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CUYAHOGA AND SUMMIT COUNTIES' NON-PROFITS ENTER THE \$1 MILLION ADULT LITERACY XPRIZE COMMUNITIES COMPETITION TO TRANSFORM LIVES THROUGH LITERACY

TEAM LITFITNEO WILL COMPETE TO DISTRIBUTE FREE LITERACY APPS TO WIN PRIZE

Cleveland, Ohio (April 15, 2019) – The Literacy Cooperative – a convener, strategic coordinator, and watchdog agency for literacy advancement - today announced it is leading a team of local organizations and has officially entered into the \$1 million Adult Literacy XPRIZE Communities Competition, a national competition that will challenge organizations, communities and individuals to recruit adults with low literacy skills to download and use effective, convenient and private learning apps. Team LitFitNEO with partners in Cuyahoga and Summit counties, is among 46 competitors that will help propel adult education into the 21st century and beyond, and directly impact the lives of millions of people across the U.S. The team is spreading the message to all adults to download and use the apps to advance literacy and to give our community the chance to win the competition and bring much needed resources to advance adult literacy services.

The LitFitNEO team includes two award-winning library systems – Cuyahoga County Public Library and Cleveland Public Library, one of the oldest and largest community foundations in the U.S. –Cleveland Foundation, plus two public housing agencies, Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority and Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority, with more than 70,000 residents. Additionally, the team is comprised of Aspire adult education programs, workforce development organizations, neighborhood improvement agencies, as well as, doctors' offices, childcare centers, and our local NBC affiliate, WKYC. This network represents experienced collaborators who bring enthusiasm and commitment. Expanding on existing partnerships and shared initiatives, LitFitNEO's campaign will be integrated into established services. It will focus on reaching adults through a neighborhood-approach that utilizes services people are already accessing. Community Connectors will recruit and support all app users and will encourage users to visit partner organizations for services. On April 1, 2019, XPRIZE recognized the team for their innovative, feasible and scalable plan and were among 24 winners of the Milestone Award, an award granted for best proposals.

Laureen Atkins, VP of Strategic Initiatives for The Literacy Cooperative leads the team. "There are more than 500,000 residents in Cuyahoga and Summit counties that read below an eighth

grade level,” Laureen explained. “Our two largest cities, Cleveland and Akron have poverty levels of 35.2% and 24.1% respectively. For these adults, advancing their literacy advances opportunities.” The Literacy Cooperative is an umbrella organization that brings foundations, organizations and people together to find practical solutions to improve literacy. They mobilize Northeast Ohio resources to increase reading, math and digital literacy, beginning at birth, so our kids are performing at grade level throughout their educational journey. Their support, coordination, and facilitation of adult literacy initiatives are creating pathways that lead to rewarding and life-sustaining careers. The Literacy Cooperative is sharing research and introducing best practices and pilots that are innovative, interactive, and effective.

The LitFitNEO team is strong and dynamic, with wide-reaching influence that will be coordinated and consistent across the region. The target population already engages and trusts our team member organizations. Instead of creating something new, LitFitNEO is enhancing existing services and networks with the introduction of the apps and offering support with the placement of Community Connectors.

To learn more about LitFitNEO and its team, please visit www.literacycooperative.org/LitFitNEO.

LitFitNEO Team includes the following partners:

- Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Aspire Cuyahoga County Community College
- Aspire Greater Cleveland
- Aspire Polaris Career Center
- Central Promise Reads
- CEOGC
- CHN Housing Partners
- Cleveland Foundation
- Cleveland Public Library
- Collinwood Reads
- Cuyahoga County Public Library
- Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority
- Digital C
- Esperanza Inc.
- Hough Reads
- Imagination Library Greater Cleveland
- Literacy In The Hood
- MyCom
- NEO Skill Corps
- NewBridge Cleveland
- PCs for People
- Project Learn Summit County
- Reach Out & Read Greater Cleveland
- Seeds of Literacy
- Slavic Village Development
- Slavic Village P-16
- Slavic Village Reads
- The LD Edge Network
- The Literacy Cooperative
- Towards Employment
- University Settlement

WKYC

“The Communities Competition is a one-of-a-kind effort to scale the impact of the Adult Literacy XPRIZE and transform lives through literacy,” said Shlomy Kattan, executive director of the Adult Literacy XPRIZE. “The passion, dedication and thoughtfulness of these competing communities is critical to reaching learners from diverse geographies and backgrounds. We have an array of teams, from educational institutions, to nonprofits, NGOs, government agencies, corporations, and individuals who are all critical to our goal of empowering adult learners to take learning in their own hands.”

XPRIZE and its sponsors, the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy and Dollar General Literacy Foundation, will award a total of \$1 million, with \$500,000 available in milestone awards for teams that submit the most innovative, feasible and scalable plans, and a \$500,000 prize purse for teams that go on to recruit the most adult learners to download and use the apps.

For more information about the Communities Competition, visit communities.xprize.org.

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About XPRIZE

XPRIZE, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is the global leader in designing and implementing innovative competition models to solve the world’s grandest challenges. Active competitions include the Lunar XPRIZE, the \$20M NRG COSIA Carbon XPRIZE, the \$15M Global Learning XPRIZE, the \$10M ANA Avatar XPRIZE, the \$7M Shell Ocean Discovery XPRIZE, and the \$5M IBM Watson AI XPRIZE. For more information, visit xprize.org.

About Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy

The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy has been the nation’s leading advocate for family literacy for three decades. The Foundation was established by former First Lady Barbara Bush in 1989, inspired by her vision of fostering the opportunity for every man, woman, and child to secure a better life through literacy. Today, the Foundation is a public charity that remains committed to Mrs. Bush’s vision, providing innovative programs and services to ensure that every American has the opportunity to learn to read and write. To learn more, visit www.BarbaraBush.org.

About Dollar General Literacy Foundation

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation is proud to support initiatives that help others improve their lives through literacy and education. Since its inception in 1993, the Foundation has awarded more than \$160 million in grants to nonprofit organizations, helping more than 10 million individuals take their first steps toward literacy, a general education diploma or English proficiency. To learn more about the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, visit www.dgliteracy.org