



Nonprofit Technology Resources

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Free Computer Projects - Fiscal Year Ending July 31, 2009

Financial support from private foundations and corporations allows NTR's **Learning Through Technology (LTT)** program to provide free computers to disadvantaged households. We distributed 321 free computers this year to people in the Philadelphia area. We distributed a majority of these computers (295) to schoolchildren, except for 8 machines that we furnished to persons with disabilities, 6 to homeless families, and 12 to senior citizens. We conducted these projects in cooperation with schools or community-based organizations that offer training and/or ongoing technical support to program participants.

Recipients were equipped with Internet-ready, Pentium-IV-equivalent computers, 1.3 GHz speed or better, each equipped with a modem, sound card and CD-ROM. Each computer recipient also received free, unlimited Internet dial-up access.

Free Computers for Youth

This year's Free Computers projects for youth provided computers to 262 students, in workshops attended by 301 participants. These numbers include not only the students receiving computers, but also other family members, teachers and facilitators in attendance. About 88% of participants were children. About 57% identified themselves as African-American, 14% as Hispanic, and 8% as Asian. 58% were Female and 39% were Male.

Sponsors of projects for youth included:

- African American Female Entrepreneurs Alliance Youth Program (AAFEA) [10]
- Julia R. Masterman School [28]
- Philadelphia Academies Inc. [134]
- Philadelphia Youth Advocates [24]
- South Philadelphia High School [8]
- Spring Garden CDC [9]
- St. Anne School [9]
- Urban Technology Project [19]
- Visitation BVM [12]
- W.E. Martin Production Company [9]

English for Speakers of Other Languages Students

An additional 33 youths received computers this year who were participants in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs at public schools in Philadelphia. Two schools sent students. An additional 23 participants including other family members, teachers and facilitators were in attendance. Of those attending, 96% identified themselves as Hispanic. 41% were male, 59% were female.

This year's ESOL projects served students from:

- Edison-Fareira High School [20] and
- The Feltonville School of Arts and Sciences [13]

Free Computers for Persons with Disabilities

This year's Free Computers projects provided computers to 8 persons with disabilities. Sponsors of Free Computers projects for persons with disabilities included:

- Inglis Foundation [2]
- Liberty Resources [1]
- Partnership for Community Supports (PFCS) [5]

Free Computers for Troubled Families

This year for the first time we have hosted a group of 6 families to receive free computers. These families were sponsored by Pathways PA.

Information Technology Support and Training for Nonprofit Organizations in the Philadelphia Region

The official registration and financial information of Nonprofit Technology Resources may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Written Request Policy

We now ask that prospective computer recipients submit hand-written letters to the facilitator for each partner organization, describing their circumstances and reasons for requesting a free computer. The facilitator for each group is to forward the students' letters to us with a cover letter, stating that he or she has approved the requests. The facilitator also provides us with contact information so that we can confirm the workshop arrangements.

This is a new procedure, which we instituted this year in an effort to promote better communication with our partners. This new policy has been very successful in ensuring greater participation by teachers and community leaders, helping to ensure that needy and deserving students receive computers, and reducing the number of late cancellations and no-shows.

Continuing Partnerships

Over the past four years, we have placed well over 400 computers with English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students. Our partnership with the ESOL program at Edison-Fareira High School began in 2005 when a School District retiree, Ron Stoloff, volunteered to refurbish computers at NTR. Ron introduced us to Nilza Lozada, who has coordinated all of our work with Edison High School students.

We provided free computers again this year to a group of students from Julia R. Masterman School, which is one of our closest neighbors. David Meketon, Dean of Students, has been coordinating free computer workshops for Masterman students since 2004. This year, Mr. Meketon and Mikaela Lerer, the Technology Teacher Leader, were instrumental in coordinating free computer workshops for Masterman students. Masterman students have also helped to refurbish computers as volunteers at NTR.

Additionally, NTR continued in Free LTT partnerships with: AAFEA Youth, George Washington High School, Feltonville School of Arts and Sciences and the Mantua Haverford Community Center.

New Partnerships

NTR values all of the partnerships that have been created with vital organizations within the community. We take pleasure in maintaining these partnerships and also find great joy in building new ones. This year NTR has established Free LTT partnerships with the following organizations:

- Philadelphia Academies
- South Philadelphia High School
- Urban Technology Project

Lisa Nutter, First Lady of Philadelphia and President of Philadelphia Academies believes that the partnership with NTR is important in helping her students reach their goals. Mrs. Nutter wrote:

"The Philadelphia Academies Inc. is pleased to partner with Nonprofit Technology Resources to provide free computers for our students as part of your Free Learning Through Technology program. We thank Nonprofit Technology Resources for the opportunity that your Free Learning Through Technology program offers and will keep you informed as we learn how the participants have used the computers you are providing."

Why I Need a Computer

Here are excerpts from letters written by several students:

- "I would really appreciate receiving a computer from your organization. I think it would really help me with my school assignments. With this computer I would be able to research and type my school projects. I would also gain access to my school website where I can view assignments, get homework, send e-mails to my teacher and share weekly reminders with my family."
- "This is my first year at a Catholic school and some of my classes, homework, and projects require that I use a computer. I have been going to the library to use computers. However, the time given to use the computer is not enough to complete what I started."
- "If I had a computer in my house I would use it to help me with my homework. I would also like to be able to go on the Internet. The Internet is great. You can find information about anything in the world on the Internet. My goal is to attend Cheyney University. I would like to one day become a teacher."

Feedback

Below is an excerpt from a thank you letter Stanley R. Pokras received from Carol E. Pancoast, the Business/Technology Coordinator of Samuel S. Fels High School:

"I personally want to thank you for the outstanding learning experience. It was the first time I ever held RAM in my hands. I have seen the insides of computers many times, but that was the first time I was actually able to take a computer apart and put it back together again. You should have been a teacher. You were excellent with your descriptions and also with the control of the students. I was certainly glad that we were in your group."

Timothy Archer, Principal of St. Anne School wrote:

"These computers will help our students with their class work. Even though our students have access to computers and the Internet in school, the time is not enough to impact their education. The computers will also allow the student to contact the teacher after school hours if help is needed. We would be happy to write a follow up report in six to nine months to let you know of the progress of these students. Again, we are most grateful for all you do!"

Three-Year Warranty

Last year, we formally announced that we would replace our one-year warranty with a three-year deal at no cost. Every computer we distribute now comes with a three-year, no-fault, no cost warranty. We repair or replace systems that fail, whether due to viruses, Windows or hardware failure, or user error.

Benefactors

This year's free computer workshops were made possible by the many individuals and organizations that provided donations of cash and/or used computer equipment, the dozens of volunteers and interns who helped to refurbish computer equipment, and especially the private foundations, corporations and government agencies that provided major financial support:

- Nordstrom, Inc.
- The Quaker Chemical Corporation
- Union Benevolent Association
- Henrietta Tower Wurts Memorial Foundation
- Patricia Kind Family Foundation
- Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation
- Claneil Foundation