



Allegheny County Department of Children Initiatives

RFP Response Form

RFP for Out-of-School Time Capacity Building

PROPOSER INFORMATION

Proposer Name: Dragons Den

Authorized Representative Name & Title: Monte Bohna, PhD

Address: 1008 Amity St, Homestead, PA 15120

Telephone: 412-461-3336

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Website: <https://dragonsdenpgh.org/>

Legal Status: For-Profit Corp. Nonprofit Corp. Sole Proprietor Partnership
 Local Education Agency (LEA)

Date Incorporated: 2017

Partners included in this Proposal: Propel CS-Homestead

How did you hear about this RFP? *Please be specific.* Dr. Aaron Johnson, Chief Strategy Officer, Consortium for Public Education

Does your organization have a telecommunications device to accommodate individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing? Yes No

REQUIRED CONTACTS

	Name	Phone	Email
Chief Executive Officer	Giulia Lozza Petrucci	412-901-0522	Giulia.lozza.petrucci@dragonsdenpgh.org
Contract Processing Contact	Giulia Lozza Petrucci	412-901-0522	Giulia.lozza.petrucci@dragonsdenpgh.org
Chief Information Officer	Giulia Lozza Petrucci	412-901-0522	Giulia.lozza.petrucci@dragonsdenpgh.org

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Chief Financial Officer	Giulia Lozza Petrucci	412-901-0522	Giulia.lozza.petrucci@dragonsdenpgh.org
MPER Contact*	Giulia Lozza Petrucci	412-901-0522	Giulia.lozza.petrucci@dragonsdenpgh.org

* *[MPER](#) is DHS's provider and contract management system. Please list an administrative contact to update and manage this system for your agency.*

BOARD INFORMATION

Provide a list of your board members as an attachment or in the space below.

See attachment, "DD Board of Trustees"

Board Chairperson Name & Title: Dr. Aaron Johnson, Chief Strategy Officer, Consortium for Public Education

Board Chairperson Address: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Telephone: [REDACTED]

Board Chairperson Email: [REDACTED]

REFERENCES

Provide the name, affiliation and contact information [include email address and telephone number] for three references who are able to address relevant experience with your organization. *Please do not use employees of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services as references.*

Robert Levin, Chairman, Levin Furniture & Mattress

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Buddy Hobart, Founder and President, Solutions 21

[REDACTED]

bhobart@solutions-21.com

Hannah Sitz, Executive Director, Methodist United Social Agencies of the Steel Valley

412-461-1800

hannahs@musasv.org

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Date Submitted 3/2/2022

Amount Requested: \$96,177

CERTIFICATION

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Please check the following before submitting your Proposal, as applicable:

I have read the standard County terms and conditions for County contracts and the requirements for DHS Cyber Security, EEOC/Non-Discrimination, HIPAA and Pennsylvania's Right-to-Know Law.

By submitting this Proposal, I certify and represent to the County that all submitted materials are true and accurate, and that I have not offered, conferred or agreed to confer any pecuniary benefit or other thing of value for the receipt of special treatment, advantaged information, recipient's decision, opinion, recommendation, vote or any other exercise of discretion concerning this RFP.

Choose one:

My Proposal contains information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information and I have included a written statement signed by an authorized representative identifying those portions or parts of my Proposal and providing contact information.

OR

My Proposal does not contain information that is either a trade secret or confidential proprietary information.

ATTACHMENTS

Please submit the following attachments with your Response Form. These can be found at <http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/solicitations>.

- Partner commitment letters, if applicable
- MWDBE and VOSB documents
- Allegheny County Vendor Creation Form
- Audited financial reports or other financial documentation for the last three years
- W-9
- Completed budget template

REQUIREMENTS

Please respond to the following. The maximum score a Proposal can receive is 110 points. Your response to the following section should not exceed 12 pages. (Pages 1-3 are not included in the page count).

Organizational Experience (15 points possible)

1. Describe your organizational experience providing OST programs or programming that works with children and families.

Located in an historic building in Homestead, PA, Dragon's Den is a 501(c)(3) non-profit providing transformative experiential learning environments to the children of the Steel Valley and the greater Pittsburgh region since its founding in 2017. Among other plaudits, our Executive Director, Giulia Lozza Petrucci, has just received the 2022 Rob Zellers Award for Excellence in Arts Education, bestowed by

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Pittsburgh Public Theatre in recognition of Dragon's Den's success in encouraging students from Homestead and nearby communities to participate in the Shakespeare Monologue Contest as part of our afterschool program.

Centered on the use of a therapeutic challenge course consisting of suspended rope course, zipline and climbing wall (the most sophisticated in the tri-state region), Dragon's Den offers programming in three principal areas: an afterschool enrichment program for students, summer camps designed to stimulate curiosity and learning to supplement children's in-school time, and workshops offered both in and out of our facility promoting social-emotional learning, confidence-building, teamwork and self-esteem.

The importance to our work of experiential learning through the therapeutic challenge course cannot be overstated: proof of the benefits of challenge courses, which were first used for educational and therapeutic purposes in Europe starting in the late 1960s, has grown steadily since that time. Our record itself is proof of the value of our central idea: despite the pandemic, we served nearly 5,000 children and more than thirty schools and organizations in 2021, and have earned the praise of Pittsburgh-area educators, social service providers, local political leaders and pediatric physicians for the value of our work with children from a wide range of backgrounds. Kerry Bron, MD, has noted this aspect of Dragon's Den's programs: "Rarely have I been so impressed by the value of an organization in its neighborhood. As a pediatrician I appreciate the value of children interacting with other children of different ages, which makes the play space more like a family, [and] children of different socioeconomic backgrounds and races interacting with one another. As studies have borne out, the diversity to which these children are exposed is advantageous to all. They all have the opportunity to learn about different types of people as they grow up in a society that is increasingly diverse. The diversity that I observed and the friendships that these children formed benefited all".

2. Describe your organizational experience working in high-need communities, especially the community(ies) you are proposing to serve.

