

# *The* ***Courageous Steps*** *Project*

## **The Courageous Steps Project, Inc. CEO's 2017 Comprehensive Plan**

A plan released by **founder & CEO Connor Archer**

### **Overview**

***The Courageous Steps Project, Inc.***, a soon-to-be non-profit organization, continues to build on the success of the organization since 2014. Under the umbrella of Old Town High School, our initiatives have grown, and are continuing to grow in this transition process from our 'One Word' Challenge, our back-to-school drive, and our Charitable Giving initiative. Our organization has raised over \$30,000 since 2014, thanks to our supporters & sponsors. Because of your support, we are improving how we operate as an organization as we continue to make our transition. In this document, I will cover my main areas of focus for 2017, and the steps that I will take to accomplish the main areas of focus.

### **Fundraisers**

#### **Back-To-School Drive**

Since 2014, ***The Courageous Steps Project's*** Annual Back-To-School Drive has benefited eighteen schools in Eastern Maine. In 2017, it is my hope to expand our back-to-school drive, to communities in Hancock & Waldo counties, as well as other communities in Penobscot County.

My plan includes to have two back-to-school drive campaigns occur in 2017. There will be one drive based out of Old Town, and one based out of Ellsworth. The drives would be held at the beginning of August in Governor's Restaurant in Old Town, and hopefully Governor's Restaurant down in Ellsworth too. We would split up our beneficiaries determined by county, and by organizations selected before the 2017 back-to-school drive campaign begins.

1.) Back-To-School Drive bins will be setup at Eastern Maine locations, and in locations through other communities in our region-based drive areas.

2.) Monetary donations will be accepted, to purchase more supplies. This will be done by myself, and any other board members who volunteer for the drive.

Volunteers are more than welcome to collect cash donations and use those to purchase supplies, but they will not receive a permission to use organization funds to

purchase supplies. Our Special Events Chair Wendy Boucher, and board member Peyton Boucher, will be responsible for overseeing some of the operations for the 2017 back-to-school drive campaign.

3.) Supplies will only be donated to schools, not classroom teachers. This fundraiser is not affiliated with the Wishlist Initiative.

## **Benefit Dinners**

Since 2015, *The Courageous Steps Project* has partnered with Governor's Restaurant in Old Town to host a benefit dinner fundraiser at least three times a year. In 2015, we hosted one dinner. In 2016, we held three benefit dinners with one in March, August, and December. In 2017, it is my goal to partner with other restaurants to have more benefit dinners in the Hancock & Waldo county regions especially.

Fundraisers will be announced on our Facebook pages, and our website.

## **Catalog/Online Fundraisers**

*The Courageous Steps Project* recently launched it's first catalog fundraiser. Since then, we have held one catalog fundraiser, and an online fundraiser. I will strive to build on that success, and try different fundraisers that appeal to our supporters, but could also bring in new supporters, while also keeping in mind of our bigger fundraisers during the year.

All catalog/online fundraisers will be advertised on our Facebook page, and on our website.

## **Walk-Run Fundraiser**

Our annual walk-run fundraiser, held every spring, has become a signature fundraiser for *The Courageous Steps Project*, gathering supporters from all over Eastern Maine. This year, our walk-run event will take place on Sunday May 21st, 2017, at Old Town High School's Victory Field. Since 2014, this venue has housed this signature fundraiser of ours. This year, we are pushing to increase our registrations and our donations towards the event, so we can make this one of our most successful fundraisers yet. In transitioning our organization, we are now putting sponsorships on a organization model, not a fundraiser model.

It is my plan to form teams through businesses, schools, and colleges. With help of the board of directors, I will also recruit individuals to come and walk or run that day. We will also push for online pre-registration, new to our organization this year. Volunteers & supporters will also be welcome to recruit teams, and those supporters, who have been through the process, can help register online through our new walk-run registration process.

## **Booth fundraisers**

This year, *The Courageous Steps Project* will be expanding booth fundraising opportunities. You will either see me and/or board members at these booths scattered around Eastern Maine, and potentially beyond. Booth fundraisers include raffles, silent auction/CYI items, and selling products.

All booth fundraisers or events will be announced on our Facebook page, our website, and through media in that region.

## **Product Line Sales**

*The Courageous Steps Project* will continue to expand its product line, to provide a variety of products that appeal to current supporters, but could also attract new supporters to our organization. It is my plan, to expand our stress ball sales, our t-shirt sales, and our other apparel sales. It is my plan to add more products, as we head into 2017. Expect to see some new postings under our online store in the coming months.

A new product available will be announced on our Facebook page & our website.

## **CYI fundraiser/Silent Auctions**

In late 2016, we tried to morph our silent auctions into a CYI fundraiser. In 2017, we hope to do both of these fundraisers, but in shorter time frames. Silent Auctions and our CYI fundraiser are very similar, but the only difference is instead of you bidding on an item, you are just claiming the item to purchase. First one to claim an item, gets the item at that CYI listed price.

An upcoming fundraiser of this type, will be announced on our Facebook page, and on our website.

## **Volunteering**

In 2016, I had the privilege of launching our new volunteering program, as part of our transition into a non-profit organization. With this volunteering program, we are able to protect our volunteers, and our organization as a whole, for the future. All volunteers have to sign a form. Once that form is signed, people will be seeing volunteering opportunities popping up on our email list. We are hoping to expand our volunteering list in 2017, as we continue to expand.

To download volunteering forms, please visit our website, to find the form that applies to you.

