



January 31, 2020

Eric Davidson
Director of the Chesapeake Watershed CESU Research Network
University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
Appalachian Laboratory
301 Braddock Road
Frostburg, MD 21532

Dear Dr. Davidson and colleagues,

Thank you for considering Live It Learn It's application to join the CHWA CESU. We learned of this exciting opportunity through our work with the National Park Service.

Live It Learn It offers the CESU a wealth of knowledge and experience in connecting students—particularly students of color in high-poverty schools—with our area's tremendous cultural and environmental sites in ways that maximize learning. We have long enjoyed robust partnerships with both federal and non-federal institutions and we look forward to collaborating with an even wider community through CESU membership. We believe our experiences can benefit other members as they design and facilitate educational programming; we also believe our focus on racial equity may bring a unique and critical perspective to the network.

This confirms that we have read and agree to the CESU agreement, and that if selected, Live It Learn It will fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a non-federal partner.

As the appropriate authority, I confirm that Live It Learn It understands and accepts a limited overhead rate of 17.5% for activities conducted through the CESU.

Live It Learn It will be an active participant in the CESU, including annual/semi-annual partner meetings, internal and external communications, response to CESU correspondence, etc.

We agree to relay opportunities to other members as they arise.

My signature below confirms that I have the authority to commit organizational resources in a binding multi-year federal cooperative and joint venture agreement.

Respectfully,

Michelle N. Edwards, Ed.D
Executive Director



Live It Learn It's application to CHWA CESU

Description of the institution/organization, its mission, and the primary focus of collaborative activities to be supported through the CHWA CESU in the context of the CESU mission.

Live It Learn It (LILI) is a DC-based non-profit organization whose mission is to increase students' self-efficacy, motivation, and academic achievement through experiential learning. We utilize DC's tremendous cultural resources—arguably our city's greatest competitive advantage in education—in an accessible, equitable way for the academic and socio-emotional benefit of our students, nearly all of whom are children of color. We serve students and teachers in Title I (high-poverty) schools and we partner with more than 20 cultural and environmental institutions in the DC area, including the National Park Service.

While DC Public Schools (DCPS) has recently made gains in student achievement, the gap between students of different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds continues to widen and 80% of black and Hispanic 4th graders are not proficient in reading. We believe there is an “experience gap” that contributes to this achievement gap, where students living in predominantly high-poverty neighborhoods do not have equal access to the enriching, out of classroom learning experiences enjoyed by their peers.

Since 2005, LILI has been addressing this inequity by immersing students in experiences that expose them to new places, content, and career options. As a result, students build schema (a critical component of literacy proficiency), gain confidence as learners, and develop a sense of belonging to the broader DC community. In DC, we are seen by schools and cultural institutions as the premier partner in experiential learning.

Live It Learn It offers the CESU a wealth of knowledge, experience, and connections including:

- Deep knowledge of working effectively with students of color
- Deep knowledge of designing curriculum through a lens of racial equity
- Strong relationships with DCPS and access to students and teachers, particularly in Title I schools
- Opportunities to engage with our partner schools and destinations on research projects and/or programming

We look forward to collaborating with CESU members on projects such as curriculum development, teacher/educator/docent/ranger trainings, and delivery of educational programming for students.

Description or list of the primary programs, departments, or other institutional divisions of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will likely be engaged in CHWA CESU activities. Include website addresses for further information as appropriate.

Live It Learn It offers programming for students, teachers, and families.

1. Core Content for students. Through Live It Learn It's Core Content program, 2nd-5th grade students from Title I D.C. public schools analyze Jacob Lawrence's Great Migration series at the Phillips Collection, contemplate Lincoln's leadership at Ford's Theatre, examine plant adaptations at the U.S. Botanic Garden, and explore the most important sites of our nation's



capital. We use these cultural treasures to inspire students and teach them critical academic content and skills. Each Core Content unit consists of a pedagogically sound learning loop – extensive preparation, intensive experience, and guided reflection – to ensure that students have multiple opportunities to learn and demonstrate learning. For each of our 25 units, we have crafted detailed curricular materials that are interdisciplinary, age-appropriate, and support national standards. During the course of the school year, every student takes part in two Core Content field experiences and four related pre- and post- classroom lessons taught directly by Live It Learn It educators. These units elicit exclamations of joy from students (“I love Live It Learn It because we are having fun but learning at the same time!”) every time.

