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Games Industry Reflects on and Recommits to #PlayApartTogether Campaign at One Year Milestone

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Campaign Encourages Players to Follow Health and Safety Guidelines for COVID-19 from the World Health Organization; Provides Information and Social Connection

SAN FRANCISCO--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Apr. 13, 2021-- Today, leaders from the global games industry who participated in #PlayApartTogether committed to reactivate the initiative launched one year ago, which encourages gamers everywhere to follow World Health Organization (WHO) health advice on COVID-19 prevention.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210413005079/en/>



As part of #PlayApartTogether, a large number of gaming companies agreed to disseminate evidence-based health messages from WHO to help slow the spread of COVID-19. To promote these messages, hundreds of game industry leaders in the interactive entertainment space have encouraged their vast network of users to follow the WHO's health guidelines—including on physical distancing, masks, hand and respiratory hygiene, avoiding crowds and how to keep rooms well ventilated.

Since the initial kickoff of the campaign, #PlayApartTogether has been adopted by platforms and organizations across the breadth of the digital entertainment space, including mobile, console and PC gamemakers, hardware, platforms, eSports, streamers, universities, non-profits and consumer advocacy groups. The hashtag has been seen by gamers around the world, during the pandemic, in countries including Finland, Germany, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, the Netherlands, Russia, UK and the USA.

Games Industry Reflects on and Recommits to #PlayApartTogether Campaign at One Year Milestone (Graphic: Business Wire)

WHO has served as the leading international health agency spearheading the global response to the coronavirus outbreak and has prioritized keeping

people informed through equitable access to trusted information. As information on the virus, as well as diagnostics, treatments and vaccines are developed and used around the world, WHO continues to provide essential guidance and public health recommendations to governments, communities and individuals everywhere, including through new and wide-reaching communication channels.

By bringing special events, exclusives, activities, rewards and inspiration to some of the most popular games in the world, #PlayApartTogether encourages users to adopt best practices of protection from COVID-19 transmission for the sake of their own health and that of their families and communities. By incorporating COVID-19 prevention messages into games, people everywhere are told: "Wherever you are, whatever game you play, you can make a difference."

Follow the hashtag #PlayApartTogether on social media for ongoing updates and details.

#PlayApartTogether Game Industry Partners

Activision Blizzard	GSN Games	Riot Games
Atomhawk	Jagex	Rovio
BANDAI NAMCO Entertainment Inc.	Jam City	Scopely
Big Fish Games	Kabam	Snap

Dirtybit	Lenovo	Tencent Games
Drone Racing League	Level Ex	thatgamecompany
fortyseven communications	Maysalward	Tilting Point
G5 Entertainment	MobilityWare	Twitch
Graffiti	NCSOFT	Ubisoft
Green Man Gaming	PocketGems	Unity
Gismart	PlayMob	WellPlay
Glu Mobile	Playtika	Whow Games
	PUBG Mobile	Zynga

#PlayApartTogether Game Industry Partner Quotes:

"As COVID-19 challenged communities around the world, we were proud to join others in our industry in supporting #PlayApartTogether. Our games have a unique ability to reach hundreds of millions of people, and through the campaign we helped spread vital information, while delivering safe entertainment and joy during an extremely difficult year. We are honored that veteran players and newcomers alike turned to our franchises including Call of Duty, Candy Crush, and World of Warcraft to find much-needed social engagement and fun. And we look forward to continuing to welcome these players back even after the pandemic subsides."

Daniel Alegre, President and Chief Operating Officer, Activision Blizzard

"Atomhawk is supporting #PlayApartTogether as it's so important to follow best practice health guidance during the current COVID-19 situation. Our teams in the UK and Canada have successfully managed to keep working, playing and learning together during lockdown, all the while creating awesome art for some incredible video games."

Tim Wilson, Managing Director, Atomhawk

"The COVID-19 pandemic changed our day-to-day lives dramatically these days. Of course, food and medical care are essential for sustenance and life, but entertainment is also an essential requirement for keeping up our spirits. We are glad that our offer for free copies of PAC-MAN Championship Edition 2 last April and Little Nightmares this January contributed to #PlayApartTogether and helped people with social distancing while keeping households entertained."

Yasuo Miyakawa, President & CEO, BANDAI NAMCO Entertainment Inc.

