



ALLEGHENY CHILDREN'S INITIATIVE, INC.  
CITIZEN CARE, INC.  
EXCEPTIONAL ADVENTURES  
PARTNERS FOR QUALITY FOUNDATION, INC.

October 11, 2018

The Thomas Brown Alton Foundation  
c/o The Birmingham Foundation  
2005 Sarah Street, Second Floor  
Pittsburgh, PA 15203

Allegheny Children's Initiative is excited to request support from The Thomas Brown Alton Foundation to help enrich the individual mental health and behavioral health treatment that ACI provides to youth and their families. The funding requested would allow ACI to purchase therapeutic games and books, which will help ACI therapists engage youth in active conversations about difficult topics such as trauma, depression, and anxiety. Through these open discussions, therapists will be able to identify and address individual mental health needs, actively assist in suicide prevention, and provide youth and families the support needed to successfully navigate through complex emotions and situations.

Allegheny Children's Initiative is confident that this collaborative project will strengthen the services provided to youth and families and allow ACI to continue supporting our community.

Respectfully,

Joyce Blackburn  
Executive Director  
Allegheny Children's Initiative



## Project Description

Allegheny Children's Initiative (ACI) will purchase therapeutic games and books to help enrich the individual mental health and behavioral health treatment that we provide to youth and their families. Ancillary tools, such as games and books, can help youth engage in conversations about difficult topics such as trauma, depression, anxiety, anger, and violence. Creating opportunities for communication and discussion within therapy can help provide youth the support they need to successfully express their feelings and navigate through complex emotions and situations.

## Project Rationale

These tools will serve to build relationships between the youth, their families, and their therapists by opening the door to discuss difficult topics and providing youth a non-threatening opportunity to learn the skills necessary to navigate their individual needs. The tools will also serve to teach positive coping skills, emotional regulation, and other pro-social behaviors. For example, an ACI therapist may be working with a 13 year-old youth who has experienced trauma, engages in aggressive behavior and defiance, and exhibits unhealthy coping skills. The therapist could sit with the youth and try to talk directly about the trauma and subsequent emotional needs, but this would likely be ineffective. If the therapist's approach is too direct and intense, the young person is unlikely to engage and the treatment will not be successful. Using a game, book, or workbook to ease into these difficult and complex topics can help build the therapeutic relationship while opening the door for ongoing discussion, processing, and skill building. Games, such as "Anger Defuser: The Fun Anger Control Game for Kids and Teens" and "Talk It Out: A Game to Encourage Teens to Communicate" and books, such as "The PTSD Workbook for Teens: Simple, Effective Skills for Healing Trauma" are examples of tools that could be useful for this particular youth.





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## Mission Connection

Providing ACI therapists with these therapeutic tools will allow them to deliver the most effective and successful treatment for youth and families within our community. ACI therapists will actively assist in suicide prevention by identifying and addressing individual behavioral and mental health needs, teaching healthy coping skills, encouraging effective communication, and promoting strong interpersonal relationships. The resources and tools purchased will be re-used again and again, benefiting many youth and families for years to come.

## Amount Requested

Allegheny Children's Initiative is requesting funding in the amount of \$3,500.00 from the Thomas Brown Alton Foundation to enhance the mental health and behavioral health services provided to youth (ages 2 to 21) and their families.