Dragon's Den makes it home in Homestead, a community identified by Allegheny County DHS as an area of extreme need. In 2021 alone, we served almost five thousand children across our three program areas, and while bringing new life to an historic building in the heart of Homestead, we have concentrated our efforts on meeting the needs of the children and families of Homestead. That commitment to a high-need community has not passed unnoticed: Lloyd Cunningham, vice president of Homestead borough council, has said of Dragon's Den that its "commitment to the community, the people (especially youth), has been inspirational and as an asset of the town". Likewise, Ed Wehrer, superintendent of Steel Valley School District, has expressed his excitement at the "creative energies" Dragon's Den has brought to Homestead. The mayor of Homestead has said "the community is anticipating wonderful results" from our presence in the borough. Dragon's Den is not the oldest youth-focused organization in greater Pittsburgh, but its experience working in one of the highest-need parts of the region has already won the confidence of Homestead's leaders, built solid relationships with the borough's families, and is making a real difference in the lives of its children.

Program Design (70 points possible)

3. Provide an overall description of your proposed Program and how it meets DCI's goals, including:

- Describe how you are opening new quality OST slots (certified child care or community based) in a community that lacks them. Please include the proposed number of new slots.

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- Describe how you will provide a consistent Program schedule that meets the needs of families in your selected community, including the hours and days of operation.
- Describe how you will provide children with a safe space to spend time and the physical location you intend to use.
- Describe how you will create opportunities for children to engage in enriching activities and what participants will gain from engaging in your program.
- Describe how your Program serves historically underrepresented populations.

Building upon our experience providing enriching afterschool programming during the Covid pandemic in 2021, during which we provided afterschool programming for 20 students twice weekly, we intend to expand our capacity by offering 40 slots for children aged 7-13 five days per week. Our program plan meets the needs of our community in two ways: first, through a consistent five-day 3:00-6:00pm schedule Monday through Friday; second, by offering this program at no charge to the residents of zip code 15120 (Homestead, West Homestead, Whitaker, and Munhall).

Expanding our afterschool program to 40 slots will significantly expand the availability of quality out-of-school time (OST) opportunities for students in Homestead and nearby communities. Our service area certainly qualifies as one of Allegheny County's most arid of OST deserts: by comparison to other parts of the greater Pittsburgh region, Homestead (and the Steel Valley generally) lacks accessible and affordable quality OST programs. For our target population of students aged 7-13 in particular, the options are few. Athletic summer-time programs, primarily involving participation in team sports, are offered by the Borough of West Homestead's Calhoun Park Summer Program and the Best of the Batch Foundation's "Project CHUCK" summer basketball program. During the school year, Methodist Union of Social Agencies (with whom we partner) offers afterschool programs at Steel Valley School District's Park and Barrett Elementary Schools for children in kindergarten through 4th grade, a younger age group than our program serves. Best of the Batch, according to their representative, has suspended its normal year-long afterschool program during the construction of its new facility. To our knowledge, no other organization is offering OST opportunities in the area for "tween" children aged 7-13.

Our facility, the restored former St Mary Magdalene Church in central Homestead, is a safe and welcoming space for children. In physical terms, the building is structurally sound and renovated to the most demanding requirements of safety. Entrances are limited and monitored, while in case of urgent necessity the Homestead Borough Police Station and Volunteer Fire Department, just two streets from us, is a mere two minutes from our front door. The journey from Propel-Homestead Charter School, from which many of our students come, is not a long one - it is precisely 371 feet from door to door. But in respects other than physical safety, Dragon's Den is also a safe space for children. Housed in the Italian Romanesque grandeur of the old St. Mary Magdalene's, our facility surrounds children in the beauty and grandeur of a historic landmark building repurposed for children and their needs, while our staff (all of whom are required to provide criminal and child abuse clearances) have received extensive training in program delivery, instruction, and managing childhood emotional trauma and behavioral issues.

Our program is informed by the mounting body of scientific research on the effects of the pandemic on children in the last two years, and designed to complement and expand upon the curriculum provided by schools in our service area in order to provide an enriching, academically valuable program which promotes students' mental and physical well-being. The program rests on three pillars: physical and nutritional health, academic support, and STEAM activities.

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Through the first, we address a problem increasingly of concern to pediatric medicine and child-development research: the worrying increase in sedentary behavior and corresponding decline in children's physical activity during the last two years, during which the pandemic-induced necessity of "zoom school" has made it very difficult for school physical-education programs to function (see, for example, Denton et al., "Early effects of the Covid-19 pandemic" BMC Public Health (2020): decreased physical activity and increased sedentary behavior among children raises a "public health concern" that "these short-term changes in behavior in reaction to COVID-19 may become permanently entrenched, leading to increased risk of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease in children as they get older"). By making the most of our sophisticated rope challenge course, zipline and climbing wall (the most extensive such facility in western Pennsylvania), our afterschool program builds opportunities for physical activity into every day's range of activities, under the supervision of a team of instructors trained to the highest national standards of challenge-course safety (indeed, even as this proposal is submitted, key personnel of our team are in Harrisburg attending an advanced course of training).

Second, our instructional team collectively represent one of the most impressive resources for academic help, mentoring and tutoring of any afterschool program in the region, including members with doctoral and other advanced degrees and professional teaching and tutoring experience in core curricular subjects such as reading, mathematics, and instruction in second languages. In the last year, our pilot afterschool program proved its worth in terms of assisting our students to higher levels of academic achievement (we would be delighted, if opportunity arises, to introduce you to Wendoll, an alumnus of our afterschool program and now not only a star student but also one of our most valued employees!), and we are confident that our expanded program will deliver similar results in supporting and extending the work of local schools. In a region of Allegheny County which faces systemic challenges to students seeking academic success, Dragon's Den is prepared to make a significant contribution as an ally of local schools and a vital resource to their students.

Third, it is well-known that schools, both locally and nationally, struggle with insufficient resources, with the result that they are often unable to provide opportunities in instructional areas which are perceived as "extra" to core curricula centered on standardized testing. For the past year, and on an expanded scale in the year to come, Dragon's Den has and will offer a rotation of specialized enrichment opportunities through our OST program, often partnering with other organizations such as Pittsburgh Circus Arts Collective, Venture Outdoors and the youth-focused environmental organization Communitopia to expand the range of activities, both indoors and out, which we offer to students. Modules will include cultural enrichment in the form of drama coaching led by our professionally-trained acting coach, building on the success of our award-winning student team's participation in Pittsburgh Public Theatre's Shakespeare Monologue Competition. STEAM subjects will be addressed through age-appropriate robotics and engineering projects (see below for examples). Important life-skills such as personal finance – a topic, which if taught at all is typically postponed until high school – will be introduced to our students through play-based learning. Perhaps most importantly, periodic visits by volunteer professionals of our community (defined in terms both racial and geographic) have been arranged, to bring them together with our OST students to talk about their own education and career-paths, giving an opportunity to our OST students to learn from people, who look like them and come from their own hometowns, about the possibilities their future holds.

