



Foster teens receive special gift

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Eighty-five East Tennessee foster kids were given brand new laptop computers Tuesday morning. One young woman said it's the key to her future.

Kelly Harold attends Pellissippi State Community College, but before she was a college student, she was a foster child.

'I moved from house, to house, to house, to house, so I never had anything this big,' she said.

On Tuesday, Kelly and 84 other foster children got a special gift: a brand new Dell laptop computer to help them build their future.

'Just to be able to help them further their education and to see the looks on their faces is pretty awesome,' said Steven Buttry with Connected Tennessee, the group distributing the computers.

The recipients were chosen based on their academic performance and good behavior.

'These children face a lot of challenges, a lot more challenges than their peers,' said Cynthia Chapman with the Department of Children's Services. 'That they are able to get to this point with excellent grades and an excellent reputation in our community is just something for them to be very, very, especially proud,' she added.

'Doing well in those key subjects of math, science and technology that are required for college and the workforce, as well...if you have access to a computer at home, you're much more likely to be successful in those areas,' Buttry added.

But for Kelly Harold, Tuesday was about more than just a new computer. It was a sign that someone is willing to invest in both her and her potential.

'My major is undecided, so I don't know what my future is going to be yet,' Harold said. 'It helps me a lot to be able to look online and see what options are out there,' she said.

Connected Tennessee expects to distribute more computers in the Tri-Cities area later this year.