Connected Tennessee Awards Foster Youth in Knox Region with New Laptops

Contact: Jessica Ditto
jditto@connectednation.org
(202) 251-4749

Erin Kleinlein
ekleinlein@connectedtn.org
(615) 509-9937

For Immediate Release
June 26, 2013

Knox Region's Celebration of Excellence provides recent high school graduates with new laptops from the Department of Children's Services and Connected Tennessee's Computer 4 Kids program

Nashville, TN – On Friday, June 14, Connected Tennessee, the Computers 4 Kids program, and Tennessee's Department of Children Services presented foster children from the Knox region who are either graduating from high school this spring or on track to graduate and have exhibited positive behavior throughout the school year with new laptops as a way to recognize and celebrate their achievements.

As part of the *Computers 4 Kids: Preparing Tennessee's Next Generation for Success* project, the C4K program deploys computers, academic support programs, and workforce training to two disparate, but especially at-risk, populations: those in the state's foster care system who are "aging out" as they turn 18, and youth who are active in the state's 76 Boys & Girls Clubs. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act-funded program will impact the lives of nearly 60,000 youth across the state throughout the life of the grant – providing a helping hand to youth who are working hard to attain a better life for themselves.

Friday's event was held at the DCS offices in Knoxville and included the presence of State Representative Harry Brooks who offered words of congratulations and encouragement to the youth.

"It is such a pleasure to see the efforts of these young men and women being recognized," said Brooks. "Not only will the computers provide an opportunity for continued educational pursuits, but also will be invaluable tools to communicate and keep pace with today's technology-based society. Thank you to Connected Tennessee and the Department of Children's Services for giving these youth such a significant opportunity. "

In five years, the Computers 4 Kids program has:

- Awarded more than 4,400 computers to youth in need across the state
- Supported all 76 of the state's Boys & Girls Clubs
- Provided computers to more than 2,890 foster youth aging out of the Department of Children's Services program
- Helped the Boys & Girls Clubs in Tennessee youth to complete over 90,000 hours of computer training
- Impacted all 95 counties in Tennessee

The *"Preparing Tennessee's Next Generation for Success"* project is a result of a $2.3 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant awarded to the C4K program in August 2010 by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). BTOP provides grants to support the deployment of broadband infrastructure, enhance and expand public computer centers, and encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service.

For more information, please visit our website at www.connectedtn.org.

Photo: From left, Representative Harry Brooks, foster youth Mauri Hutchinson, Connected Tennessee Executive Director Corey Johns, and East Tennessee DCS Program Coordinator Stephanie Bosson at the Knox Region Celebration of Excellence on Friday, June 14.

# # #

About Connected Tennessee: *As Tennessee's state broadband initiative, Connected Tennessee is a public-private partnership that joins with technology-minded businesses, government entities, universities and non-profit organizations to improve economic development and enhance quality of life by accelerating Tennessee's technology landscape. For maps, research or more information about what Connected Tennessee is doing to expand broadband access, adoption, and use, visit www.connectedtn.org.*

About Computers 4 Kids: Preparing Tennessee's Next Generation for Success: *Connected Tennessee's Computers 4 Kids program is helping to prepare Tennessee's most vulnerable youth for success by providing them with connectivity. The program promotes economic, career, and educational development through the provision of computers and broadband Internet, online technology training, career training, and community awareness that highlights the benefits of technology adoption.*

Follow us on ***Facebook*** *and* ***Twitter****.*