



City of  
Philadelphia



THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT:** Jin David Kim  
(c) 215- 900-9030  
(o) 215-563-5848 ext. 23  
[davidk@pccy.org](mailto:davidk@pccy.org)

### **Blockbuster Minecraft gaming event returns to raise funds and ambitions about hi-tech learning in PHL schools**

*STEMCraft to draw thousands of enthusiastic gamers and future scientists to School of the Future with unique challenges and expanded STEM fair!*

**PHILADELPHIA** (August 15, 2018) – Today the region’s top experts in Minecraft (kids!) gave Mayor Jim Kenney a sneak preview of STEMCraft, PCCY’s popular and groundbreaking gaming event for young fans of Minecraft, the world’s most popular video game. The kids showed off their Minecraft skills by presenting the mayor with their ideas for the Rebuild initiative. Made possible by the Philadelphia Beverage Tax, [Rebuild](#) is the City of Philadelphia’s program to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in neighborhood parks, playgrounds, recreation centers, and libraries across Philadelphia. The kids created computer models of their dream playgrounds, recreation centers, and libraries to share their ideas with the mayor.

Philadelphia has become a hub for science, research and tech, fueling our economy and influencing the culture of the city,” said Mayor Kenney. “I’m excited to see these young Minecrafters here today showing off their tech and design skills. These kids are our future tech leaders and I’m inspired to see what they have been working on.”

On October 6, 2018, thousands of young gamers, their friends and families, will attend PCCY’s STEMCraft (formerly “*Block By Block Party*”), the largest Minecraft gaming event for kids in the world. This year, the event will be hosted at School of the Future, just blocks from the Philadelphia Zoo.

The event is a fundraiser for PCCY, the leading child advocacy organization in southeastern Pennsylvania, and funds a new grant program that brings hi-tech learning tools to boost coding and robotics skills in public schools.

Hailed as a boon to creative play that promotes STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) learning, Minecraft enjoys high praise from educators and academics as a wholesome and educational activity for kids of all ages.

“STEMCraft brings kids together in creative, educational play, and raises money to bring hi-tech learning tools into classrooms. This event will raise funds to increase access to robotics and coding classes and clubs in the Philadelphia School District,” said Mayor Kenney. “As far as fundraisers go, STEMCraft is a homerun.”

STEMCraft is a safe, kid-friendly gaming event that uses Minecraft to build STEM skills, involve children in creative constructive play, develop critical thinking skills and encourage collaboration children via an on-line platform and is especially designed for gamers 17 and under.

Not interested in Minecraft? STEMCraft will also feature a STEM fair with activities and games from event partners like the Philadelphia Zoo and the Franklin Institute, as well as arts and craft activity centers, and a fleet of Philadelphia’s most popular food trucks.

“STEMCraft really shows off how kids gravitate toward opportunities to learn and collaborate and how technology can help create those opportunities in new and exciting ways,” said Melanie Harris, Chief Information Officer, School District of Philadelphia. “PCCY’s tech grants will have such an impact on our students and we’re very pleased to partner with them on this dynamic event.”

“We were blown away by how excited all of the kids were at last year’s event and this year we’ve got new and amazing activities that will knock their socks off,” said Donna Cooper, Executive Director at PCCY. “We had thousands of people from the region attend last year as gamers, guests, and volunteers. Everyone had a great time and the fact that we were also helping kids made for a very special event.”

With over 100 million copies sold worldwide, Minecraft has been hailed as a breakthrough educational platform that encourages creative thinking, exploration and collaborative play. How one plays Minecraft is entirely up to the player, whether they want to build structures or sculptures using cube building blocks or explore the ‘open’ world and embark on adventures alone or with friends.

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