Ana Conner: Hello.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Hey.

Ana Conner: Hi. Third Wave.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Welcome. Welcome. So just to kick us off, welcome to folks that are joining. We are coming on live to share a little bit about what it's like to be co-directors. My name is Kiyomi Fujikawa. I use she/her pronouns.

Ana Conner: Hi folks. My name is Ana Conner and I use they, he or she pronouns.

Kiyomi Fujikawa: And we're the co-directors of Third Wave. We started as the co-directors back in 2018 and from the first day we were committed to knowing that there would be a leadership transition at some point. We had sort of set off five years, had a moment where we were like, it's COVID, should we rethink that? But ultimately the organization is a really good place. So we're really excited to be passing the baton onto the next iteration of co-co's, so co-directors is our shorthand. Yeah, we're so excited to be able to talking with you all a little bit about passing this baton.

Ana Conner: Yes, yes. And something that, as we announced the co-director application, we heard a bunch of questions. Folks were like, how do I find a co-director? Who should I be thinking about? And how did we get started? So we figured it made sense to go on live and talk about some of those questions. Also, if we have some questions that we've already heard, if you all have questions who are listening in and want to ask them in the chat, please do so. Also, we might miss it. I will say this is my first Instagram live, so if we miss the question, we can also follow up with you in Third Waves DMs.

So just to get us started-

Kiyomi Fujikawa: Start us off.

Ana Conner: I have the first question, which is, so I'm a new co-director, or I'm a person who's applying for co-director and I have many of the qualifications, but I've never been in the ED before. Is that okay?
Kiyomi Fujikawa:
That is a great question, Ana. Third Wave is really, really open to first-time executive leaders. Ana and myself were first-time executive leaders. We had not been in leadership in this sort of formal way before. And we know our next co's, it's probably more important for folks to have experience in movement, experience with a majority sick and disabled, a majority BIPOC, a majority queer and trans team. It is a role in philanthropy, so make sure that you have the strong values, practices and community that's going to support you around supporting grassroots gender justice work. And I think maybe one other thing just to name is it's really important that the next leaders just have a clear excitement for how to unlock funds, how to make sure money is moved, how to make sure Third Wave is keeping money going to our grantees in the field.

Ana Conner:
Yes. Thank you. Okay.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Okay. We're seeing a couple questions come in about our grants, and that's not what the live is here for today unfortunately. So we're just going to stick to questions about the co-directorship structure. But those are great questions, you can send them over to info@thirdwavefund.org. Great. So the next question I will ask you, when we are thinking about the co-directorship, Ana, how did we split up the role and what might you recommend for other folks who are splitting up the role?

Ana Conner:
Yes, absolutely. So when we got started, first I'll say we met at Borealis Philanthropy and we were doing two different roles. Kiyomi was working for the Fund for Trans Generations and I was working for the Black-Led Movement Fund and the Emerging LGBTQ Leaders of Color Fund, formerly known as the TMF. And so we met each other, we were doing funding work and realized that wait, we could potentially apply for this together. And even though we weren't on the same team, we had built trust at the organization together.

And so we looked at the job description for the co-directorship and thought, okay, what are the skillsets that I have, what are the skillsets that she has, that makes sense for us to break up the role and think about, both what skillsets we have, but also what excites us? What are some things that we want to both grow into, or something that I'm fascinated with, even if I didn't have all the skills around that I could look for different trainings and skill up in that way? So we really did a series before we applied together to map out our skills and think about what we would need to develop in those collectively as a team and also as individuals. And then also what were the relationships that we needed to build to have that, to have this co-team really work and exist?

