

A Manifesto

As we approach our tenth anniversary, our organizational legs now fully under us and with time to establish and define our role in this community and beyond, we've also found our voice. Starting from a single man, with a single vision and a passion for improving children's lives we are now a team, but more than that, we are a family. We are but a few staff and many dozen volunteers who provide their time along with hundreds of supporters. All dedicated to this emotionally lucrative work, willing to bear any burden, and pay any price to demonstrate this continuously over these years. The work is our reward.

Our simple mission is to bridge the digital divide of access to the skills and to the unprecedented educational and communication tools which the personal computer, and the Internet have developed into over the past twenty-five years. We promote and provide equal access leveling the playing field for all in the competition for jobs and education, providing an equal voice in our participatory democracy to all, both within our community and beyond, regardless of race, employment, or economic status. Our work ensures parents can care for their children, and dream the same big dreams for them we do.

This document projects our collective voice to those who are listening.

We have never requested handouts, only a hand up as we provide to our clients. We are willing to work hard to accomplish this.

Our primary charitable accomplishments include:

Delivering several thousand computers for schools, nonprofit's and economically disadvantaged families within this community and beyond using our programs

Providing hundreds of hours of phone, email, and carry-in technical support for these units

Providing several thousand hours of computer skills training for hundreds of families and nonprofit businesses

Providing thousands of hours of technical computer skills training to many dozens of volunteers

Diverting hundreds of thousands pounds of surplus computer equipment from our community landfills into refurbishing and recycling

Providing low cost Internet service to many hundreds of low-income families

Our agency has evolved dramatically over these few years

We have transitioned from a personal hobby to an all-volunteer group, then to a volunteer group managed by AmeriCorps Vista volunteers, to a volunteer group managed with paid staff.

Three active volunteers became dozens and then hundreds over these years.

We transitioned from no employees to now seven.

Established and maintained a Board of Directors with a monthly meeting schedule.

Established a financial accounting system, and from no budget to one now approaching a quarter million dollars.

We have operated from three different facilities over time, and have grown from 300 sq. ft. to nearly 16,000 sq. ft.

Have built three extensive internal network infrastructure domains, to support our business operations.

Put in place policies and procedures to guide and direct business operations.

Established a strategic plan for future growth and expansion.

Created staff and volunteer management systems, which continue to evolve and improve.

Put in place a customer marketing system that we continue to develop.

Organized donation pickup, processing, testing, and warehousing systems.

Constructed and operate two completely equipped computer software-training labs.

Established full compliance with State and Federal business requirements.

To support ourselves within this mission, we:

Secured school district contracts worth many tens of thousands of dollars for our services.

Secured County contracts worth tens of thousands of dollars to provide our services.

Secured contracts to manage school IT operations worth tens of thousands of dollars.

Created and operate a Surplus Outlet Store to provide computer systems for the general community.

Created an online auction sales operation for unmarketable donated equipment.

Initiated an Internet provider operation with more than 500 customers providing revenue to support our continuing charitable operations.

Formed a recycling operation with the landfill diversion of 300 thousand lbs. of electronic equipment per year to provide additional revenue.

Built a computer training operation for both public and nonprofit clientele.

Hired a full time Executive Director, with a twice-monthly payroll and health benefits for our community-based staff.

When you step back to view this, these are remarkable achievements accomplished within a short period. We do not aspire to acclaim or praise, only for some support in this work and without acknowledgement of the personal and professional sacrifices involved.

We are here to afflict the comfortable with our ideas, and comfort the afflicted with our efforts. This work is our reward.

Our drive toward achieve full sustainability remains unfulfilled, and may be years away.

We are doing additional work on an ever-increasing scale, searching for ideas to support ourselves in reaching our final goals.

We are working toward obtaining funding for a three-year program to provide our services across the county.

We are working to secure additional contracts to manage school IT operations.

We are submitting grant applications monthly.

We are in the process of rolling out a wireless broadband Internet initiative and planning another for next year.

We are planning a data center operation, to help support other nonprofit's and generate additional revenue.

The key to meeting our challenges are the devotion and discipline to what many believe is the 'trinity' of accomplishing any goal - people, process, and resources. We have come a long way toward building this strong foundation of committed, competent people and developing effective, and efficient processes. We are now turning our "vision" to 'reality' through development of financial and other resources.

We strongly believe funding must be achieved in a manner as to minimize our dependency on outside sources. Given the resources donated to us each day, it is critical to develop earned income in every area of our operations. Only after we maximize income from our own capabilities, would we ask outside sources for assistance. This is a tough but achievable goal, which in our view builds long-term strength and balanced partnerships.

The reality is that the future is bright for us. We are a non-profit group run using the efficiencies and incentives of a for-profit business, the mission of a public service agency, and with the moral zeal of a social service organization.