



GIRLS PREPARATORY SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 4736 • 205 ISLAND AVENUE
CHATTANOOGA, TN 37405

June 12, 2014

Dear Mozilla Gigabit Community Fund:

I am writing in support of the GigBridge program developed by Anjali Chandra. This program is an exciting opportunity for the Computer Science students at Girls Preparatory School. We have a cohort of students who, upon their completion of AP Computer Science this spring, decided to form a Computer Science Club dedicated to investigating more topics in Computer Science and participating in outreach programs to bring more Computer Science education to the Chattanooga community. We have already formed a partnership with the Chattanooga Library to host outreach events at the various library branches in Fall 2014, so naturally we were incredibly excited about Anjali's new initiative, GigBridge. This is the perfect opportunity for GPS, CGLA, and the Building Stable Lives East Lake Center to start a lasting partnership to bring linguistic and technical education to the students of their communities.

Creating apps through Appy Pie will be a great gateway into Computer Science education for the Hispanic student community. The world is in need of more Computer Scientists. Technology has become ubiquitous in all aspects of our lives, however the demographic of the people who create technology has not changed. We desperately need to diversify the set of people working on problems so that we will have a diverse set of solutions. Also, we simply need more people to pursue careers in computer science. Currently this high-paying career is one of the fastest growing fields, yet fewer than 20% of college students graduate with a degree in Computer Science. This is largely due to stereotypes about the discipline, and the lack of exposure to engaging computer science experiences in K-12 Education.

It is vital that we begin attracting a more diverse population to the field of Computer Science. The US Department of Labor reports that by 2020 there will be 1.5 million Computer Science related job openings, and at the current rate students choose to pursue computer science degrees, only 400,000 of those jobs will be able to be filled. Closer to home, according to Anthony Carnevale from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, 47% of the STEM jobs in TN will be in computing by 2018. Now is the time to engage our Chattanooga area students in computer science, and GigBridge provides an exciting and engaging way to fight stereotypes and expose an underrepresented population to this discipline. Exposing students and parents to computer science is the first step toward a grassroots effort to expand true computer science education in our local schools, and I whole-heartedly endorse the GigBridge program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill Pala". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jill Pala
GPS Computer Science Department Chair