Obviously our leadership is nothing without the relationships that we came to this work with. And then one last piece I'll share that was really important for us is, because our decision making is shared, it means that there's some parts of how we broke it down that I would hold full decision making over, Kiyomi would hold full decision making over, and some of the parts that we would share that decision making. And I guess I never really said the exact breakdown. I oversee the individual fundraising and communications work and Kiyomi oversees grant making and philanthropic advocacy and the programmatic work. And then the shared bits are questions about our finances, how we do staff management and general team building and also advisory council management, because we really saw that for a lot of those parts of the work, it made sense for us to share them so that there was a bit of,
what's that called, cross ownership, or we were able to both have a say in how the finances looked, or how the advisors showed up in our work. So I hope that answers that question.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Yeah, and I see a couple other questions that are coming in, some of which we're going to get to. One I wanted to just flag really quick. Someone asked what's the education requirement for the role? If someone has comparable experience, do they need a High School Diploma? Do they need a College Degree? And the reality is, we know that some of our folks don't roll through the education system and that's totally fine. We understand there is a push-out system in schools. And also just to name, this is a role in philanthropy. It is a lot of navigating spaces that are really not built for us, that that can be pretty difficult to navigate and can replicate some of those traditional systems. So just separate from the education piece, I think in general, but if you're someone who's really used to working outside systems, that's a great skill. We need that in philanthropy and just to know some of your day-to-day as interfacing with donors, talking through philanthropy and knowing that there's a lot of resources to unlock and move out of philanthropy.

So yeah, I wanted to talk to that. I see there's also a question about just how the transition prep is going and what is that. I will say we've known, when we started we were like five years, and then we checked in and we were like, yep, it's still five years. So we're doing this. So we've kind of always had it in mind. We're working with Strategies for Social Change who's a consulting group that actually helped hire us, so that's really cute and really fun, full circle moment. And they've been working with us for, we've been actively planning this, it'll be about a year, a little over a year start to finish. So there's a lot of intention and a lot of thought going into it there.

And people are asking about the start time of the position. That's a great question. So we're going to get to it later, but applications are due July 31st. And we're going to have an interview process. There is a committee. We are not on the committee. I will just say it's part of us passing on leadership to the rest of the team to make that decision. We're expecting folks to start around January, 2024, or specifically January, 2024. And we'll overlap with folks for a couple of months, probably through the end of February, just to make sure folks are grounded.

There also is a really strong team at Third Wave. We have amazing staff. You'll have so much fun working with all of them and they're really able to hold, as well as our advisor advisory committee and our fiscal sponsor. So yeah, there's a lot of support there. So just wanted to name that. Getting us back to the role, I'm wondering if you have questions for me about what it was like for us to prep for that.

Ana Conner:
I have so many questions. So I'm applying and what prep work did you do beforehand?

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
That's a great question. Folks have a lot of time, maybe not a lot of time, but it's May applications are due July 31st, July 31st. And I hope that date is right. If I'm saying it wrong, Monica-

Ana Conner:
It's definitely July 31st.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Great. I'm like, that is not when I have the fact up on the computer behind the screen, but you have some time to prep. And I think for us, Ana alluded to this already, but the thing that you can never train up on the role. When you're in the job, of course you're going to figure out a bunch of stuff that you didn't know you had to figure out. Of course that's going to happen. The thing that you need to do ahead of time, is make sure you work with your CO to know that you are aligned on work style, that you're aligned on values, that you're aligned on navigating conflict and disagreement.

We spent a lot of time together talking through something is going to come up and we're not going to agree. How do we navigate that? Who are the folks that we would go to for input, whether that's staff, advisors, grantee, movement folks that we really trust, our individual, just like accountability pod, and just really knowing what our expectations are of each other, of how we're going to roll through conflict, how we're going to show up together. And just know it's a very powerful connection to have with someone, and it's a deep one. We spend a lot of time together. We're here together in person, which is really nice. So yeah, I don't know if there's other things that you want to share.

Ana Conner:
No, I think that's right. I think you covered that. I'm also seeing, I think Monica's being very supportive and DM-ing us questions.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Oh, great, great, great. I will pull those up.

Ana Conner:
See if we missed anything.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
And I see there's also, let's see. Oh yeah, I'll look on the DMs. When would the co-director start? What's the transition plan overall? Do you want to talk more to that? I know we just said the dates and some of the things. What's a challenge in co-directing that you did not expect Ana Conner?

Ana Conner:
Okay, so the transition overall, I guess, how much more deeply do we want to? So, I think the idea is that the applications happen January, or July 31st. Then there will be a series of interviews. So Strategies for Social Change will hold some interviews with folks and also we will share some contact information after, if you have direct questions for our consultants who are really, with our staff and advisors, are leading the process. And there will be time for our staff and advisors to review the applications.