2. Family Day for families. Family Day offers students the opportunity to become the teachers and demonstrate their mastery of knowledge and skills learned through Live It Learn It Core Content programming to their families. This type of exploration promotes community-building as students and families connect through shared experience.

3. Professional Development for educators. Live It Learn It provides opportunities for both veteran and pre-service teachers to learn to design and lead experiential learning units with their own students. Through our partnership with the U.S. Botanic Garden, teachers across the DC area participate in a two-hour workshop that trains them to conduct a LILI unit on their own, utilizing curricular materials we provide for classroom lessons and a field experience at the Garden. Through our partnership with George Washington University’s Graduate School of Education, cohorts of pre-service teachers participate in a two-day workshop that introduces them to LILI’s Guided Experience methodology. Participants then apply what they learn to design an experiential learning unit for their grade band and content area.

4. Experiential Learning Fellowship. In SY18-19, we piloted this intensive, year-long program for a cohort of Title I DCPS teachers. The Fellowship underwent a program evaluation, conducted by a team from Compass, this spring. Recommendations from this evaluation, along with our own reflections, will guide how we modify and continue this program. In the fall of 2019, we will offer extended engagement to the original cohort of Fellows, including more opportunities for collaborative planning and coaching support.

Additionally, we have contracted and/or partnered with many organizations on projects such as:

- Creating a hands-on curriculum (including pre- and post-classroom lessons and site visit materials) for the U.S. Botanic Garden
- Creating and delivering experiential programming for teachers and students with the National Park Service
- Facilitating trainings for museum docents and educators at the National Gallery of Art focused on racial equity and effective instructional/management practices for students in Title I schools



A list of and brief description of the staff or faculty with expertise in disciplines and subject areas of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies (do not submit CVs).

Michelle Edwards, Ed.D, Executive Director

Prior to joining LILI, Michelle was principal of Orr ES (now Boone ES, Ward 8) for nearly a decade. She also coached many of DCPS' current principals as the Director of the Emerging Leaders Program at New Leaders, Inc. Michelle's areas of expertise include leadership development, trauma-informed teaching, and racial and educational equity.

Lauren Hawley Peters, M.Ed, Senior Director of Programs

Lauren is a former classroom teacher with nearly 15 of experience working in Title I schools. In her long tenure at Live It Learn It, she has led multiple initiatives in curriculum design, student programming, and teacher training. Lauren's areas of expertise include curriculum development and effective student instruction.

Bridget Berg, Experiential Learning Educator

Bridget is a former expeditionary learning teacher with a background in conducting scientific research in extreme places—like 72 meters up a redwood tree and below the ocean via scuba diving. She is highly effective at designing interdisciplinary, project-based curriculum with a social justice focus.

For academic institutions, include a description of student demographics and the institution's status as a minority-serving institution (e.g., as defined by the U.S. Department of Education).

Although we are not an academic institution and thus not technically an MSI, we do primarily serve minority populations.

Live It Learn It serves teachers and students in Title I DC public schools located in Wards 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Our student programming reaches 2nd-5th grade students, while our teacher programming impacts students from Pre-K through high school. More than 60% of our students attend schools in Wards 7 & 8 (east of the Anacostia River), historically the most economically disadvantaged area in the city. 98% of our students are children of color. Our partners in Wards 1 and 4 serve large numbers of students (32-45% of school population) who are classified as English Language Learners. And we are expanding our work in Ward 6, where great disparities in income and educational opportunities exist from block to block and even within each school.

Most of our partner schools have been classified by OSSE (Office of the State Superintendent of Education) as "priority" or "focus" schools, meaning they need "intense" and "targeted" support (respectively) to address low student performance and large achievement gaps between students. On average, 18% of students at our partner schools demonstrated grade-level proficiency on the standardized reading assessment. We focus on this audience because of our commitment to bringing high-quality experiential learning to the students who need it most.



