



March 2, 2015

John R. Kasich, Governor
Office of Faith-Based Initiatives
77 South High Street, 30th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Governor Kasich:

I am pleased to write this letter of support for Partners Achieving Community Transformation's (PACT) submission of the Community Connectors grant to your Office of Faith Based Initiatives.

The release of this RFP is timely as The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center (OSUWMC) has been engaged with PACT and Columbus City Schools (CCS) to reimagine seven low-performing schools in a feeder pattern on the Near East Side of Columbus. Using a thematic overlay to the Common Core Standards, we are partnering with Columbus City Schools to launch the seven Health Sciences Academies (HSA) in the fall of 2015. There are five elementary schools, one middle school and one high school that comprise the HSA.

As the Vice President of Student Life at The Ohio State University, I am and have been a supporter and proponent of the partnership for the development of the Health Sciences Academies. In addition to the important work that Tei Street, PACT education director, conducts through the Office of Student Life, we have developed service and outreach programs to connect students with the Near East Side of Columbus. Under the direction of Dr. Patty Cunningham, more than 250 students a week have been participating in service-learning projects on the Near East Side in a program known as the Buckeye Civic Engagement Connection. The model that is being proposed will align the current student volunteers' participation with the goals of the pending Health Sciences Academies. Though this mentoring grant will afford us the ability to better serve young people from 5th – 12th grade in an after school program, our work with HSA will afford us the opportunity to engage with children from as early as Pre-Kindergarten.

At Ohio State our motto underscores the importance of educating students for citizenship, and we are dedicated to helping students understand the efficacy of being actively engaged in the communities in which they live. The PACT proposal for the Community Connectors grant will provide a wonderful compliment to the academic plan for the seven schools that will become the Health Sciences Academies, while giving our undergraduate students meaningful service-learning opportunities. For this reason, I submit this letter of support, and I thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Javaune Adams-Gaston, Ph.D.
Vice-President for Student Life
The Ohio State University