Then interviews will start, I think it's in August, and run through really November to find the next Co's. Then when the co-directors are hired, we plan to have overlapping time, like Kiyomi mentioned, for about two months. It's a critical time where a lot of relationships will be transferred, we'll share all the institutional knowledge that we have, we'll have a bunch of resources for the co-directors to move into those new roles. And then the plan is for us to be out, and for folks to fully be in those roles.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
One thing I just thought of is that the consultants who are holding the process Strategies for Social Change, also provide coaching for the new co's. And that was so helpful for us, because we got in, we had never been in positional leadership before. It was our first time. Did we look good doing it? I don't
know if we did. We tried. And it was really helpful to have a coach who had actually been a part of the whole hiring process, knew actually probably what the fear, they never explicitly were like, here's what people were worried about when they hired you, but likely they knew what existential questions was the organization dealing with, and were just able to coach us through as we got there.

And a lot of it, I will say, a lot of the coaching advice we got was like, here you go, little bird, fly. Because we actually do know, and I think folks in movement do know what are the solutions that we need. And it was scary for me, I will say. I don't know if it's scary for folks on this call to navigate philanthropy. We had been in philanthropy before, but not at any near close to the level that we're at now, in terms of positional leadership. But yeah.

Ana Conner:
Yeah, that's right. And what was the other question that came in the... I'm forgetting now?

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Oh yeah. Transparent facilitation. Is there an ideal required term or time commitment for holding the co-directors positions?

Ana Conner:
There's definitely not a required term. So I'll share from our perspective. When we were interviewing, we decided that five years made sense to us, and our leadership and how we thought how much time we could commit. And Kiyomi shared at the top, that was something that was deeply a part of the conversations from the beginning, which actually made it really easy to have to be able to transition out as we are now. To have that commitment to each other too, because I think that was something that was really, because you're applying as two, you have to be really deeply committed to okay, wait, we're going to do this together in the same time capacity. So having that was important. I think five years, if I personally would share, I think five years was a good commitment, and I don't know what you would add there?

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Yeah, I will say the leader before us also was an ED for five years. So just organizational culture wise, five years is what has been practiced, and we will not be the co-director, so we don't actually know what folks might want or hope for or dream. I would say, unless you're coming in as like boom, I've been an executive director at a million other places. I've been in philanthropy at a million other places. If you were one or two years, you probably wouldn't get done the things that's that you're going to want to do as a co-director, and be able to push that along. So that's the ideal time commitment.

What was a challenge that you didn't expect, Ana? Also, I'm asking these, so if you want to popcorn that one to me, I could kick-

Ana Conner:
What's the challenge that you didn't expect, Kiyomi?

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
I had no idea that question was coming, Ana. Wow. Wow, wow. Just really, really cutting to the core. I think, I remember our first three months on the job, maybe we got requests that I was just like, I never thought I would have to ask this. I never thought that I would have to deal with these sorts of things.
And they were not problems, or things that were breaking down that we were maybe stressed about, but it was more like, Hey, there's an opportunity to start a donor organizing program with a group in the Bay that's starting to fold. Would that be something that Third Wave wants to hold instead? Or something like that. And we had to be like, what do we say yes or no to? It's clear what the calls for movement are, and we also have to reckon with our capacity.

So I think, one thing that surprised me was just, we are the only ones that were saying yes or no. I think, both of us can be the type of folks that are like, let's do the next thing. Let's keep going, let's keep going. And we had to be the ones to be... In other roles, I had a boss that would be like, this is too much, slow down. And I think, we had to be the ones to manage, to look at our team and be like, how much can our team do? Because we're also not saying yes for us, we're saying yes for a whole group of people. And I think that was something that was new and challenging for me. How about for you? Were there challenges?

Ana Conner:
Yeah, I mean we spoke to the showing up in Philanthropy challenge as who we are. I think what was a challenge? I think something that was new for me, is when we started, it was a smaller team. And by the time now that we're leaving, I believe we'll be a team of 19. And because that growth happened within our time, it has been a challenge for me to level up as both having to start as a new ED, and then having to learn as we go. Also navigating the pandemic, you all, honestly, that was a big challenge for all of us. And so I think that recognizing that the team has shifted and understanding that the organization was different than when we started and when we came in.