## **Initiatives**

### **Charitable Giving**

In 2016, the Courageous Steps Charitable Giving fund was launched to provide tougher guidelines on how donations are awarded by our organization. With this program, organizations, with non-profit or tax-exempt status, are able to fill out an online application, and submit that application online. Depending on our budget every year, we will be selecting a certain group of organizations to donate the funds to.

To apply for a Charitable Giving grant, visit our website, to find the application under the Charitable Giving section. Email us at: [charitablegiving@thecourageousstepsproject.org](mailto:charitablegiving@thecourageousstepsproject.org), to learn more!

### **‘One Word’ Challenge**

This initiative will see immediate growth as we head into 2017. With our non-profit transition taking place, we are looking at ways that we can grow some of our initiatives. Our ‘One Word’ Challenge, continues to build stronger communities, through the schools. Launched in 2015, the ‘One Word’ Challenge campaign has benefited six schools, with three more to be added on in 2017. We are so excited about this opportunity, as it will help to fulfill our mission and vision for our not only our organization, but for our charitable purposes. We also hope to reach out to businesses in Maine in 2017.

**Email us at:** [projects@thecourageousstepsproject.org](mailto:projects@thecourageousstepsproject.org), to learn more about how our ‘One Word’ Challenge can benefit your school, organization or business.

## **Resources**

In 2016, I was able to partner with some organizations, to provide resources for our website. In 2017, it is my goal to build our resources page, increasing our awareness portion of our ***The Courageous Steps Project*** mission and vision statements.

Email us at: [resources@thecourageousstepsproject.org](mailto:resources@thecourageousstepsproject.org), to provide information that helps strengthen our awareness portion of our mission and vision statements.

## **Scholarship Fund**

***The Courageous Steps Project's*** Scholarship Fund was created in 2014, to support high school seniors who are graduating, so they can get the support to pursue a post-secondary education. Since 2014, the scholarship fund has helped five high school seniors at Old Town High School. In 2017, we will be most likely awarding scholarships at Old Town High School, Orono High School, and in certain schools through our Eastern Maine Region-Wide Scholarship Program.

To learn more about our Scholarship Fund program, please email us at: [scholarshipfund@thecourageousstepsproject.org](mailto:scholarshipfund@thecourageousstepsproject.org).

## **Sensory Learning**

***The Courageous Steps Project*** has been maintaining sensory learning gardens at the Green House Nursery School in Milford, ME. In 2017, we hope to add another sensory learning garden to our list. This garden would be located at the Old Town Recreation Center. It is my goal to have this done in the May-June timeframe of 2017, so we can grow fresh produce for the summer program that occurs at the Old Town Recreation Center. Of course, we will also maintain the sensory learning gardens at the Green House Nursery School.

To learn more about how our Sensory Learning initiative can help your organization, please email us at: [sensorylearning@thecourageousstepsproject.org](mailto:sensorylearning@thecourageousstepsproject.org).

## **Wishlist Initiative**

Our Wishlist Initiative was launched in 2016, to provide classroom teachers with the resources to keep children and young adults with these developmental challenges in the regular classroom setting. In 2016, \$500 was given out in Wishlist donations, with more expected to be given out in 2017, especially with tighter regulations under our Charitable Giving fund. Our Unified Basketball donations would also apply under this Wishlist Initiative platform, along with our Sensory Learning platform.

To learn more about how a simple Wishlist donation can help you as a classroom teacher, please email us at: [wishlist@thecourageousstepsproject.org](mailto:wishlist@thecourageousstepsproject.org).

## **Business Information**

### **Sponsors**

***The Courageous Steps Project, Inc.***, has continued to grow its sponsorship programs. As we head into our next phase, we have adjusted our 'Step' System for Businesses, and have added a new program called "Sponsor Steps" to challenge bigger corporations to donate more. In 2017, expect our growth to continue.

To learn more about which sponsor plan would work best for you, please email us at: [sponsors@thecourageousstepsproject.org](mailto:sponsors@thecourageousstepsproject.org).

You can also visit the sponsors section of our website, to view all the current sponsors of our organization.

## **Tax-Deductible Donations**

As of January 1st, 2016, we have submitted our necessary legal forms to become a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. After working with an experienced attorney, we are confident about our organization's efforts. Through this "waiting period", we are still asking for your contribution. All contributions, once we receive our IRS designation letter, will be retroactive back to July 25th, 2016, when the organization was incorporated.

If you have any more questions about this, please email us at: [info@thecourageousstepsproject.org](mailto:info@thecourageousstepsproject.org).

## **Organizational Transition**

Like I mentioned above, *The Courageous Steps Project* is transitioning into a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, to provide services to more children and young adults with developmental challenges. As our organization makes this transition into 2017, we are tightening our policies as an organizations and guidelines within our initiatives, so we can help the organizations who truly deserve our support.

Our board of directors and I are committed to investing our time and energy into this organization. We want to be a resource for non-profit organizations and schools, whether it's from our back-to-school drive, 'One Word' Challenge, Wishlist Initiative.

We do expect to release some new programs for our supporters as we head into 2017, so I encourage you to stay tuned to our website and Facebook page for more information.

As the organization continues to grow, I am looking for any comments about our organizational initiatives, or suggestions on what we should put into place. All inquiries should be sent to [connor.archer@thecourageousstepsproject.org](mailto:connor.archer@thecourageousstepsproject.org).

Inquiries to be board, can be emailed to Jay Martin, our board chair, at: [jmartin125@gmail.com](mailto:jmartin125@gmail.com).