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Subject: Letter of Support for Play.CLOH.org

Dear Sprout Fund,

The Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC) is writing in support of Mark Rauterkus' Play.CLOH.org program in its application for funding through The Sprout Fund. We are enthusiastic about the potential of Play.CLOH.org, a digital badging program that seeks to combine coding, personal development, career development, and play, to be a catalytic platform for youth development in Pittsburgh.

The ENEC aims to support the employment and development of youth, particularly those aging out of foster care. The ENEC always aids numerous young people in searching and applying for jobs, creating resumes, and conducting mock interviews to prepare them for the hiring process. The ENEC was the lead recruitment site (600+ applications accepted) for the City of Pittsburgh Learn and Earn Youth Job Program which gives a foundation for Play.CLOH.org to scaffold upon. Mark has worked as needed in part-time positions for the ENEC to help continue the growth in these programs.

One youth-centered activity to note, in partnership with Neighborhood Learning Alliance (NLA), is the ENEC's Tech Titans, a web development program for homeless youth. More than a dozen high school students learned HTML5 and WordPress in our offices in the fall of 2015.

Our agency has demonstrated a commitment to working with youth, and assisting them to maximize their opportunities to achieve their personal, academic, and career goals. The ENEC is excited to lend our expertise to assist in Play.CLOH.org's personal development component, since its focus on building 21st Century skills, playing well with others, and workforce readiness aligns with our mission to improve the economic and social conditions of our community.

Staff at the ENEC have admired Mark's work in swimming with BGC, and are confident in his ability to implement and facilitate a broad, collaborative project that engages Pittsburgh's youth in a way that fosters positive social interactions and practical skills that position them to succeed now and in the future. The ENEC fully endorses Mark in this endeavor, and is proud to offer the necessary support needed in implementing it.

Sincerely,

Rick Flanagan,
ENEC Manager