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Finally, but not least importantly, good nutrition and learning to make healthy food choices is a theme which runs throughout all Dragon's Den youth programming. Through our long-standing partnership with Rainbow Kitchen of Homestead, and through the efforts of our own staff, we have provided nutritious meals and snacks to children taking part in our programs from our very beginning, and we will continue to do so throughout our expanded OST program.

Dragon's Den's afterschool program is targeted to children of Homestead and surrounding communities of the Steel Valley. The two nearest schools, from where we expect the greatest number of participating children to come to us after the school-day ends, are Steel Valley School District's Park Elementary School (0.1 mile or two minutes' walk to our doors) and Propel-CS Homestead (371 feet or one minute's walk). Park Elementary's student population is approximately 76% black or African-American, 12% white, and 9% two or more races. Propel Homestead is 87% black or African-American, 4% white, and 6% two or more races.

According to the most recent (2019) US Census American Community Survey data estimates, the population of the borough of Homestead itself is about 59% black or African-American, 35% white, 4% Asian, and less than 2% two or more races. About 2.5% of Homestead's people identify as of Hispanic origin, while as of 2019 just under 11% of the borough's population was born outside the United States (by comparison, the comparable figure for Allegheny County is 5.9%). The median household income of the borough's residents in 2019 was \$26,220, less than 40% of the average for the US.

The Allegheny County Community Need Index Update for 2021 (published May 2021) identifies the Homestead census tract, coterminous with the borough of Homestead, as one of the communities of the county in "extreme need", a category which makes up just 9% of census tracts in the county. Extreme need communities are characterized by high rates of family poverty (an average of 39%; the average for the county is 8%), male unemployment (46% vs. 20% for the county), single-mother households (44% vs. 6% for the county), and low levels of university degree achievement (averaging just 13%, while the county average is 59%). An crucial point in relation to the importance of neighborhood-based, walk-accessible OST programs in extreme need communities like Dragon's Den is that on average 46% of residents of such communities lack access to a vehicle, nearly three times the average of areas of moderate need.

Therefore, whether measured in terms of race, immigration status, household income, or educational achievement, the children of Homestead indisputably belong to populations historically disadvantaged in American society as a whole and underrepresented in terms of access to quality OST programs in particular.

4. How will your program ensure children of all abilities are served, including English language learners and children with IEPs?

One of America's leading proponents of best practice in inclusion of children of different abilities, Dr. Deborah Voltz, advocates the perspective that "inclusion is participation that is meaningful and where the environment promotes a sense of belonging and acceptance" (Voltz, D.L. et. al, "What Matters Most in Inclusive Education: A Practical Guide for Moving Forward", *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 37 (2001)). Those principles of meaningful participation and an accepting environment are central to the institutional culture of Dragon's Den. In practical terms, this means that we have consciously developed a student-led model we call "Challenge by Choice", which encourages students of all abilities to become leaders, instilling confidence and raising self-esteem. It means offering a variety of activities that allow

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students of all abilities to explore their interests and take part in activities they may not otherwise have a chance to enjoy. It means valuing parent feedback to tailor and adjust programming to best support students of all abilities. And it means mindfully eliminating barriers to participation, in order to ensure that students of all abilities can benefit from all that our afterschool program has to offer. The result, as Kelly Hughes, founder of Foster Love Project, has said, is that Dragon's Den "is incredibly helpful in providing kids with physical activity as well as an arena of support and community...to give kids a platform to excel. That is why we at Foster Love Project have partnered with them to help our foster youth. Their venue provides meaningfully opportunities to talk about courage, bravery and overcoming obstacles that we face".

Finally, in regard to students who are English language learners, we are very conscious that we serve a community with a proportion of foreign-born people (11%) almost twice that of Allegheny County (5.9%). Our staff includes multi- or bilingual members with academic credentials or professional experience in immigration law, foreign language instruction, and transcultural communication, including program management for the US State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Moreover, enjoying relationships with local organizations such as Global Pittsburgh, The Global Switchboard, Hello Neighbor, Casa San Jose, and the University of Pittsburgh University Center for International Studies (UCIS), we are able to draw on an extensive network of resources to ensure that English-language learning students are fully accommodated in our afterschool program.

5. How will you prevent suspensions and expulsions of children from your Program and ensure enrolled children maintain Program access?

All Dragon's Den's instructors receive training in in de-escalation technique and behavioral management, most recently through a series of workshops led by Craig Maier, PhD, PCC. Dragon's Den's strategy to avoid behavioral problems which may lead to suspension or expulsion is to focus on positive behavior modeling (both by staff and participants), and positive reinforcement of behaviors. The vast majority of negative behaviors, especially by youth, are attention-seeking acts. By consistently focusing attention and praise on positive behaviors (rather than attention and punishment for negative ones), our participants learn that the easiest way to gain attention is through similarly positive behaviors. Many of the children we serve have experienced trauma in their lives: to date, no student has had to be removed from any of our programs.

6. Describe the community(ies) in which you intend to locate your OST Program. Why did you select those community(ies)? How will you tailor your Program to respond to the unique needs of the community(ies) you are serving?

Dragon's Den is located in Homestead, PA in the heart of the Steel Valley region of Allegheny County. Formerly the site of the world's largest steel mill (and of some of the best-known events in the history of the American labor movement), the closure of US Steel's Homestead Works in 1986 left the region facing some of the most severe post-industrial challenges of any community in the United States. The population of Homestead, originally including significant numbers of Irish, Eastern and Southern European immigrants and African-Americans arriving during the Great Migration, declined precipitously from its height in the mid-20th century, leaving behind a legacy (as described above) of poverty, exiguous public resources, one of the most financially precarious school districts in the Commonwealth, and the high levels of crime and decay which inevitably followed from the collapse of the Steel Valley's industrial economic base.

Dragon's Den made its "home in Homestead" in large part because, in light of this history, the social and educational need for a center for children was especially urgent in the Steel Valley. While many areas of

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the greater Pittsburgh region have enjoyed some measure of recovery from the post-industrial decline of the 1980s and '90s, the Steel Valley has benefitted relatively little from local public and nonprofit initiatives to address the consequences of poverty, racial inequity, and inadequate educational resources. For example, the Hill District, which has certainly faced many such challenges itself, is served by more than a dozen youth-oriented organizations. Other than Dragon's Den itself and our partner organization MUSA, few OST opportunities, and those for the most part focused on team sports, exist in the Steel Valley.

