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Business Outreach Center Network

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BOC WBC InnovateHER 2016 Challenge: Statement of Support

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter in support of Brooklyn-based Rock Paper Scissors for the InnovateHER 2016 Challenge.

Rock Paper Scissors has a measurable impact on women and their families by increasing family bonding and creative development for their children. As comprehensive arts education in schools continues to dwindle at an alarming rate due to inadequate funding and lack of awareness of the powerful benefits the arts have on a child's development, Rock Paper Scissors fills this void by providing products and services which help families spend more quality time together while nurturing children's creativity. Jennifer and Alexis, Rock Paper Scissors co-founders, are passionate about bringing arts education to underserved communities through outreach, workshops, and kit gifting, because of their belief that when every child is given the chance to thrive, it has a positive impact on our world in addition hiring local mothers and providing a NYC living wage in addition to generous leave and flexible schedules as they strongly believe that taking care of a family should not interfere with their ability to earn a living.

Rock Paper Scissors was founded by, Jennifer Donlin (an early childhood teacher) and Alexis Winter (a designer and stylist). As mothers with backgrounds in education and design, they share a passion for creating developmentally enriching and creative activities for their children as parents face the challenges of raising children in a culture that emphasizes screen-based entertainment. Founded on principles of social and environmental responsibility, Rock Paper Scissors designs arts and crafts kits for children that promote the development of the whole child and provide opportunities for families to bond and nurture their children's creativity.

In order to participate in the BOC WBC's InnovateHER local competition (and to ensure that we received innovative and a high caliber of participants) we required participants to attend:

- Attend a 'How to Write a Business Plan' workshop
- Meet with a BOC counselor to discuss how to create a holistically sustainable business plan
- Attend the September Business as a Force for Good workshop or October's Cash Flow Projections workshop

Participants who met all the requirements were then required to submit their draft business plans on Oct 19th for the first round of judging and for consideration in the pitch round. A total of 6 finalists were invited to pitch in front of 5 judges (bios below) on October 5th at the Brooklyn Business & Career Library in downtown Brooklyn. Since winning the pitch round, Jennifer and Alexis have been 100% dedicated to working with the Women's Business Center to strengthen their business plan in preparation for the national competition. They have continued to visit the



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WBC weekly to work on their business plan to ensure that it is well-thought out and written in the hopes that they can be a finalist and invited to Washington, DC in March.

It has been absolutely amazing to work with Jennifer and Alexis, the passion, dedication and hard work they put into this competition is inspiring.

The BOC WBC InnovateHER pitch judges were:

- **Christophe Le Gorju, Industrial Business Account Manager at Business Outreach Network Center (BOC).** Christophe has an extensive background in management, finance, marketing, and sales within the fashion, beauty and internet industry. Christophe began his career in the financial services sector as sales director at BNP Paribas Bank and Aviva in Paris, France, where he oversaw new business development and product marketing.
- **Lisa Linhardt, Founder and Creative Director of Linhardt Design,** a custom and ready-made jewelry Gallery located in New York City. Lisa is a trained goldsmith/silversmith and creates sculptural jewelry that is harmonious with our environment. Lisa's specialty is designing one-of-a-kind engagement rings that incorporate recycled metals and ethically-sourced stones. Lisa's jewelry has been showcased in Fashion Week NYC for six seasons.
- **Adria Powell, Executive Vice President of Cooperative Home Care Associates:** As Executive Vice President at Cooperative Home Care Associates, Adria Powell supervises the Vice Presidents of the cooperative's three divisions: Operations, Clinical Services, and Finance. By guiding CHCA's ongoing strategic planning and compliance efforts, she helps to ensure that the company is positioned to seize opportunities and meet challenges that arise in providing home health care services in a highly dynamic environment.
- **Christine Sparrock, CPA, CFE, CGMA:** Offering over two decades of extensive experience in the area of accounting and financial management, Ms. Sparrock functions seamlessly in multiple finance related role—crisis management, software integration and upgrade, and turnaround management. She is an active member on the Mental Health and Disability Committee at the Brooklyn Borough President's Office and serves on the Mayor's Task Force for Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice System.
- **Anne Laraway, Director of Business Development at Happy Family Brands,** a mom-founded and -operated premium organic food company that's changed the way we feed our children. The company's purpose is to give babies their healthiest, happiest beginnings by offering parents organic, thoughtfully-made food. Launched in 2006 as Happy Baby, the company has grown up into Happy Family and offer a comprehensive, for-all-ages assortment of organic meals and snacks. They've also partnered with game-changing organizations since day one and continue to nourish more healthy bodies worldwide.

Sincerely,


Delia A. Awusi
BOC WBC Director