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JEN VORSE WILKA NAMED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF YOUTHTRUTH

Long-time staff member selected to lead growing team

SAN FRANCISCO – Jen Vorse Wilka has been named executive director of YouthTruth, a national program that harnesses student perceptions to help K-12 educators accelerate improvements in schools and classrooms. YouthTruth was developed in 2008 by the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP), in collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to bring the voices of students into the decision-making processes that shape education.

Wilka has been with YouthTruth since 2011, serving most recently as director of partnerships.

“Jen Vorse Wilka is a key reason why YouthTruth is what it is today, and why we have seen in the past year especially a rapid increase in its use among schools, districts, and charter management organizations,” said YouthTruth co-founder and CEP President Phil Buchanan. “Jen is a passionate advocate for really understanding the views of those who should matter most — the students whom public schools are designed to serve. She is also a great leader and manager, someone who combines passion, smarts, an incredible work ethic, and great vision.”

Before joining Youth Truth, Wilka worked as a consultant to the 25,000-student Fe y Alegria School System in Ecuador. She also held roles as a program associate at the Boston Foundation, where she developed programs and grantmaking strategies in education, youth development, and criminal justice, and as a Rappaport Public Policy Fellow in the Boston Mayor’s Office, where she worked on the Circle of Promise initiative. She holds a bachelor’s degree in English from Williams College and a master’s degree in nonprofit management from Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government.

“Students possess incredible insights about what is working in their schools and what could improve their educational experiences,” said Wilka. “I’m excited to expand our partnerships with school and district leaders to tap into that expertise. Authentic student feedback is an important piece of the puzzle that, when done well, directly supports student achievement goals.”

As executive director, Wilka will lead a growing team based in CEP's San Francisco office and be responsible for marketing YouthTruth, representing the project publicly, and overseeing district and state recruitment efforts nationally. Wilka will seek to build on YouthTruth's success as it serves elementary, middle, and high schools with its overall school experience and teacher feedback surveys. She will also join the senior leadership team at CEP.

YouthTruth partners include Summit Public Schools, San Francisco Teacher Residency, and Lancaster Independent School District.

About YouthTruth

YouthTruth is a national survey program that harnesses student perceptions to help educators accelerate improvements in their K–12 schools and classrooms. Through validated survey instruments and tailored advisory services, YouthTruth partners with schools, districts, states, and educational organizations to enhance learning for all students. Since 2008, YouthTruth has surveyed more than 365,000 students in 31 states and four countries, including Russia, Thailand, and Singapore. For more information, visit www.youthtruthsurvey.org.

About the Center for Effective Philanthropy

The Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) is a nonprofit organization with a mission to provide data and create insight so philanthropic funders can better define, assess, and improve their effectiveness and impact. CEP received initial funding in 2001 and has offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts and San Francisco, California. For more information on CEP's work, including its research, programming, and assessment tools, see www.effectivephilanthropy.org.