



News Release
For Immediate Release

Contact:

Dan Ayer
412.874.5256
dan@oystercreates.com

Connecting Champions Awarded \$125,000 Grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation
Support to fund career-based mentors for young people undergoing cancer treatment

PITTSBURGH, Pa. – April 26, 2022 -- Connecting Champions, a nonprofit providing mentorship and friendship to young people with cancer, announced today it has received a \$125,000 grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation, the largest foundation in southwestern Pennsylvania, and one of the 50 largest in the world. The grant will be used to support a variety of Connecting Champions' key pillars as the organization kicks off a new strategic plan in 2022.

Connecting Champions asks kids and young adults: "What are you passionate about?" and then pairs them with a mentor for their cancer journey. Through its in-person and virtual friendship programs, Connecting Champions has paired 3- to 26-year-olds with mentors from more than 50 career paths, such as fashion design, robotics, and zoology. Mentors visit on a weekly to monthly basis through every transition of the cancer journey.

Richard King Mellon Foundation's Trustees approved a grant of \$125,000 to Connecting Champions to provide career-based mentors for young people who are undergoing cancer treatment and in survivorship.

"Young people with cancer deserve the opportunity to have visibility into their future health and future success, beyond their cancer treatments," said Sam Reiman, director of the Richard King Mellon Foundation. "These brave children deserve this support and we are pleased to facilitate this important work by Connecting Champions."

Connecting Champions' model has been proven with a pilot program started at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh in 2012. With an evidence-based, outcomes-driven approach, Connecting Champions' program is now implemented in 23 cities across the country.

“Receiving the support of the Richard King Mellon Foundation is an honor and something we take very seriously,” said Sidney Kushner, executive director, Connecting Champions. “The foundation has a long history of supporting organizations that make a real impact in our world. We will work every day to live up to that high standard.”

To learn more about Connecting Champions, please visit <https://connectingchampions.org/>.

About Connecting Champions

Connecting Champions is a nonprofit that asks kids and young adults with cancer, “What are you passionate about?” and then connects them with a mentor for their cancer journey. Through its research-based and outcomes-driven approach, Connecting Champions has helped hundreds of children and young adults better survive the cancer journey — developmentally, psychosocially, and physically. Launched in 2011 and piloted with UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, Connecting Champions has now served individuals in 23 cities across the country. 98% of teens and parents have reported Connecting Champions makes the child healthier mentally, socially, or physically. For more information, please visit connectingchampions.org.

About the Richard King Mellon Foundation: *Founded in 1947, the Richard King Mellon Foundation is the largest foundation in Southwestern Pennsylvania, and one of the 50 largest in the world. The Foundation’s 2020 year-end endowment was \$3.1 billion, and its Trustees in 2021 disbursed \$152 million in grants and Program-Related Investments. The Foundation focuses its funding on six primary program areas, delineated in its 2021-2030 Strategic Plan.*

###