In its three pillars (academic support, physical and nutritional health, and STEAM enrichment) Dragon's Den's afterschool program addresses the most pressing needs of the children of our community. Test scores and other indicators of academic progress have documented for several decades the racial disparities in schools in the Steel Valley region by comparison to elsewhere in Allegheny County, with consequent lower rates of college applications and admissions. Encouraging physical activity (and the sense of self-esteem which meeting physical challenge promotes) is, together with our emphasis on healthy food choices, an essential response to growing rates of obesity and childhood diabetes among the community we serve. Our third pillar, including age-appropriate STEAM projects such as robotics and drama competitions, provide an important supplement to the curricula of our local schools. Together, these three pillars respond to the unique needs of the children of the Steel Valley in ways that are creative, engaging, and enriching, while at the same time creating an oasis amidst the tranquil setting of our Italian Romanesque architecture in what otherwise truly would be an OST desert.

7. Describe why you think families will want to enroll their children in your Program.

We think families will enroll their children in our program in the first place because this proposal itself is the result of local parents' request to expand our current after school program. Dragon's Den is rooted in the community it serves and has a track record of success in drawing children from our service area to our programs. Despite the limitations imposed by the Covid pandemic, in the course of 2021 we served almost 5,000 individuals in total. Our six-week summer camp, which is built around many of the same concepts as our afterschool program, was enrolled at capacity in 2021. The testimonials appended to this proposal, from parents, educational leaders, and members of peer organizations, demonstrate the originality and value to children of our programming and facilities.

8. Describe how you will market the Program and how you will create or strength formal paths to equitable enrollment.

Because the focus of our afterschool program is Homestead and adjacent communities in the Steel Valley, our marketing plan emphasizes Dragon's Den's existing strong connections to those communities. The program will be marketed through three principal channels: local advertising, social media, and in-person through local schools, churches, and community organizations. Local advertising will include targeted mailings, posted flyers, and banners at high-traffic locations in Homestead. Dragon's Den staff will attend community and school meetings as frequently as possible to explain the features of the program and eligibility (i.e. local residence).

9. Describe how you will staff your Program and the strategies you will use to recruit, hire and retain racially diverse staff, staff with relevant lived experience, and staff that reflect the population served.

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In the last two years, Dragon's Den has held a series of no-resumé job fairs targeted specifically to residents of Homestead and adjacent communities in order to promote our staffing opportunities locally – a strategy for attracting racially-diverse staff with direct experience of our community which continues to be a key part of our operational plans. As a result of these efforts, we have hired a mother, a grandmother, a young adult and two teenagers from the Steel Valley, all of whom are African-American and who constitute half our staff. At the level of board leadership, our chair, Dr. Aaron Johnson, formerly Associate Principal in Steel Valley School District, Mary Nesby, member of Homestead Borough Council, Robert Powell, principal of Propel-Homestead Charter School, and Rachel Hailey of Hailey & Associates Consulting, all bring to Dragon's Den valuable lived experience of Homestead's and the greater Pittsburgh region's African-American community.

10. How will any identified challenges be addressed, including low program enrollment or attendance, transportation challenges, or other issues impacting program access?

Given our geographical proximity to several of the Steel Valley's schools, transportation has not so far, nor is likely in future, to pose significant challenges to us and our families. The most significant challenge our program faces is ensuring steady and high participation, which depends on consistent communication and coordination with our neighborhood schools and the wider community, to ensure that students and their families know about our program and make the most use of its opportunities.

Our marketing plan described above is an important way we achieve that goal. However, in the specific context of communication with our neighborhood schools, we are fortunate to have the benefit of excellent relationships. The chairperson of our board of trustees, Dr. Aaron Johnson, was until recently associate principal at Steel Valley School District and an educational leader who has devoted his entire career to advancing our community. Robert Powell, principal of Propel CS Homestead and a member of our board, is no less devoted to the educational advancement of that community.

But our most important relationships are with the families of our region, and there too we have important assets: a regular schedule of community events, such as last Spring's community Easter Egg hunt in Homestead's Frick Park (across the street from our building), which help to introduce Dragon's Den to new friends in our community and renew old acquaintances. The best guarantee of the success of a community center is good relationships with its community, and Dragon's Den is proud to say that, whether in terms of local educational institutions or with the people of our region as a whole, ours are of the best. Those relationships help convey the availability and value of our program, which in turn sustains it through enrollment and consistent attendance.

Quality and KPIs (10 points possible)

11. If you are a certified child care OST program, provide your STAR level designation and describe your progress towards raising or maintaining this level. If you are an uncertified program, please provide a description of how your program efforts will align as an APOST Quality Campaign member or other nationally recognized quality improvement tool.

Our program aligns with the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network and APOST Quality Campaign as follows:

Structure and Management: Dragon's Den staff and volunteers are certified in challenge course management and safety and have received training in behavioural and de-escalation technique. Approximately half of our employees are African-American residing in Homestead or adjacent communities. Dragon's Den has a comprehensive body of written policies and procedures that are consistently used and updated by management. Our financial position is sound and sustainable, while we

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employ continuous improvement methods including: evaluation, outcomes measurement, participant/family input, strategic planning, and professional development.

Positive Connections: We value and devote great effort to ensuring positive relationships between and among youth and staff, and are proud of the strong partnerships with families, schools, businesses and other community stakeholders we have created. We offer consistent opportunities for youth to contribute to the well-being of the community.

Safety and Health: Dragon's Den is a safe and accessible environment for young people from our community with clean & well maintained facilities, certified annually by the PA Dept of Agriculture. Our reputation is justly founded on the excellence with which we promote fitness, good nutrition, and healthy choices among our young clients.

Activities: Our afterschool program is intentionally designed and age-appropriate to develop skills, promote learning, and foster positive youth development. The program's activities contain varied content and learning strategies and combine different academic, recreational, and cultural elements, are youth-centered, responsive to youth interests, and actively involve youth in program development, planning, and implementation. We regard it as of greatest importance to promote understanding and respect for our young clients' culture and other cultures.