"Over the past year, our top priority has been to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our employees while continuing to deliver exceptional experiences for our players. Through the challenges we have all faced, Big Fish Games has strived to provide some fun, a degree of escapism and strengthened connections through our player community. #PlayApartTogether has been at the core of creating new releases, and a positive and safe space for our players. We are proud to have participated in this initiative and are humbled to be in a position to make a difference in life through the power of play."

Jason Willig, Managing Director & Co-president, Big Fish Games

"People all over the world create memorable moments together through Dirtybit's mobile games. Connecting players for a fun time together is the core of what we do, and we were very excited to participate in the #PlayApartTogether initiative in 2020. Dirtybit launched campaigns both in "Fun Run 3" and in social media to help raise health awareness and share advice from WHO, and encourage people to connect with friends and family through games while staying safe at home. Fun Run players all over the world engaged with our content, helping us reach more than 2 million people. Seeing people share stories about how playing games together help them cope with the pandemic, motivates us to keep developing for social game experiences."

Anette Staloy, Chief Marketing Officer, Dirtybit

"Drone Racing League is thrilled to support the #PlayApartTogether campaign with the World Health Organization. We're inviting aspiring drone pilots everywhere to learn to fly, race with friends and explore new worlds on the DRL SIM, our drone racing video game on Xbox and Steam, safely from home."

Rachel Jacobson, President, Drone Racing League

"We are all more optimistic now that we have global vaccine efforts to put an end to the pandemic. Even though it may not be the last, 2020 set a historical precedent. As developers, we are glad that our players have been able to find comfort and a much-needed outlet and connection in times of isolation. And, as lockdowns ease in parts of the world, the activity in our games continues to remain high, which speaks to the quality of our games. We would like to thank the #PlayApartTogether initiative and industry peers for continuing to empower players to #PlayApartTogether. We will continue to do our part by providing players with a sense of community and games that they can continue to enjoy."

Vlad Suglobov, Co-Founder & CEO, G5 Entertainment AB

"Last year the world was turned upside down amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Even today, as we move into our new normal, people face continuing challenges to their physical and mental health. From the very beginning, Gismart has tackled the problem head-on, taking part in the #PlayApartTogether campaign alongside other industry leaders. We promoted important WHO messages inside our 40 games and apps to hundreds

of millions of people. We really hope it helps to raise awareness and make keeping safe simple. We also made our anti-anxiety app, Music Zen, completely free for the first most stressful months of the pandemic. In addition, as part of an internal initiative, we looked after our employees' mental health with a psychologist's help, as well as by tracking how they were feeling via Mood Tracker. We hope our actions made the world a slightly better place in such tough times."

Lana Meisak, VP Business Development and Marketing, Gismart

"The past year has illustrated just how powerful games are in their ability to bring people together. Not only through entertainment, competition, and creativity – but also the communities formed and connections forged. On the one-year anniversary of #PlayApartTogether, we are proud to continue supporting our global community of players by sharing important World Health Organization information and resources across Glu games in the fight against COVID-19."

Nick Earl, President & CEO, Glu Mobile

"One year on, we are still very supportive of adhering to safe social distancing, as guided by the World Health Organization and through the #PlayApartTogether initiative. At Graffiti, we are dedicated to enabling people to stay connected through fun, gaming experiences, like through the recent launch of our AR game 'Leap Trigger' that allows friends to play together, while also staying safely apart."

Toshiaki Morimoto, CEO, Graffiti

"Never has it been more critical for people around the world to stay connected to friends and family as it has been in the past year. While countries globally have been locked down for long periods of time, isolation, anxiety and general wellbeing have been a challenge. In these turbulent times, games have been such a powerful force for good, bringing joy and keeping people connected as they stay home. We are proud that in the toughest time, the industry has come together under #PlayApartTogether to help stop the spread, keeping gamers safe and bringing hope to our communities."

Ian McGregor, CMO, Green Man Gaming

"At such a stressful time, it was great to see the gaming community and World Health Organization team up to offer people a place to come together when doing so physically wasn't possible. Jam City used social, in-game ad inventory, influencers, and partners to help promote the #PlayApartTogether PSA. Jam City is proud to offer our players experiences where they can de-stress, decompress and enjoy immersive worlds that bring a little joy to their daily lives."

Chris DeWolfe, Co-Founder and CEO, Jam City

"The #PlayApartTogether initiative is a great way of inviting more people into the world of gamers. For a long time, gamers have known that games provide an amazing way to bring people together even when they can't be in the same room. Keep playing games, keep having fun doing it and stay safe out there. Someday this pandemic will be over, but the friends you make playing games can be with you for life."

