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Dear Evaluation Committee:

It is with great pleasure to nominate Charlie and Hannah Lucas for consideration for the 2018 mPower Award in recognition of their outstanding leadership and tireless efforts in addressing and raising awareness about mental health issues facing teens as well as taking away the stigma surrounding mental illness with teens and young adults.

Hannah Lucas, 16, struggled with depression and self harm last year, her freshman year of high school, after being diagnosed with a chronic illness. Her illness, POTS, short for Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome, caused her to unexpectedly faint. She fainted in all of her classes at various times, in the hallway, in the restroom, everywhere. She eventually received her own emergency code at school to notify the administrators whenever she fainted: Code HL. She became “that girl” at school and dealt with hallway taunts, kids simulating seizures to make fun of her, and muttered threats from boys who hoped they find her unconscious and alone.

Needless to say, her freshman year was a nightmare. The combination of bullying, dealing with an unknown medical condition, and paralyzing fear of being alone when she fainted quickly spiraled into a deep depression, which also led to self harm and a suicide attempt.

An idea formed in her head during her lowest moment: an app that would let people know she was not OK. With the assistance of her younger brother, Charlie Lucas, 13, the Lucas children got to work on the app idea which would become the notOK App™. Charlie led the technical side of developing the app through early prototypes, wireframing, and sketching. Together, Charlie and Hannah interviewed developers and eventually hired one who shared their same vision.

notOK App™ is a digital panic button that takes the guesswork out of asking for help. Users add up to five trusted contacts and when the time comes, they open the app and press the large, red notOK button which sends texts messages to those trusted contacts that says: “Hey, I’m not OK. Please call, text, or come check up on me” along with the user’s GPS location.

With the recent launch of the notOK App™, Hannah and Charlie have been able to empower people struggling with mental illness to get the help they need from their friends and family. Once timid, Hannah is now outspoken about her mental illness struggles and suicide attempt.

Charlie and Hannah are even working with school counselors in their district to start notOK clubs at middle and high schools to bring awareness to mental disorders kids may face as well as to emphasize the importance of self care routines.

It is Charlie and Hannah's goal to have notOK Clubs in every school so no kid has to go through what Hannah went through because they firmly believe: It's okay to be notOK!

Please take my nomination into consideration and keep an eye out for these amazing teens who are and will continue to change the conversations we have around mental health.

Sincerely,

Robin Lucas