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To:

Dear Friends:

You are invited to join a new endeavor that I am leading, "[Play.CLOH.org](http://Play.CLOH.org)." Thank you for considering this proposal and responding. This letter provides insights into a **pathway** for obtaining a \$40,000 grant from the Sprout Fund. Its eventual implementation includes you joining our **playlist** of **digital badges** at [LRNG.org](http://LRNG.org).

**Request #1: Check out the plan.**

An outline of the Play.CLOH.org proposal follows. If you have questions, let's talk on the phone or in person. For now, we do not need to slave over the details of the implementation of the grant until after it is awarded. I'm committed to doing the bulk of the work, but your support in a few key areas is going to be most welcomed.

**Request #2: Submit a letter of support.**

I'm seeking a letter of support for this venture to be published and included in the formal grant application, due April 8, 2015. I'd love to get your letter in a week or so. In the letter, you can:

1) Introduce your organization, its history, and your overall capacity for service to those ages 13 and older.

2) State some mention of our previous interactions. Perhaps we've worked together in the past or else you are aware of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, the Sprout Fund, City of Learning or other hopeful players here. Shared history provides credibility.

3) Address your desire to champion the theme of "playing well with others." Or, make a statement about any of the three-youth-engagement settings: sports/recreation, technology/computer programming, career/personal development.

Send to [Mark@Rauerkus.com](mailto:Mark@Rauerkus.com). Or, mail to: Mark Rauterkus, 108 S. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Pittsburgh, PA, 15203.

### **Optional Request #3: Boosting network strength always welcome.**

If others should be included, or if you can lend networking assistance with the other possible players within the venture, do it. Your help is welcomed. Call. Keep me posted.

#### **Invited players include:**

+ Government: Pittsburgh Public Schools Athletics, PPS Out-Of-School-Time, City of Pittsburgh Public Safety, Citiparks' Big League Program, West Penn Rec Center.

+ Nonprofits: Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (financial oversight); Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center; Kevin Carter's Adonia Center; Jerry McMeekin of Coaching Boys Into Men of PAAR.net.

+ Sports & Rec: Venture Outdoors, Thelma Lovette YMCA; Sarah Heinz House; Charlie Batch Foundation; Hosanna House; Pittsburgh Project; First Tee of Pittsburgh; Jewish Community Center; Sandcastle Water Park; Yoga instructor, Tim Krupar; American Water Polo (with Pgh Combined aquatics).

+ Tech Companies: Spider Learning, Fred Gohh of Team Citius cycling and app developer of PT Helper, LiveCode.com, Claire & Mark Siskin of CMU and the LiveCode community.

+ Corporate: Craig Cozza of Pro Bikes and Elite Runners & Walkers; Nancy Hart of Urban Media Today;

+ Religious: South Side Presbyterian Church.

#### **Associates for inclusion at a later date may include:**

Richard King of Mindful Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, and SKWIM USA.

## **Outline of Play.CLOH.org Proposal**

### **Past & Future:**

In 2015, a much smaller grant of \$2,500 was earned via The Sprout Fund to deploy digital badges with Pittsburgh City of Learning to our students at PPS Summer Dreamers. These digital badges are much like the Scouts' merit badges. A system, now defunct, assisted organizations with enrollment and challenges and administrators could craft and bestow these digital tokens to participants for displaying specific skills, knowledge and/or dispositions. Our staff pushed and created more than 20 digital badges.

In 2016, the system gets an overhaul and is being re-branded as LRNG.org. Our past digital badges can be migrated and re-introduced this spring. But the RFP (request for proposals) calls for a team approach and playlists and pathways of experiences for those ages 13 and older. Plus, efforts tied to building a local workforce and helping youngsters in their careers is desired.

### **Play.CLOH.org's first target: PPS Athletes**

The Play.CLOH.org plan includes PPS Athletics as a partner and first base for recruitment. PPS student athletes, coaches, boosters, guardians, teachers and friends that want to opt in can do so at an August, public kickoff, perhaps at Sandcastle. We'll seek to get 400 high school kids \$100 of support, for the \$40,000 total of the grant. Each student gets a Raspberry Pi after a preseason class / orientation. About 50% of the budget is invested into tech tools for the students to own.

I've worked on the PPS Athletic Reform Task Force and coached swimming since 1976, with nine seasons as a college coach (2014-15 with CMU women's water polo team). We need to get further assistance and additional opportunities to our city's high-school athletes and students. Furthermore, Pittsburgh is a sports and technology town. Our greater community is going to be called to connect with the youngsters in positive ways, as we build meaningful interactions among various sites and populations. Sportsmanship, teamwork and playing well with others are skills that can be reinforced throughout the community in a wide range of activities and settings.

## **Action Plan**

### **Initial Wave: Play.**

Envision kids and adults from different parts of the city and county engaged through a robust, open-source calendar of sporting events and activities that includes: speed golf, kayaking, yoga, swimming, deck hockey, spinning, weight lifting, seminars and more. We'll leverage play as an outreach avenue for the first wave of engagement to fitness, wellness, life-long learning and digital badges.

### **Second Wave: Technology.**

The digital badges we've created, plus, the new ones we have yet to create for you with your assistance, present a suite of tech gizmos that can be strung together in a playlist for the high school students. But these efforts aim to motivate the student athletes to a much higher level. We want to help them embrace a pathway of technology that goes from competency, to literacy, to fluency, to brilliance.

After an orientation class, we'll give each student their own Raspberry Pi 3 computer and access to LiveCode.com's open source software. We'll offer classes, encouragement and support that blend sports and technology leading to computer programming, app development and computer science experiences. Understand rules, research, write, code, manage the digital badges, of course, use the Raspberry Pi, develop team playbooks, exercise routines, stats, player bios, recruiting letters, college essays, sports journalist blogs, technique videos. More digital badges.

### **Final Wave: Development – both career and personal.**

Job and career experiences form part of the third wave, development. Opportunities to

be a sports journalist, lifeguard, golf pro shop worker, and Junior Police Academy participants are to be offered. Additionally, goal setting and goal orientation are covered in a six-step digital badge sequence that can greatly assist all athletes and scholars.

**Desired commitments from various players in Play.CLOH.org endeavor:**

**Digital Badges:** All of the organizations in this budding network do fantastic work with our youth, and every organization has specific activities that led themselves to steps on a challenging pathway of digital badges. We look forward to consulting with each organization to craft a plan for one-to-three new digital badges that support your existing programs.

**Community-wide events:** For the 2015-2016 school year, we'd like to coordinate calendars and host one-to-three special sporting events for our participants and/or greater community within your site.

**Cross-promotion of your core activities:** The specific Play.CLOH.org network and the overall infrastructure of LRNG.org can cross-promote your core activities to additional students and community members. We desire determined, dedicated and disciplined participants in sports and fitness. We can all celebrate their energy and encourage a better support of technology, goal-setting and career options in these efforts.

In reality, the outcomes and events are going to be customized and branded to each organization's desires and parameters. The administrators at Play.CLOH.org hope to work with you to build solutions that fit everyone's needs and schedules.

In summary, I think it is prudent to brainstorm in person or in smaller groups throughout the spring and summer. We can prepare for the launch in the fall, if we get the grant's approval.

Thanks for your help and guidance.

Sincerely yours,

Mark Rauterkus

[Mark@Rauterkus.com](mailto:Mark@Rauterkus.com)

<http://CLOH.org>