Tim Fields, CEO, Kabam

"This challenging year has taught us that we're all in this together. Lenovo has responded to the needs of communities around the globe with millions of dollars in response and aid. Lenovo Legion led a number of online activations encouraging our gaming community to #StayHome and game on to help make the world a happier and healthier place. Lenovo Legion fans sent us almost 3,000 photos of their gaming setups and explained how gaming helped them to reconnect with friends and family online. Gaming is a great activity for having fun and was a valuable tool for millions of people coping with lockdown to relax. Inspired by the photos received, we gave nearly 186,000 entrants a chance to upgrade their battle stations with top Lenovo Legion gaming PCs and headsets via Lenovo Legion's #PlayApartTogether Giveaway. To further spread the word about the #PlayApartTogether initiative and WHO's social distancing guidelines, Lenovo Legion and our North America esports partner, TSM, teamed up in the fall of 2020 to lead through example via our support of transitioning all global events to online to save lives."

Matt Bereda, Vice President of Global Consumer Marketing, PCs and Smart Devices, Lenovo

"Over the past year, we have seen how games can keep people connected, and through #PlayApartTogether, how they can help promote health and safety. Our players are doctors, and we were eager to support them as a part of this initiative. Using cloud gaming technology, we developed a platform for healthcare professionals to train apart, together, so multiple doctors can practice procedures and diagnosis puzzles together over Zoom. We also created COVID-19 levels in our mobile games to disseminate critical information. These levels were played by tens of thousands of medical professionals, helping them provide better care to patients globally."

Sam Glassenberg, Founder and CEO, Level Ex

"Since March last year, we entered a new challenging level in humanity's life that needs everyone's effort to overcome the enemy at this stage, so we joined the #PlayApartTogether campaign with our players to defeat the boss of this level."

Nour Khrais, CEO, Maysalward

"All of us at MobilityWare are honored to once again join our peers in mobile gaming for the #PlayApartTogether campaign, as we try to do our part in the fight against the Coronavirus pandemic. As a partner in the initiative, our Jigsaw Puzzle team kept our players updated on the World Health Organization's latest public health messaging and guidelines with our free "Do the Five" puzzle pack, our Easter Egg Hunt event, and the launch of our "Stay Home Puzzles" category. Our mission is to bring joy to others one game at a time and we hope that, with our extensive catalog of titles, we've both entertained and provided a sense of community to gamers over the past year."

Francesca Noli, Chief Product Officer, MobilityWare

"This past year in lockdown has been challenging for everyone around the world. As a creator of virtual worlds, we worked hard to keep our players connected and engaged. We discovered our massively multiplayer games were a great resource for our players to help them #PlayApartTogether and stay safe."

Dr. Songye Yoon, President, NCSOFT

"Pocket Gems continues to support the #PlayApartTogether campaign alongside the World Health Organization and our fellow developers. The challenges of the past year make us even more committed to deepening our connections with the Episode and War Dragons communities and delivering original experiences for new and existing players alike."

Ben Liu, CEO, Pocket Gems

"At Rovio, our mission is to craft joy and deliver unforgettable experiences to our players. If ever there was a time when people needed more joy, it's now. We see our responsibility as game-makers is to delight people as they increasingly find their entertainment at home, away from their friends, family and loved ones. We will continue our commitment to bringing joy in our players' lives through our games and through initiatives like

#PlayApartTogether.”

Alex Pelletier-Normand, CEO, Rovio

“At Scopely, we aim to inspire play, every day. And every day – especially over the last year – it’s our players who inspire us. We are proud to continue to support the World Health Organization on the one-year anniversary of #PlayApartTogether. We’re dedicated to fostering connection and entertaining players globally through our games, while sharing important resources as we continue in the fight against COVID-19.”

Walter Driver and Javier Ferreira, Co-CEOs, Scopely

“In a year where it’s been harder than ever to stay connected, games have provided an engaging way for friends and family to keep in touch. By putting games right in Snapchat, and weaving communication into the core game experience, we’ve created a place where Snapchatters feel like they’re hanging out, sitting side by side – even when they’re apart. We’re continuing to support #PlayApartTogether, and make sure that Snapchatters can have fun with friends and family, staying safe while staying connected.”