But I think something to that point, which I'm really excited about is that a part of that process has been building out a leadership team. So beyond Kiyomi and me, we have three director level positions that are forming a team right now, that will provide a ton of support for the next co-leaders, and for the organization in general. So yeah, both having to navigate some shifts internally and then having to figure out, okay, what does that mean? How do I need to level up my leadership to be able to support the organization? And, sorry, there's some motorcycles going by.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Oh, cutie. Motorcycles. Okay.

Ana Conner:
Mindful of the time.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Yeah. I want to ask, how do you find a good co, Ana? What do you think?

Ana Conner:
Okay, so I shared a bit about where we both came from in this work before, and I think what was really important was the various experiences that we brought. I wasn't trying to find a copy and paste version of me. I wanted someone who had different experiences than me, that came from different movement building experiences and organizing experiences, so that we could have that shared political analysis. And ultimately we came to this work with very similar values, but different experiences. So I think that was really important to have that, and to come with different communities committed to supporting us.
Transcript for Instagram Live with outgoing Co-Directors, Ana Conner and Kiyomi Fujikawa on May 12, 2023. Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/CsJYltzIlMq/

Also, I think finding folks with complimentary skills. I was really geeked about thinking about finances and fundraising. And Kiyomi was super geeked about the programmatic work and that just really supported us in thinking about the organization more broadly. Also, and you mentioned this earlier, but finding someone who you've had some transformative, you've navigated conflict with, and have moved through that. Because I think, if you are able to move through conflicting disagreements or whatever conflict and come out on the other side stronger, then you're going to be able to do this work. I think that's a really big part of it. So yeah, I think that's good.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Yeah, I think you nailed that question.

Ana Conner:
Great.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
It's great having a co. Yeah, make sure you have a strong working relationship and yeah, it's such a great way. I think too, as emerging leaders, I definitely would not have applied for this job without you as a co.

Ana Conner:
Oh yeah, no way.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
If you were like, no, I'm not doing it, I would've been like, okay, that was a fun idea. And I do think part of that is the ED role is a lot, the co-co role is full. But yeah, I do think knowing I was sharing that with someone, knowing that there was someone I could ask questions to. Which kind of brings to this next question. I'm curious if you have a question for me here.

Ana Conner:
I do. I do. I want to apply, but I don't have a co-director. Help. What do I do?

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Oh, no you don't have a co. Ana, I'm right here. What am I? So I will say the best practice... There are so many motorcycles going by here, us here today. I'm going to pause for one second on the sound and you could let us know if you can't hear us at any point. But the best practice is for you to find co for yourself. We think the pairing, the matchmaking, it's very loaded. And for the co-directors that we've seen struggle, I think, a lot of times it is folks that got just two people hired, because they had similar skillsets, but folks weren't able to talk about the conflict and some of the other things that we talked about.

So if I was looking for a co again, I think I would talk to my networks, I would talk to my friends, I would talk to my friends of friends, and be like, what are the things that we need? What are the skillsets I have? I think there was deep, deep self reflection. We actually went through the job description and we're like this one, one through five, where am I at? And we had some months when we were in this process of doing the interviewing, where I could go to a finance class, I could prep myself for that. So I would encourage you to do that deep self-reflection when you're looking for a co.
Transcript for Instagram Live with outgoing Co-Directors, Ana Conner and Kiyomi Fujikawa on May 12, 2023. Link: https://www.instagram.com/p/CsJYltzIlMq/

This should be a role that is a wholehearted, yes. This shouldn't be a role that you have to twist someone's arm to, and hopefully you're an organizer if you're applying, and you're used to doing an ask, you're used to going out and being like, Hey, I think you'd be amazing as a co-director, what would a yes look like? What would a heartfelt, deep from the gut, yes, feel like for you? Is there a way to get us there?

Your co should be a fellow strategist and a confidant, a cheerleader, a sounding board, an accountability buddy, maybe someone that shares your sense of humor. That has been very important for the two of us in terms of our working relationships. So when you hear those words, who's the first person you think of? And I think, it might be your bestie. You probably need your bestie in the next corner of support outside of that. You could apply with your bestie. I'm not saying don't apply, but also make sure you have a network of support outside of just your co too.

