



Connected Tennessee Awards Foster Youth in Smokey Mountain Region with New Laptops

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Smokey Mountain 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 Monday, June 10, Connected Tennessee, the Computers 4 Kids program, and Tennessee's Department of Children Services presented foster children from the Smokey Mountain 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.

Monday's event was held at The King Family Library in Sevierville and included the presence of Connected Tennessee Executive Director Corey Johns, Connected Tennessee East Tennessee State Operations Manager Alyson Ferine, and Sevier County Schools Director of Special Education Dr. Sandy Enloe.

"The academic accomplishments of these students are impressive. It was remarkable to see the excitement of the youth at the Celebration of Excellence," said Ferine. "They will be able to take this opportunity with them into their future and learn something new every day by being connected to the digital world."

In five years, the Computers 4 Kids program has:

- Awarded more than 4,300 computers to youth in need across the state
- Supported all 76 of the state's Boys & Girls Clubs
- Provided computers to more than 3,250 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 (NTIA) 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, Sevier County Schools Director of Special Education Dr. Sandy Enloe, foster youth Mikhayla Ballard, and Connected Tennessee Executive Director Corey Johns at the Celebration of Excellence on Monday.

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About Connected Tennessee: *As a public-private partnership, Connected Tennessee partners with technology-minded businesses, government entities and universities to accelerate technology in the state. For more information about what Connected Tennessee is doing to accelerate technology in Tennessee's communities, 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.*

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