Description or a list of facilities, equipment, centers, or institutes that would provide support to the research, technical assistance, or educational activities of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will be engaged in CHWA CESU activities.

Live It Learn It's current partners include:

- Audubon Naturalist Society
- Anacostia Watershed Society
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- DC Public Schools
- George Washington's Mount Vernon
- George Washington University's Graduate School of Education
- International Spy Museum
- Independent Schools Experiential Education Network (ISEEN)
- Kreeger Museum
- Library of Congress
- National Building Museum
- National Gallery of Art
- National Museum of African American History and Culture
- National Museum of the American Indian
- National Museum of Natural History
- National Museum of Women in the Arts
- National Park Service
 - FDR Memorial
 - Frederick Douglass National Historic Site
 - Ford's Theatre and the Peterson House
 - Lincoln Memorial
 - Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial
 - Peirce Mill (Rock Creek Park)
- National Portrait Gallery
- National Zoo
- Phillips Collection
- U.S. Botanic Garden
- U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
- Washington Youth Garden at the National Arboretum
- Washington International School Summer Institute for Teachers

Description or a list of past research, technical assistance, and educational services supported through federal financial assistance awards that are of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will be engaged in CHWA CESU activities.

- Curriculum development for U.S. Botanic Garden (funded through contract with Architect of the Capitol)



- Program facilitation for teachers, students, and the general public at the U.S. Botanic Garden (funded through contract with Architect of the Capitol)
- Cooperative agreements with National Park Service for conducting educational programming for students, teachers, and families at NPS sites on the National Mall

Description or a list of current formal agreements and informal relationships with federal agencies that are of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will be engaged in CHWA CESU activities.

- Program facilitation for teachers, students, and the general public at the U.S. Botanic Garden (funded through contract with Architect of the Capitol)
- Upcoming cooperative agreement with National Park Service to include student programming, teacher training, and curriculum development

Technical representative

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United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Interior Region 1- National Capital Area
National Mall and Memorial Parks
900 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1/30/2020

Dr. Eric Davidson
Director of the Chesapeake Watershed CESU Research Network
University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
Appalachian Laboratory
301 Braddock Road
Frostburg, MD 21532

Dear Dr. Davidson,

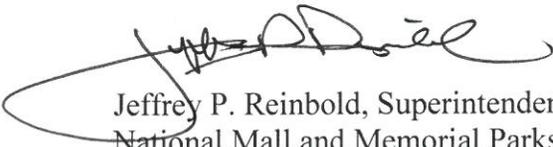
We are pleased to provide this letter of support for Live It Learn It's application for membership in the Chesapeake Watershed Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CHWA CESU).

The National Park Service has enjoyed a productive and positive partnership with Live It Learn It for more than a decade. Through cooperative agreements with Live It Learn It, thousands of students who attend Title I (high-poverty) DC Public Schools have engaged in experiential learning at local NPS sites. Live It Learn It's unique model of facilitating pre- and post-NPS site visit lessons, in addition to designing high-quality field experiences, means that students who visit NPS sites are extremely well prepared, thoughtful, and excited. Our park rangers always enjoy working with Live It Learn It students.

NPS and Live It Learn It have also collaborated on a variety of other educational opportunities, including professional development workshops for teachers, professions-focused programming for students (where students simulated NPS' role in planning for an inauguration), and special events for families of Live It Learn It students. Live It Learn It creates access for students who otherwise may not connect with NPS sites to not only visit these sites, but more importantly, engage in deep and meaningful learning while there.

We believe Live It Learn It has a lot to offer the CESU and will make a wonderful member. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,



Jeffrey P. Reinbold, Superintendent
National Mall and Memorial Parks

INTERIOR REGION 1 • NORTH ATLANTIC-APPALACHIAN

CONNECTICUT, DELAWARE, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, KENTUCKY, MAINE, MARYLAND, MASSACHUSETTS,
NEW HAMPSHIRE, NEW JERSEY, NEW YORK, PENNSYLVANIA, RHODE ISLAND, VERMONT,
VIRGINIA, WEST VIRGINIA