12. Outline the KPIs you would like to use to measure the success of your Program.

Key performance indicators in measuring and improving the success of Dragon's Den afterschool program:

- 1) 40 slots created for zip code 15120 (including Homestead, West Homestead, Whitaker and Munhall.
- 2) At least 25 new children (not formerly participating in Dragon's Den afterschool) enrolled from zip code 15120.
- 3) Expanding programming hours to 3:00-6:00 pm, Monday-Friday
- 4) Indicators of program success including
 - a. Parent & Student Satisfaction Surveys administered on a regular basis to gather feedback about the quality of our afterschool program and develop new ideas for activities and opportunities;
 - b. Retention Rate of 75% based on data regarding number of students joining and remaining engaged with our programs;
 - c. Community Feedback: evaluation of contribution to the community from local government officials, school leaders, and community groups.

Financial Management, Budget and Timeline (15 points possible)

13. Using the budget template available on our website, provide a detailed one-year, line-item budget that reflects a realistic estimate of the costs associated with implementing and sustaining the Program. The budget template file attachment will not count toward page limits.

- Please provide the number of children you plan to serve both during the summer and during the school year.
- Please include any other funding sources that would contribute to the Program, including fees to families.

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14. In the space below, provide a budget narrative that clearly explains and justifies all line items in your proposed line-item budget. Please also describe plans to sustain new Program slots beyond year one.

Staff consists of three instructors (@ \$15/hr) and two lead instructors (@ \$16/hr), in order to achieve an instructor/student ratio of 1:8 for 40 children. Instructors are assigned to the program during afterschool program hours (3:00-6:00pm), while lead instructors are on duty one half-hour before and after open hours for purposes of preparation and closing. In addition, Dragon's Den's program director is assigned (at 0.5FTE effort, the remainder devoted to other program areas) to supervise the afterschool program, conduct outreach with parents, schools and community groups and other public relations, and carry out curriculum design, program evaluation and continuous improvement.

Materials expenses relate primarily to the program's STEAM pillar, and include age-appropriate commercially available science, engineering and robotics experiment kits as projects for participating students. Examples include "Educuro Wallbot Robot Building Kits for Kids Ages 8-12" (\$46.99 ea.); "Giggleway Electric Motor Robotic Science Kits" (\$23.99 ea.); "Elenco Teach Tech SolarBot.14, Transforming Solar Robot Kit" (\$18.99 ea.): budget assumes average price of \$30 ea. for 120 kits, thereby permitting six groups of 20 students to conduct a range of projects over the course of the program. Additionally, 60 drawing art kits (Faber-Castell Do Art Colored Pencils Art Kit, \$14.99 ea.) will be provided for four art projects of 15 students each. Such STEAM projects, among other afterschool activities, will be spaced throughout the school year in accordance with student interest and program curriculum plans.

The services of Diarra Imani, founder, Resonate Studio, will be retained on a consulting basis to provide culturally and academically enriching DEI-based curriculum design, at a maximum expenditure of \$15,000 (See Ms. Imani's qualifications at: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/diarra-imani-580283a0>)

16. Provide your timeline of how funding will be implemented and when new Program slots will begin.

- **June-August 2022** and continuing: Ms. Imani will be retained to provide curriculum design support immediately upon notification by DHS of award of contract, and will work with Dragon's Den staff through June-August to prepare curriculum and diversity planning. She will continue to provide consulting services, including observation of program and evaluation, at regular periods throughout the school-year. Therefore, funds designated for consulting will be expended in large part in June-August 2022 and at regular intervals thereafter throughout the 2022-23 school year.
- **June-August 2022:** Working with Ms. Imani, Dragon's Den current staff will begin planning and preparation for afterschool program. Additional staff, if required, will be interviewed, hired and child abuse/criminal clearances documented in the same period. STEAM experiment materials (as described above) will be acquired in preparation for beginning of program.
- **August 2022:** Enrollment in new program slots (40) will be opened on August 1, with a marketing campaign of flyers, school announcements, meetings with parents, church and community groups, etc., ensuring that students and families are informed of program availability and aided in enrollment process. The afterschool program will begin on the first day of the school year (per Propel CS-Homestead academic calendar).
- **August 2022-May 2023:** Expenditure from award funds will continue for staff costs on a biweekly basis throughout the school year.

DCI OST Capacity Building RFP Budget Proposal Template

Organization Name Dragon's Den
Contact Name (Full) Monte Bohna, PhD
Business Address 1008 Amity St, Homestead, PA, 15120
Business Phone 412-461-3336
Business Email monte.bohna@dragonsdenpgh.org

Item Category		
I. Personnel	Cost	Notes
3x Instructors	\$26,325	x3hrs x 117 days @ \$15/hr
2x Lead Instructors	\$24,960	x4hrs x 117 days @ \$16/hr
2x Lead Instructors Planning/Prep Time	\$4,992	x4hrs x 39 weeks @ \$16/hr
1x Program Director, 0.5FTE	20,000	10x months @ \$2,000/mo
		Children served: 40 (ratio of 1 instructor: 8 children) during school-year (NB: OST continues through Dragons Den 6-week summer camps financed independently, offered to OST students at no cost)
Total Personnel Costs	\$76,277.00	
II. Materials and Supplies	Cost	Notes
STEM Experiment Kits x 120 @ \$30	\$3,600	See budget narrative
Art/Drawing Kits x 60 @ \$15	\$900	See budget narrative
Misc materials/supplies	\$400	Printing costs, cutlery/plates, etc
Total Material Costs	\$4,900.00	
III. Facilities and Operations	Cost	Notes
Total Facilities Costs	\$0.00	
IV. Contracts and Services	Cost	Notes
Consulting, curriculum design, etc	\$15,000	
Total Services Costs	\$15,000.00	
Total Proposed Budget	\$96,177.00	



FOSTER**LOVE**PROJECT

Letter of Support

—
Foster Love Project

PO Box 8779

Pittsburgh, PA 15210

██████████
khughes@fosterloveproject.org

February 15, 2021

To Jefferson Regional Foundation,

Foster Love Project has been incredibly grateful to partner with the Dragon's Den to provide support and opportunities to our local youth. The venue that the Dragon's Den has created is incredibly helpful in providing kids with physical activity as well as an arena of support and community.

We believe wholeheartedly in the work being done at the Dragon's Den to give kids a platform to excel. That is why we at Foster Love Project have partnered with them to help our foster youth. Their venue provides meaningfully opportunities to talk about courage, bravery and overcoming obstacles that we face.