Pany Haritatos, Head of Games, Snap

“While most of us were physically separated last year, the PUBG MOBILE community remained closely connected. Supporting the #PlayApartTogether campaign, millions of PUBG MOBILE players enjoyed chicken dinners at home, with over 500,000 players engaged on social media and more than 20 million viewers tuned in to the global esports tournament for this campaign. Playing together across 20 markets, the PUBG MOBILE community demonstrated its continuous effort to fight against the pandemic in the #StayInTheSafeZone campaign, and its ability to enjoy the game in a healthy way consistent with WHO health guidelines. PUBG MOBILE players also participated in the #PUBGMPlayAsOne in-game running challenge and achieved 864 million kilometers in total, which was converted into a USD2 million donation of medical kits to frontline healthcare workers from the PUBG MOBILE team in real life. Video games are not just our passion, but also how we connect with each other and support our community; they are a big part of our efforts to improve ourselves and realize our dreams. We hope the PUBG MOBILE community can continue to play well together and support our local communities to slow the spread of COVID-19.”

Vincent Wang, Head of PUBG MOBILE Publishing, Tencent Games

“We are so overwhelmed by the generosity of Sky’s global community. Originally, we asked how could our studio help during the pandemic? We couldn’t have predicted the altruistic behaviors in-game would translate to real life action and giving to frontline workers. Our team is so moved by the word-of-mouth and support Sky has inspired during this pandemic.”

Jenova Chen, Co-Founder and Creative Director, thatgamecompany

“The pandemic has hit everyone hard, on various levels, but it also provided ways to rally together, in true Star Trek fashion. In the context of STAR TREK TIMELINES, we quickly put in place an initiative to provide our players with a care package every two weeks. When #PlayApartTogether came to be, we were ready and embraced it – its double meaning resonating with all of us. Games are indeed a great way to socialize with each other while remaining physically distanced.”

Anne Williams, Player Experience Lead for Star Trek Timelines, Tilting Point

“Ubisoft is proud to have participated in the #PlayApartTogether initiative, during which we saw more than 9 million players redeem giveaways of some of our most beloved titles. This unprecedented period has shown what a positive impact video games can have on players’ lives, offering people around the world not just a source of entertainment and escape, but also a means to stay connected with friends and family.”

Yves Guillemot, Co-Founder and CEO, Ubisoft

“This past year we’ve witnessed humanity come together in amazing ways. The #PlayApartTogether initiative enabled gaming to take on an important role, allowing players to connect with new friends and old, socialize and escape for a little while, all while staying distanced. Even as we locked down, creators continued to inspire us with new games, new experiences and new devices that brought more players together from all around the world. And at Unity, our commitment to the initiative, to the WHO and to the gaming community remains strong. We will continue to invest in the tools, services and support so that game developers and players can find success, enjoy their favorite entertainment and connect socially online.”

John Riccitiello, CEO, Unity

“#PlayApartTogether demonstrated the resiliency and creativity of the global gaming community. At WellPlay, we learned how the driving factors of gaming – socialization, interactivity, co-creation and positive feedback loops – can positively impact health and are pleased to be using our game Virus Hunters in the clinical setting to improve health outcomes. While serious games are not new, we believe that there is a greater opportunity for the health and gaming communities to come together and tackle our greatest challenges. We look forward to bringing the best of storytelling, gaming and health to players around the world.”

Ari Mostov, Founder & CEO, WellPlay

“At Whow Games, we have the great privilege of bringing joy to millions of people around the world through our games. But games can do more than entertain: They connect people and overcome the physical distance currently imposed on us. That’s why we’re very proud to join many other great games companies in promoting the WHO and #PlayApartTogether campaign for the past year. Gamers worldwide have taken responsibility and done their part to flatten the curve.”

Philip Reisberger, CEO, Whow Games

“It’s overwhelming to reflect upon the last year; the tragedy and loss that has affected so many families, but also the inspiring strength, resilience and perseverance of so many. When we first started conceptualizing the #PlayApartTogether initiative, we couldn’t have dreamed that it would be so embraced by the global gaming community, with an enthusiasm and commitment that truly made an impact. As a return to more normal life is beginning to be within our sights, we are devoted to continuing to use this platform to bring vital information and a supportive community to players. We truly make a difference when we work – and play – together.”

Bernard Kim, President of Publishing, Zynga

Editor’s Note:

Campaign Graphics, Quote Sheet and Industry Contact Sheet =

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