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URA ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR 2015 STEEL CITY CODEFEST
New this year: Let's Mingle: A Networking Event and Codefest Jr.

PITTSBURGH, PA (Dec. 16, 2014) The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) announced today that the third annual Steel City Codefest (Codefest) will take place beginning at 8:30 a.m. on Sat., Feb. 21 and run through 3:30 p.m. on Sun., Feb. 22 at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - Main, located at 4400 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

"Codefest has had remarkable growth in just 3 years," said Tom Link, director of the URA's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. "It has become one of the signature events on the City's Tech and Innovation calendar and is unique in that it truly connects technology and innovation with government and non-profits in a meaningful way."

Steel City Codefest is a civic software application (app) development competition designed to grow the City's innovation and technology community through the creation of technology infrastructure.

The popular 24-hour civic hackathon will once again emphasize community impact, and participants will tackle specific challenges sourced from local non-profits. Participants will also receive available relevant data. Apps will be judged in-part on their potential for near-term civic impact.

Codefest participants will stay overnight in the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – Main (Oakland) in designated areas to work on their apps. While diverse skill sets are welcome, participants with backgrounds in coding and design are especially suited for this event as each collective team will be expected to successfully build an app.

"We are excited to host Codefest this year, bringing Pittsburgh's creative thinkers and talented programmers together," said Toby Greenwalt, director of digital strategy and technology integration at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. "Throughout our long history the Library has played an instrumental role in supporting and nurturing innovative development within our communities. Our unique environment creates a collaborative work space that we hope will jump start ingenuity and produce positive change."

New this year are Let's Mingle: A Networking Event, and Codefest, Jr. The goal of Let's Mingle is to assist participants with team formation before the actual competition. It will be held on Fri., Jan. 9, at 6:30 p.m. at Bakery Living, located at 6480 Living Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15206.

Codefest, Jr. was created to get children excited and familiar with coding. Led by the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, the offerings will include coding apps, coding games and a robotics challenge. Codefest, Jr. will be held Sun., Feb. 22 at the Main library in Oakland (4400 Forbes Avenue, 15213). More information on both Let's Mingle and Codefest, Jr. can be found on the website at <http://www.steelcitycodefest.com>.

The last two Steel City Codefests boasted sold-out ticket sales and a number of area organizations that benefitted from the creation of their very own community-based technology. Among these was Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania (PPWP), whose app will expand the population they serve in a way that could not have been accomplished through in-person education alone.

“The app developed through the generous support of The Forbes Funds and BNY Mellon Foundation, and the extensive efforts of Apps N’at, the incredible team we partnered with at Codefest, will allow us to implement a youth-friendly, confidential sexual health textline, ‘It’s OK To Ask Someone’ (IOTAS), and train 180 high school peer educators to staff the line,” said Katie Horowitz, VP for education of PPWP. “The app will be invaluable as a teaching tool for the students we work with on a long-term basis and transformative for our program model, as we work to arm youth with the important sexual health knowledge they need to make healthy, informed decisions about their lives and their bodies.”

The Codefest event is just the beginning of the community impact. In order to further develop many of the apps initiated at Codefest, a grant pool has been established with the help of The Forbes Funds and BNY Mellon Foundation. The grant pool will allow participating organizations to apply for funding along with a team to finish the app started at the competition.

“We’re delighted to be a partner in the Steel City Codefest,” said Matt Zieger, executive-in-residence for innovation at The Forbes Funds. “The Forbes Funds is committed to supporting creative solutions for challenges in the nonprofit community. All innovation solves problems, but some are more important than others. Codefest is a great opportunity for local talent to come together and create apps for good. These grants help ensure Codefest doesn’t end on Sunday, by supporting the apps’ full development.”

Registration for this year’s Codefest opens Jan. 15, 2015 on the website and includes food and a T-shirt. The registration fee is \$10. Due to space constraints, participation is limited to the first 100 people.

Teams may include three to six members, and each member must purchase a ticket. For more information on Codefest and how to register, log onto <http://www.steelcitycodefest.com>.

Created in 2012 through a partnership between the City and Google Pittsburgh, Steel City Codefest was the first major project generated under the PowerUp Pittsburgh Initiative. The first Codefest was held in the Google offices located in Bakery Square in the City’s East End. Google continues to be an integral partner in the development and execution of the event.

Steel City Codefest is coordinated by Jennifer Wilhelm, the URA’s innovation and entrepreneurship strategist. Planning partners include the URA, The Forbes Funds, American Eagle Outfitters, PowerUp Pittsburgh, City of Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Center for Social and Urban Research (UCSUR), Tagalong Tour, The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, MAYA Design, and Hack Pittsburgh. Key allies and sponsors include The Forbes Funds, BNY Mellon Foundation, Google, Mylan, NetApp, PNC, Remake Learning, Bakery Square, Branding Brand, Innovation Works, ShowClix, Jones Day, and UPMC Technology Development Center.

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) is the City of Pittsburgh’s economic development agency, committed to creating jobs, expanding the City’s tax base and improving the vitality of businesses and neighborhoods. The URA achieves this mission by assembling, preparing and conveying sites for major mixed-use developments; and by providing a portfolio of programs that include financing for business location, relocation and expansion, housing construction and rehabilitation, and home purchases and improvements.

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