We are lucky to Giulia and her team in the Pittsburgh region and love the value she brings to our community!

Sincerely,

Kelly Hughes

Founder & Executive Director, Foster Love Project

Foster Love Project (FLP) is a registered 501c3 with the Department of the Treasury of the Internal Revenue Service. All contributions to FLP are tax deductible and under control of FLP for the use of serving foster children and their families.

*EIN 81-2263514
United Way # 15747777*



Lo Zemanek
Youth Program Manager

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Lo@ventureoutdoors.org
412-255-0564 [REDACTED]

February 15, 2021

Jefferson Regional Foundation
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

RE: Letter of Support for Dragon's Den 2021 Spring Grant Proposal

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the Dragon's Den application to the Jefferson Regional Foundation 2021 Spring grant. I was first informed of the Dragon's Den in one of the first virtual group meetings after COVID-19 began in early 2020 at a Jefferson Collaborative meet-up for youth-serving organizations. When I finally had the opportunity to visit the space in 2021, I was in awe. In speaking with Giulia, we found that the goals of our youth programs overlap and complement one another.

The Dragon's Den provides a space for youth to overcome obstacles, work together, and challenge themselves. Many of our programs also strive to provide youth with these similar experiences but in an outdoor setting. We are excited to partner together in 2021-2022 to provide these unique experiences to youth that will allow for them to take what they learn in the Dragon's Den obstacle course and apply it to outdoor experiences, such as biking, camping, kayaking, fishing, and more. This multi-faceted approach will expand the learning opportunities for participating youth, further providing them with the physical and mental wellness benefits that are critical for youth development during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I appreciate your consideration. Please reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lo Zemanek

[REDACTED]
info@ventureoutdoors.org
412.255.0564





Greater Valley Community Services

"Enriching Lives for a Greater Community"

February 15, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

It gives me great pleasure to support and endorsement the proposal by Dragon's Den to advance therapeutic activities in the Mon Valley communities and Allegheny County. I believe that this type of innovative programming will raise our community to a higher level of educational advancement and open the door for healthier communities.

As a nonprofit agency of Braddock and being on the front line of giving support to its residents, I engage with organizations that provide services to the Braddock community and beyond. Greater Valley Community Services Inc. is a thriving community agency that supports community members and families of all ages through innovative programming for youth to interact and develop healthier and sustainable families and communities.

The programs offered by the Dragon's Den will engage children and families to help eliminate the barriers of therapy, trauma and mental issues; thus, strengthening the community and infrastructure, including educating and linking participants with resources and opportunities in the areas of therapeutic activities and engagement.

The limited education and resources in our community have been heightened considering the newest pandemic and has increased mental health issues. The issue of trauma and mental health continues to grow in underserved, low in-come communities that lack the necessary resources and information to combat the dire need for service in order to thrive. Dragon's Den will take steps to eliminate barriers and provide the necessary resource for mental and physical impact and mental and physical growth.

The impactful services and opportunities that Dragon's Den can provide throughout the region, and is essential and it receives my highest endorsement.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Smith
Executive Director

Greater Valley Community Services, Inc
jsmith@greatervalley.org
412.351.7055



Hannah Sitz
Executive Director

P.O. Box 433, Homestead, PA 15120-0433
Phone: (412) 461-1800, Fax: (412) 462-6184

February 5, 2021

Re: Support for Dragon's Den's Challenge Course

To Whom It May Concern:

The Methodist Union of Social Agencies (MUSA) is supportive of Dragon's Den's Challenge Course: A Tool to Transform Lives. We are excited to have this organization join our community!

Dragon's Den brings innovative programming to Homestead. In these initial stages of planning, MUSA and Dragon's Den are discussing ways to collaborate but not compete; we aim to continue this spirit of partnership throughout future summer camp programs and after-school opportunities for local elementary students. With our physical proximity and similar visions for community impact, MUSA is happy to support Dragon's Den.

Thank you for your commitment to children and families in the Mon Valley. We look forward to continuing strong partnerships in the region, and we encourage supporting Dragon's Den in sustaining and expanding its important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Hannah R. Sitz'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'H'.

Hannah Sitz
MUSA Executive Director

Lloyd Cunningham



Julia Petrucci
Dragons Den
1008 Amity Street
Homestead, PA 15120

December 23, 2020

Dear Julia,

Your family's determination has been an inspiration to our town.

The Diocese, abandoning, neglecting and stripping such a historic, iconic part of our community was a devastating blow. The Borough was looking to a bleak future with a giant, decaying albatross dominating an important neighborhood. We were anticipating spending hundred's of thousands of dollars, after it decayed to the point of being unsafe and the municipality needing to demolish it.

Although having no ownership position, we marketed St, Mary's Church to any organization that would be a large space user we could identify. Although showing the space to many entities, no one had the vision of financially reusing the space.

Then along came Bill and Julia's, vision, charity, and the best interests of the community and its citizens. After countless hours (years) of planning and fundraising, and consulting with experts in the field of revitalizing into the dream of the Dragons Den, this dramatic facility emerged.

The commitment to the community, the people (especially youth), has been inspirational and as an asset of the town, an example of, with enough vision, other buildings can also be saved from demolition. Several buildings have since been re-vitalized, with more in the planning phase.

The Dragons Den is now an anchor, and in need of financial and physical support, the additional renovation of the parish house will make the Dragons Den more sustainable, although very expensive.

I, representing the community, public officials, and citizens, wish them much success with additional fundraising, and operating in Homestead.

Sincerely,
Lloyd Cunningham
Homestead Borough Council



129 East Tenth Avenue · Homestead, PA 15120
Phone: 412-464-2604 · Fax: 412-464-2605
www.propelschools.org

October 15, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to voice my support for The Dragon's Den, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing transformative learning environments through the use of a suspended obstacle course and other innovative programs designed to teach youth of diverse backgrounds and abilities to overcome challenges in themselves, their communities, and the world.

Propel-Homestead is excited to have been invited to take part of Dragon's Den's 24-month Pilot Program "A Challenge Course to Transform Lives", a program organized around a state-of-the-art therapeutic and educational Challenge Course that engages underserved youth in a stunning historic church transformed into an innovative 21st-century community center focusing on the holistic wellbeing of children.