And that brings me up to the next question, which is it just co-directors. **Would Third Wave accept a solo act?** What do you think about that, Ana?

Ana Conner:
Yeah, that's a great question. So as an organization, our org decided, no, we are only accepting co-director applications. And I think, that was a really powerful decision that we made and that only folks that are applying together. So if you're sending in applications as an individual, those aren't going to be accepted. And what we would encourage you to do instead, is think about like Kiyomi shared, who might be a powerful pair.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Okay. It looks like we just have time for one or two more questions. I have one that is, **do you hold work or positions outside of Third Wave, and how do you handle other personal and professional responsibilities?**

Ana Conner:
That's a great question. So I'll share that. Outside of Third Wave, I'm on a few boards, board of directors. So I'm on the board for the Transgender Law Center and Funders for LGBTQ Issues, also from my local community garden, shout-out Hope Steven. I make the time for that work. I also see that as deeply connected to being an accountable co-director. I want to be a part of the work outside of Third Wave. And it takes some time management. It definitely means that oftentimes boards meet on the weekends anyway, so it works out. But there are still opportunities to engage and work outside. But I will say that being a co-director is a lot of work. It is a full-time job. So I don't have other paid positions outside.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Personally, I was like, I'm prioritizing this. I know what else I want to prioritize in my life, in terms of the personal things. And I was like, work is not otherwise on the list besides this. Because I think it would be pretty hard to juggle other work personally. But you know your other roles, your skillsets, and we are a 32 hour work week. It is flexible. Our office hours are Monday through Thursday, and sometimes we flexed around. Sometimes we're like, I'll work a Friday because I need to go do something on a Thursday. I think the other thing to know is that our team works across time zones. So really being able to know, okay, I'm going to work across different time zones, is helpful because as a West Coast person that supervises staff that are over on the East coast, we have more limited hours that we can meet up. So I really have to make sure that those hours work, so that I can talk to my team.
And then so don't forget, July 37th we will be-

Ana Conner:
31st.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
31st. Oh God, 37th isn't even a date. And there's a question about reporting to a board. Do you want to talk about our advisors?

Ana Conner:
Yes. So we are, Third Wave Fund is fiscally sponsored by Proteus Fund. So Proteus Fund's board is our board of directors, and we at Third Wave have an advisory council who we call our “STARS”, the strategic advisors. They're great.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Revolutionaries.

Ana Conner:
Oh yeah. Strategic Advisor revolutionary.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Revolutionary.

Ana Conner:
And so they are a fabulous, fabulous group of folks that we do report to, and they support us a ton in our leadership and as an organization. And a lot of the folks on our advisory council come from movement, or come from philanthropy, or different organizing spaces.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
I would just say when you're a director, I feel like you really get to see how much a board is there to support you.

Ana Conner:
That's right.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
And really support the team and the organization. But I will say it feels less like, oh no, we need to report to our board and more like, I have this rich movement question I don’t know how to solve. Let me get some really, really key ideas. We have former stars here that we could shout out. And I think it is incredibly, incredibly helpful just for supporting the organization more broadly. Collection of folks that have been former grantees. I think one thing I'll just name, the last thing I'll name, because I know we're basically out of time, but is that you really want a strong support network. No one can do this work alone. No one can do this work with just two people. You actually do need...
Ana Conner:
One second.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
The motorcycles are just circling. But you need folks that are supporting you on the personal level. You need folks that are supporting you on a strategic level. You need folks that can support you on a funding level. You really get comfortable with the asks. So yeah. So the other questions... Thank you all for joining us today. The other questions, please email over to coedsearch@thirdwavefund.org and you could also DM them to the Instagram page too, and Monica will take a look at them, or Priya will take a look at them. And the deadline to apply again July. July 31st.
We're so excited. The salary's not split. Some people had some questions about that. Please make some time and talk with Strategies for Social Change, who are the consultants that are leading the process. They can give you the whole update and yeah, just really talk you through. But thank you so much.

Ana Conner:
Thank you all so much for joining.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Yeah, it's nice to see some familiar faces. This will be recorded, so if you missed part of it...

Ana Conner:
It'll be on the timeline.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Check it out.

Ana Conner:
Bye.

Kiyomi Fujikawa:
Thank you.