

March 5, 2015

Ms. Shelley Lopez
The Nehemiah Foundation
616 North Limestone Street, 3rd Floor
Springfield, Ohio 45503

Dear Ms. Lopez,

I am writing to share my support of the Community Connectors grant application being submitted by the Nehemiah Foundation in partnership with Springfield City School District, three other Clark County school districts, and several local businesses. This grant application builds on very important collaboration which is aligned to making students more successful in their pursuits after high school. I have worked with these partners when I was Assistant Director at Jobs and Family Services and now, as Executive Director of United Way of Clark, Champaign, and Madison Counties. These organization have the capacity and the passion to implement a collaborative mentoring program to better link the schools, the afterschool environment, community organizations, and our faith-based organizations is well established. This will clearly benefit our community and will address some needs that we, at United Way, recognize. This application will engage the faith based and other community non-profits in the work that won the support of the Ohio Department of Education via a competitive Straight A grant. I am thrilled that the Nehemiah Foundation took the initiative to approach Springfield City School District and others to develop this collaborative application.

If the grant is awarded to Nehemiah Foundation and Springfield City School District, other schools, including Clark Shawnee Local Schools, the Clark County Career Technology Center, and the Global Impact STEM Academy, will benefit. Employing a consistent framework to better link mentors to our schools is critically important and we support this effort. We recognize that United Way may be approached for sustaining support, and we will remain closely involved during the grant funded years to ensure the program is operating well so that we may recommend that support to our Board. I strongly support this application and hope that the reviewers will support it. It will provide needed services to the youth and the committed mentors in Clark County.

Sincerely,



Kerry Pedraza
Executive Director

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