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The AbleGamers Charity Assists in Cultivating a More Inclusive Gaming Industry by Launching Its Developers Promoting Accessibility & Diversity (DPAD) Initiative

CHARLES TOWN, WV (AUGUST 4, 2020) - [The AbleGamers Charity](#) — the leading charity organization enabling play to combat social isolation and foster inclusive communities for people with disabilities — is incredibly excited to announce today the launch of the Developers Promoting Accessibility & Diversity (DPAD) Initiative. The DPAD Initiative will focus on granting marginalized developers (including developers who are disabled, of color, women, and/or members of the LGBTQIA+ community), free access to a session of the [Accessible Player Experience Practitioner (APXP) Course](#).

Launched in October 2019, and developed around the Accessible Player Experience (APX) design tool, the APXP Course has already been used to train over 100 developers across major studios in the gaming industry. The course aims to guide developers on cultivating a culture of accessibility within their development teams and teaching developers how to apply player-research-driven design patterns to identify accessibility barriers and ideate assistive solutions early in the game development process.

In the midst of a global pandemic that has undoubtedly affected the ability to connect with one another, AbleGamers believes the community has seen first-hand how important gaming is to socialization. Likewise, the charity recognizes that events this year have reinforced that despite gaming's inherent ability to connect a vast and diverse community, there are still incredible deficits in how members within that community are treated.

"The overt and subtle inequalities that exist in the gaming space and the world at large for people with disabilities, people of color, women, and the LGBTQIA+ community is soul-crushing and frankly, infuriating. It's not enough to just say that it's unacceptable. We all have to do something about it," said Mark Barlet, Founder & Executive Director of AbleGamers. "When Greg Haynes, our Lead Games User Researcher and the person spearheading this initiative, approached the leadership team with the idea that became the DPAD Initiative, we knew we

had to support him in bringing this idea to life in order to support the aforementioned communities within the gaming landscape."

In June of this year, AbleGamers shared its statement in support of the Black Lives Matter movement across the charity's social media platforms. In their statement, the charity promised to continue having conversations to show solidarity with and further support the black community.

"The DPAD Initiative is one of the outcomes of those conversations," said Greg Haynes, Lead Games User Researcher at AbleGamers. "Through the DPAD Initiative, we hope to see that support extended to developers from other marginalized communities. We're hoping to create a diverse diaspora of game developers who are bastions of accessibility in an industry that's increasingly seeing the importance of accessible design practices. Not only is the completion of the APXP Course a resume distinguisher, but it also presents a unique opportunity to interact with other developers through the community of APX Practitioners we're building with each course. DPAD Initiates will be on the front lines of opportunity. As we train dozens of initiates each year, we'll hopefully begin to shift the dynamics of inequality and under-representation in this space."

Each of the extensive, two-day courses (normally priced at $2,000 USD with all proceeds supporting the AbleGamers mission and initiatives) will continue to be offered going forward alongside the DPAD Initiative. AbleGamers will select 3 DPAD Initiative applicants to attend each session. Developers interested in applying to be selected for the DPAD Initiative can submit an application at https://ablegamers.org/dpad.

A full press kit is available here: https://uberstrategist.link/ablegamers-pkit.

Don't miss a beat by following The AbleGamers Charity on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

To arrange an interview with AbleGamers to learn more about the DPAD Initiative, the Accessible Player Experience Practitioner (APXP) course, or additional aspects of the AbleGamers mission, please reach out to press@ablegamers.org or contact pr@uberstrategist.com.

About AbleGamers Charity
The AbleGamers Charity is a 501(c)3 charity that continually strives to create opportunities to enable play in order to foster inclusive communities, combat social isolation, and improve the quality of life for people with disabilities. Through received support and donations, AbleGamers provides disabled gamers with assistive technologies (including their Expansion Pack program) that allow those with limited real-world mobility to experience what it is like to walk, run, climb, drive and even fly – in a virtual world. AbleGamers additionally advises developers and publishers on how to best incorporate accessibility options so that their video game titles may

reach and appeal to the widest and most diverse audience possible. To read AbleGamers articles, or to find out how your support or donations can help them positively impact an even greater number of individuals with disabilities, please visit www.ablegamers.org.

About APX

The Accessible Player Experience (APX) design tool is based on research conducted with participants of the AbleGamers Player Panels program (which currently includes approximately 600 players with disabilities) and is freely viewable on AbleGamers' player research and game developer support hub. The APXP Course aims to provide guidance to games industry professionals in identifying barriers to play and incorporating assistive solutions early in the game development process.

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