep community engagement to nurture the organization's growth. Her commitment to promoting inclusivity, diversity, and cultural understanding aligns seamlessly with the core values of the organization.

IMP officially emerged as a catalyst for cross-cultural empowerment, originating from a compelling conversation between Gobbo, co-founder of the [St. Louis International Spouses/Expat Women Group](#), and Schlafly. Since its inception in October 2017, IMP has received vital support through the [St. Louis Mosaic Project](#), a regional endeavor led by the [St. Louis Economic Development Partnership](#) and the



[World Trade Center St. Louis](#). IMP facilitates meaningful connections, emphasizing cultural exchange and creating a supportive network for international women to thrive in their new community.

The program's success has been immediate, highlighting its significant global influence. IMP recently celebrated its growth to 540 members from an impressive 63 countries and regions, highlighting the program's widespread impact.

Furthermore, IMP has significantly expanded its influence by forging strategic partnerships with key entities, including [Arch Grants](#), [BioSTL](#), [Cortex Innovation Community](#), [Donald Danforth Plant Science Center](#), and the [St. Louis International Spouses/Expat Women Group](#). Noteworthy local corporations such as [CLAYCO](#), [LUZCO Technologies](#), [Nestlé Purina PetCare](#), and [St. Louis City SC](#) have also joined this collaborative effort. This underscores IMP's commitment to cultivating a supportive environment for foreign employees and their families within the St. Louis business landscape, highlighting the program's dedication to fostering a welcoming and inclusive community.

"The International Mentoring Program has been instrumental in helping a number of our international associates and their families feel a sense of belonging in St. Louis through meaningful relationships and fun, enriching experiences," said Christina Lawrence, Vice President, DE&I, [Nestlé Purina PetCare](#). "As a mentor in the program, I'm grateful for the deep relationship I have with my mentee, and that I could play a role in helping her make St. Louis home."

About International Mentoring Program

[International Mentoring Program](#) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation with the mission to connect international women and their families with St. Louis area women, welcome and integrate them into the St. Louis community, educate and increase awareness of international cultures and experiences within the St. Louis community, and work to eliminate prejudice, discrimination, and biases toward individuals of different cultures. Visit www.mentorprogramstl.org to learn more.

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