We believe that our organization as well as the Homestead and surrounding communities will greatly benefit from Dragon's Den's creative programs.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Robert Powell, Principal
e: robertpowell@propelschools.org





October,2019

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to voice our support for The Dragon's Den, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit providing transformative learning environments through the use of a suspended obstacle course and other innovative programs designed to teach youth of diverse backgrounds and abilities to overcome challenges in themselves, their communities, and the world.

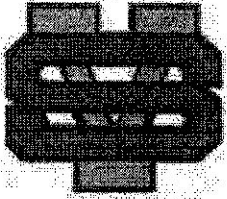
We are excited to have been invited to take part of Dragon's Den's 24-month Pilot Program "A Challenge Course to Transform Lives", a program organized around a state-of-the-art therapeutic and educational Challenge Course that engages underserved youth in a stunning historic church transformed into an innovative 21st-century community center focusing on the holistic wellbeing of children.

We believe that our organization as well as the Homestead and surrounding communities will greatly benefit from Dragon's Den's creative programs. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Keino Fitzpatrick
Mr. Keino Fitzpatrick

Dr. Aaron Johnson
Dr. Aaron E. Johnson



Delivering Extraordinary Value to Families

Steel Valley School District

District Administrative Offices

220 East Oliver Road
Munhall, PA 15120

412-464-3600 ext. 1505
Fax 412-464-3626
ewehrer@steelvalleysd.org

Edward Wehrer
Superintendent

February 10, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to voice my support for The Dragon's Den, a nonprofit organization that plans to open an innovative youth center in Homestead inside the magnificent building of the former St. Mary Magdalene church, which has been closed for many years. Homestead is a borough within my school district, the Steel Valley School District. Like many other steel towns, the collapse of the steel industry, particularly US Steel's Homestead Works, in the 1980's led to great economic distress throughout the Steel Valley area that persists to this day.

The Dragon Den's suspended obstacle course and inventive programs as well as mentoring, tutoring, afterschool classes, and winter/summer camps will teach children from diverse backgrounds how to overcome challenges and will add substantial value, not only to the Steel Valley community but also our surrounding neighborhoods.

As the Superintendent of Steel Valley School District, I see many ways in which The Dragon's Den will complement our curriculum. As a resident in the Steel Valley community, I am excited that passionate and caring people like the Petrucci's are bringing their creative energies to Homestead. I look forward to working together with the Dragon's Den in an effort to improve the lives of the children of our community.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Edward Wehrer
Superintendent

The Dragon's Den
EIN: 30-0954832
Append. Page 98



November 22, 2016

Dear Friend,

I am pleased to write this letter of support for the Petrucci family and the creative project they have undertaken with the "Dragon's Den" in Homestead, PA.

I have known Mr. and Mrs. Petrucci for four years while their children attended Sacred Heart School. They are wonderful people who are committed to helping the school, church and local community in ways that impact other families. The connection that was made the day they walked into our school is one that was genuine and enduring.

Mrs. Petrucci organized the "Meet the Maestro" Program with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra for our school families. This program gave our children the opportunity to experience the arts in a way they never had before. Mr. Petrucci continues to serve on our Sacred Heart School Advisory Council even though his children are now attending another school. Their personal gifts and talents are many and it is their nature to share these with everyone with whom they come in contact.

The "Dragon's Den" is evolving daily as a place for children to learn, to explore, and to grow. It is an ingenious idea that is motivated by the generous and inventive spirits of the Mr. and Mrs. Petrucci.

I have personally seen the project as it has developed and I support this dream of creating a child-focused center 150%. I look forward to the day our school children can enjoy a visit to the "Dragon's Den".

Sincerely,

Sr. Lynn Rettinger, S.C.
Sr. Lynn Rettinger
Principal

HOMESTEAD

POLICE

DEPARTMENT

BETTY ESPER
MAYOR

J. A. DESIMONE
CHIEF OF POLICE

November 3, 2016

RE: Letter of Support for Dragons Den application for a 501c3

As the Mayor of the Borough of Homestead, I am pleased to support the conception of a long awaited activity center for the youth of the Steel Valley. As I understand, the Dragon's Den has been created to act as a learning environment whereby children will be taught to overcome challenges (among other skills) in their daily lives. I also understand that the Dragon's Den committee has been searching for a facility for this very purpose and has found the former St. Mary Magdalene's Catholic Church building on Amity Street in Homestead to be an ideal setting for their mission.

There are a few reasons that I am aware of as to why they chose St. Mary's. I know that one of their goals for teaching team-building included the need to have high ceilings. Zip lines challenges, balance beams, and a drawbridge are just a few of the activities that will be available because of the ceiling height. Additionally, the amount of space within a building that they were looking for also was a factor. Again St Mary Magdalene met that need.

The community is anticipating wonderful results from having this type of facility within their boundaries. Collaborating with local non-profits as well as our schools is another positive feature of this program. I feel enriching children's lives in as many ways as possible is a worthwhile health goal for the entire Steel Valley, and I am anxious to see the results of this type of learning.

I am available for further discussion.

Sincerely,



Betty Esper, Mayor of Homestead Borough

The Dragon's Den
EIN: 30-0954832
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221 EAST 7TH AVENUE • HOMESTEAD, PA 15120
PHONE: 412-461-1340 • FAX: 412-461-2059

October 25, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

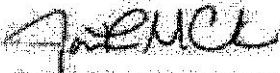
The purpose of this letter is to voice my support for "The Dragon's Den" which is opening in the former Saint Mary Magdalene Church building in Homestead, Pennsylvania. My school, Saint Theresse, is located in neighboring Monhall, Pennsylvania and is a short distance from site of "The Dragon's Den."

This initiative is sorely needed in the Steel Valley area. Since the decline of the steel industry, many businesses have closed and many residents have relocated. The children who live in the community today, as well as surrounding communities will benefit from the opportunity to grow their leadership skills as well as trust, respect and responsibility. The children need and deserve a safe environment that will help grow needed skills in a safe environment.

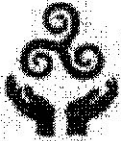
I am excited to welcome this endeavor to our community. I look forward to working with "The Dragon's Den" and exploring partnerships that can benefit the students of Saint Theresse School and the surrounding communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at 412/462-8163 or jcuniak@sttheresseschoolmonhall.org with any questions or if more information is needed.

