



Underprivileged receive Dell computers

<http://www.nwtntoday.com/news.php?viewStory=26334>

BY Danny Jones

5/7/09

Connected Tennessee's Computers 4 Kids program distributed its 1600th computer with the donation of brand new Dell computers to 128 (54 locally) deserving families in Gibson, Carroll and Weakley counties, Tuesday, at the Gibson County Department of Human Services office.

Connected Tennessee's Computers 4 Kids (C4K) initiative places computers into the hands of underprivileged children and their families of disadvantaged children in Tennessee by distributing computers to children and families facing economic challenges, in the foster care system or that struggle with behavioral disorders and other issues.

Working with the Department of Human Services (DHS), recipients were targeted for distribution by meeting work requirements in the Families First program, which emphasizes work, training and personal responsibility.

Almost half of low-income families across the state cite a lack of a computer at home as the reason they are not accessing the Internet.

Since computer skills and Internet access have become essential components necessary to participate in the global economy, the need to help Tennessee's disadvantaged residents join the information age is apparent.

Trenton Mayor Tony Burriss, Gibson County Mayor Joe Shepard and Weakley County Mayor Houston Patrick were on hand to lend their support to the C4K program. Mayor Burriss shared his thoughts about the importance of closing the digital divide in West Tennessee.

"The opportunities that are being afforded to these 128 deserving families in Gibson, Carroll and Weakley counties through these computers are virtually immeasurable," Burriss said.

"Having a computer will make it possible to help children with schoolwork, search for jobs and even go back to school themselves if they wish. This is a life-changing event, placing the proper tolls to get an education, for these families and I am proud to be a part of it. Thanks to Connected Tennessee for their vision." County Mayor Shepard noted how small the world has become through technology and competition is so much greater worldwide.

“The computers will be the connection these kids need to rise to the occasion,” he said. Mayor Patrick reported Weakley County has lost some 3,000 jobs and 1,106 people since the last census, due in part to a lack of education.

“The Toyota plant went to Tupelo instead of West Tennessee because of this, but there is no better time to start correcting this today,” he said.

“Computers level the playing field when it comes to establishing an economic base,” he added.

Tim McBride, field management director for DHS in Gibson, Carroll and Weakley counties, said the impact of the computers will be felt far beyond this event.

“DHS is honored to be a part of the Computers 4 Kids program,” McBride said. “These computers will provide the children and families in these counties with resources that have been unavailable to them in the past. By providing our families with these computers, we are not just providing them with a tool—we are saying that we have confidence in them to be successful.”

Connected Tennessee is a non-profit organization that develops and implements effective strategies for technology deployment, use and literacy in Tennessee. Connected Tennessee is coordinating the Computers 4 Kids project with the State of Tennessee, the Department of Children’s Services and the Department of Human Services.

Through C4K, Connected Tennessee will award at least 3,000 computers over a three-year period to children and families in need across the state.

Others taking part in the presentations were: Deanna Ward, West Tennessee Project Manager, Connected Tennessee; Mary Lester, DHS Client Representative, Gibson County; Janet Bailey, DHS Client Representative, Carroll County; Lorissa Stout, DHS Client Representative, Weakley County and Annette Tyler, DHS Field Management Director 2, District 7.