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For Immediate Release

VOYA Awards Grant To YOUmedia For STEM Courses

Dec. 14, 2016 — Hartford Public Library received a grant of \$10,000 from Voya Financial to fund YOUmedia Hartford's new initiative: LVL ^ — a series of STEM pathways from here to career.

YOUmedia Hartford is a research-informed digital learning space for teens age 13-19 using principles of Connected Learning, the HOMAGO learning theory, and Positive Youth Development. The space is staffed with tech-savvy mentors dedicated to helping youth figure out what they love to do, and then do it more. STEM stands for science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

During the grant period, YOUmedia Hartford will: Clarify and document the necessary skills and actions to obtain post-secondary education and employment in computer science; build and launch a web application to track teens along pathways; connect teens to new organizations, interests, and peers.

Hartford Public Library will accomplish these goals through the development, launch, and formative evaluation of an online software application called LVL ^. The application is intended to help youth navigate through high school to college and career.

LVL ^ has three components:

1. Character Skills Development . Mentors endorse teens for observed character skills; it's like LinkedIn for learning.
2. Professional Development. Teens practice essential professional skills in their area of interest.
3. LVL ^ Learning Pathways. Teens complete missions to learn concepts and progress along a learning pathway.

LVL ^ Learning Pathways is made up of key concepts that teens learn by completing related missions. Progress through a pathway is incentivized with extended access to technology and paid work opportunities. Pathways are prioritized based on student interest and current demand in the professional field. LVL ^ tracks progression through missions and the completion of essential professional skills. The more a young person engages with the system, they more they earn access to technology. As the name suggests, LVL ^ has progressive levels. Upon completion of all levels, teens reach “Legendary” status and are eligible to apply for paid work opportunities in the space. Additionally, at this level students should be prepared to enter college or an apprenticeship with existing knowledge and confidence in their chosen career field.

ABOUT HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

As a finalist for the 2013 and 2014 National Medal from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, Hartford Public Library has been recognized as national leader in redefining the urban public library in the 21st century as an innovative and stimulating place that provides free resources that inspire reading, guide learning, and encourage individual exploration. In 2015-16, the 10 locations of the Hartford Public Library counted 850,000 visits, circulated 408,972 items and had 71,059 registered borrowers. We serve adults, children and families seeking early literacy opportunities, work skills training, civic engagement, arts enrichment, and so much more. Please visit www.hplct.org

