

Ballmers Tap Housing Expert as They Expand Anti-Poverty Efforts

By Alex Daniels

Steve and Connie Ballmer have announced that Terri Ludwig, a housing and community development leader, will join the Ballmer Group as president of philanthropy, as the couple continues to pour millions of dollars into anti-poverty programs.

For the past seven years, Ludwig has served as chief executive of Enterprise Community Partners, a nationwide affordable-housing nonprofit. She has also held community-development leadership roles at Merrill Lynch Community Development Company, Credit Suisse First Boston, and a nonprofit, Accion New York.

Current Managing Director Jeff Edmonson will remain with the Ballmer Group in Cincinnati, where he will serve as executive director of community mobilization and oversee the philanthropy's community-development work in a select group of regions, including Washington State, Los Angeles County, and metropolitan Detroit. Edmonson was not able to move to Seattle, where the Ballmer Group is located, for family reasons, according to a release. Ludwig will take over on January 7.

Focus on Data

Steve Ballmer, the former Microsoft CEO and current owner of the Los Angeles Clippers basketball team, is worth \$4.2 billion, according to *Forbes*. In 2014, Steve and Connie Ballmer ranked No. 19 on the Philanthropy 50 after they gave away an estimated \$110 million — most of it to their alma maters, Harvard University and the University of Oregon.

More recently the couple has been actively supporting projects that use data to inform public-policy debates through a website they created called USAFacts. In November, the Ballmers committed \$60 million over six years to an effort to reduce racial and socioeconomic disparities in educational success. The project, called the StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network, is designed to help school systems, businesses, charities, and civic leaders work together to improve education.

In August, the couple made another large commitment, \$59 million, that combines the data-centric approach of USAFacts and the effort to get social-service providers united on a common mission, which is a big part of the Cradle to Career Network. The money will go toward developing affordable software that can be widely used and shared and give social workers and policy makers a deep look into the challenges their clients face.

The couple praised Ludwig for realizing that a "silver bullet" won't cure poverty.

"Terri understands the complex nature of developing partnerships, policies, and practices that can create an ecosystem where kids and families thrive," the Ballmers said in a statement.

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