

Dr. Wendy Lugo Gallegos Joins The Immokalee Foundation as Director of Program Services

Since 1991, The Immokalee Foundation has prepared the next generation of leaders through a 100% focus on education, career readiness & professional development.

NAPLES, FL, UNITED STATES, March 19, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Southwest Florida's Immokalee Foundation is pleased to announce that Dr. Wendy Lugo Gallegos has accepted the pivotal Director of Program Services position. In this role, she oversees the implementation, coordination and administration of all aspects of ongoing programs, including planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling program activities.



An Immokalee Foundation student with Dr. Wendy Lugo Gallegos

Since 1991, [The Immokalee Foundation](#) has prepared the next generation of leaders through a

100% focus on education, career readiness, and professional development for students in Immokalee—from kindergarten through postsecondary education. The agricultural community of Immokalee's per capita income is \$18,694, ranking it 482nd out of 485 communities in Florida.

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Dr. Wendy Lugo Gallegos

The Immokalee Foundation's [Career Pathways](#) program ensures that every Foundation student acquires technical skills, hands-on experience, and marketable credentials.

Last year, Career Pathways received the Florida Leadership Impact Award for transforming the future of Southwest Florida and having the potential to transform Florida as a whole. It was also selected as a 2024 Example of Excelencia for culturally

relevant, evidence-based practices that strengthen the skills and needs of their students and surrounding communities. The Immokalee Foundation represents what is possible when higher education institutions and organizations intentionally serve Latino students on their journey to and through college.

Gallegos earned her bachelor's degree in Elementary and Spanish Education from Niagara University (NY) in 1993 and a master's degree in teaching English as a Second Language from Nova University in 2000. Her commitment to excellence was recognized in 2007 when she achieved National Board Certification in World Languages and received the Golden Apple Award.

Gallegos' 31-year career with Collier County Public Schools (CCPS) in Southwest Florida included teaching positions in Immokalee elementary, middle and high schools. She also held TSA (Teacher on Special Assignment) roles supporting English Language Learners, mentoring new teachers, and facilitating Response to Intervention.

In 2022, she embraced the role of CCPS' Migrant Graduation Mentor, guiding agricultural migratory juniors and seniors toward graduation and post-graduate planning.

"Working with agricultural migratory high school students is a true privilege. I am their advocate, navigating the complexities of their unique circumstances to ensure their academic success," explained Gallegos. "After the position was



Dr. Wendy Lugo Gallegos, Taylor Sawatzky and Diane Kirby of Owens-Ames-Kimball Co., The Immokalee Foundation's Barbara Hawkes and Marisol Sanders on a tour of the Learning Lab Home Construction Project



Dr. Wendy Lugo Gallegos

eliminated in 2024, I prayerfully decided to retire from CCPS and dedicate myself to completing my doctorate."

Driven by a lifelong thirst for knowledge, Gallegos pursued her Ed.D. as a first-generation high school graduate.

"This journey was both a personal challenge and a way to demonstrate to my children and grandchildren the importance of continuous learning," recalled Gallegos. "When I started my Ed.D., I had already been teaching for 26 years, but I knew there was more to discover and achieve, and I was eager to expand my own understanding."

Gallegos received her Ed.D. in Education from Florida Gulf Coast University with a concentration in Curriculum and Instruction in February 2025. Her research focused on agricultural migratory students, a group significantly represented in The Immokalee Foundation's student population.

"A substantial part of Dr. Lugo Gallegos' previous work focused on guiding Hispanic students through the often-daunting process of applying for college, securing financial aid, and developing realistic and achievable post-graduation plans," explained Noemi Y. Perez, president & CEO of The Immokalee Foundation. "She helped students identify their strengths, explore career options, and connect with resources that would enable them to thrive beyond high school. Her extraordinary experience aligns perfectly with The Immokalee Foundation's education and professional development mission. We are honored to have her on our team."

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About The Immokalee Foundation: The Immokalee Foundation's award-winning Career Pathways program provides new pathways to success and financial independence through robust programming that prepares students for well-paying, in-demand professional careers in Business Management & Entrepreneurship, Education & Human Services, Engineering & Construction Management and Healthcare. To learn more about The Immokalee Foundation, please call 239-430-9122 or visit immokaleefoundation.org.

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