Neumont University Congratulates Alum Lyle Cox on Successful Kickstarter Campaign for Couch Co-Op Video Game

Salt Lake City, July 11, 2014—“I wanted to make something of benefit for society,” Lyle Cox, a graduate of Salt Lake City-based Neumont University says about his video game Together: Amna & Saif.

The game, under Cox’s direction, successfully raised more than $14,000 from 738 backers online through the crowd-funding website Kickstarter.

For Cox, money is not the driving force behind developing games, but a means to fulfill the need for human interaction and interdependence. The funds from the Kickstarter campaign will pay his contract employees for the next round of upgrades and improvements to the game he’s created.

Together is different.

This adventure puzzle game’s storyline stars Amna and Saif, a mother and son of Muslim descent whose loved one has fallen deathly ill and only chance of a cure lies deep within a mysterious forest players must navigate. Cox says a huge push of support for the game came as a result of the uniqueness of Together’s characters.

“There’s not a lot of diversity in gaming today,” Cox said. “It’s usually a white guy with a gun,” he says, with a sort of nervous amusement. Amna and Saif buck the trend.

Unlike most multiplayer or network games that have participants spread across the globe, Together’s objective is to work with the person who is sitting next to you on the couch.

“The couch co-op lends itself to a bonding experience,” Cox says, which often includes a high five between participants. (These high-five moments can be seen in a promotional video for the game where current Neumont student tested a beta version.) The connection that forms between players is also surprisingly different. Unlike most co-op games, “you can’t do anything on your own,” Cox says. “You need each other to progress.”

Another key to the game’s welcome success is the extra effort Cox and his team have taken to make the game accessible. Cox says that the colors used in the game were planned with the color blind in mind. Controls are kept simple to be accessible to as many people as possible. (The game can be played with one hand.) Plus, there are optional objectives that even avid gamers will find challenging.

When asked what specifically has been the driving force in his desire to create something better for society, Cox credits his religious background, which led to a two year service-mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints bookended with his time at Neumont University.

“I worked hard and finished in under two years,” Cox says about earning his bachelor’s degree in computer science for Neumont. Cox enrolled in school for one year prior to serving his mission, and then finished his degree program in the year following his return from Costa Rica.

Cox’s world-view is different than most. He’s not seeking fame, or trying to sell his game to a development company. Cox says he’s served his time with corporate America.

“I decided I wanted to optimize for happiness,” says Cox. “For me that meant autonomy and creative control in my work and more time for my family. I quit my job in March of 2013 to pursue those goals through indie game development.”

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ABOUT LYLE COX
Lyle Cox founded Mount Olympus Games in 2013 after working in corporate America for four years. He is a graduate of Neumont University where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in two years. He served an LDS mission to Costa Rica, and credits his religious background for influencing his vision to create a world of connectivity and interdependence. Together: Amna & Saif is his first independent game. Learn more about Lyle, his company, and the couch co-op game at togetherthegame.com.

ABOUT NEUMONT UNIVERSITY
Neumont University was founded in Salt Lake City, Utah, to fill the growing national demand for industry-ready technology professionals by offering an intense 2.5 or 3 year course of study that immerses students in a rigorous, project-based curriculum. Ninety-seven percent of Neumont students graduate into a high-wage job in the field of computer science within six months of graduation with salaries typically in the $50,000 to $80,000 range (and an average starting salary of $63,300). Neumont’s innovative approach to computer science education has been recognized by Forbes, CNN, CNBC, MSNBC, USA Today, and the U.S. Department of Education for innovation in higher education. Students attend classes full-time, year-round, Monday through Friday, and complete 180 credits, including general education courses and core technology disciplines. More information is available at www.neumont.edu.

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