Sincerely,



Jonathan M. Cuniak
Principal



The Neighborhood Academy

709 North Atkins Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15206 • 412-362-2001 (tel) • 412-362-2004 (fax) • www.theneighborhoodacademy.org

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*Former Chairman
of the Board

Founders

Josephine B. Moore
Rev. Thomas E. Johnson, Jr.

December 12, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:


The purpose of this letter is to voice my support for The Dragon's Den, a transformative learning environment that incorporates a suspended obstacle course and other innovative programs to teach children from diverse backgrounds how to overcome challenges. The Dragon's Den plans to open in the former St. Mary Magdalene Church in Homestead, a town in the Steel Valley area, which, with the collapse of the Steel Industry, has witnessed terrible decline.

As the Co-Founder and President of another non-profit, The Neighborhood Academy (a faith-based independent college prep school for at-risk high school students), I wholeheartedly support such an innovative youth center. Mentoring, tutoring, after-school classes, and winter/summer camps will be enormous value-added, both for this community and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Mrs. Giulia Petrucci, the founder, made a concerted effort to meet with me last year to get my reactions, to benchmark her program, and to discuss opportunities for partnership and collaboration. I was impressed by her energy, her passion, her drive, and her creativity. I knew then that it would only be a matter of time before she achieved her dream for the children of Homestead.

Please don't hesitate to call me at 412-362-2021 or email me at jodie.moore@theneighborhoodacademy.org if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Josephine B. Moore
Co-Founder & President Emerita

The Steel Valley Enterprise Zone Corporation

P.O. Box 168 • Homestead, PA 15120 • (412) 462-8870 • Fax (412) 241-4161 • www.svez.org

December 28, 2016

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: Giulia Lozza Petrucci
The Dragon's Den
1008 Amity Street
Homestead, PA 15120

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Steel Valley Enterprise Zone Corporation (SVEZC), the economic development organization for the Boroughs of Homestead, West Homestead, Munhall and a portion of the 31st Ward of the City of Pittsburgh. We assist in business development and expansion in this area.

We are excited that the Dragon's Den has acquired the former St. Mary Magdalene Church and Rectory in Homestead and plans to renovate the property. As a center for youth activities, this project will complement our revitalization and bring vibrancy to The Avenues area.

We want to go on record in support of The Dragon's Den's application for 501 (C) (3) non-profit status.

Sincerely,



Catherine Lesko
President



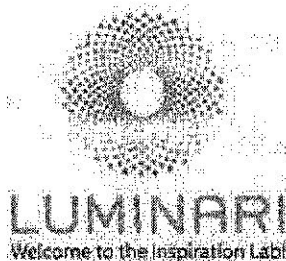
The Historic Steel Valley

The Dragon's Den
EIN: 30-0954832
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Luminari
PO Box 81603
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

412.877.1888
luminari@luminari.org

www.luminari.org



November 1, 2016

To Whom It May Concern

I am delighted to write this letter of support for the formation and incorporation of The Dragon Den. As founder and president of a nonprofit, I am excited to welcome this very unique multi-purpose activity center serving the young people in Pittsburgh. I also look forward to the collaboration between our organizations in the promotion of mind broadening experiences for our youths.

I have known Ms. Giulia Lozza Petrucci for 15 years as an extremely talented language educator, parent and enterprising volunteer. She brings her vision, high standard and immense amount of energy to every project that she undertakes. I can just see that under her leadership, the Dragon Den will blossom into a valuable asset to not only its immediate neighborhood, but also to the whole of the City of Pittsburgh.

Sincerely,

Hilda Pang Fu
Founder and President
Luminari, Inc.

Luminari, Inc is a Pittsburgh-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded to foster activities that broaden minds, inspire innovations and promote community involvement.

The Dragon's Den
EIN: 30-0954832
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R. V. ANDERSON FUNERAL HOME, INC.

Catherine Lesko, Licensed Supervisor
315 East Tenth Avenue, Homestead, PA 15120
Telephone: 412- 461- 0987
Fax: 412- 462- 9779

November 21, 2016


To whom it may concern:

I am writing in support of the 501c3 status for the Dragon's Den project in Homestead, Pa. The reuse of this former church building, as an activity and learning experience for children, is a perfect addition to our Steel Valley community. A children and youth activity/learning center will enhance the life experience available for local and regional children.

This will be a perfect reuse of a building that has stood as a community asset for close to 100 years.

I support the non-profit status of this project.

Sincerely,



Catherine Lesko

Handed over by Mrs Paula Shields Glancy -
Propel School Elementary's crossing guard

Hi my name is Mrs Paula Shields Glancy
I am so happy the church is
being used for something GOOD can't
wait for it to open. I will be
relieved my Grandkids will have
a safe place to go. They are
The Answer to a lot of the mother
Prayer! Safe Place for our Children
and Grandkids to BE Thank you!!
Thank GOD //



129 East Tenth Avenue • Homestead, PA 15120

Phone: 412-464-2604 • Fax: 412-464-2605

www.propelschools.org

February 25, 2022

To whom it may concern:

We are delighted to partner with our neighbor The Dragon's Den in providing an engaging, enriching, and diverse after-school program to our students and other children living in Homestead and nearby communities.

Although a new organization, Dragon's Den has already demonstrated its value to the children and families of that region by painstakingly renovating a disused historical building (the former St. Mary Magdalen Church) in Homestead. Likewise, Dragon's Den's impressive rope-climbing challenge course has provided our communities with the means for therapeutic and confidence-building teamwork exercises, activities which offer well-documented benefits for childhood development and in-school education. Not least among its virtues as an organization, the commitment of its staff and board to racial equity and equitable access to quality out-of-school opportunities is beyond question.

In the course of the last year, despite the pandemic, Dragon's Den proved the value of its afterschool program, keeping their doors open for our students and providing a range of interesting and educationally valuable activities, and so making no small contribution to the well-being of the children of this community at a time when few other options existed in this under-resourced part of Allegheny County. Now, Dragon's Den is acting with admirable initiative to implement across its program areas measures to address the deficits of social-emotional learning and physicality caused by the last two years of the Covid pandemic, and in doing so it can truly be called a leading youth organization in our region.

Propel-Homestead eagerly looks forward to cooperating with Dragon's Den, which is a great asset almost on our doorstep. We will do our best to ensure that our students are encouraged to make the most of the new and exciting opportunities available to them through Dragon's Den's 2022 afterschool program, and we will certainly make every effort to support and sustain a program which can only be of great value to the children and families of our region.

Thank you,

Robert Powell

Principal
