

NINE THOUSAND AND MORE

Roger Larsen

Nine Thousand!! Nine Thousand area children have been given an opportunity to compete scholastically thanks to the 501(c)3 Tellico Village Computer Users Club’s TAP program. TAP – Technology Access Program of the thousand-member Computer Users Club has been providing computer systems, free of charge, to local families who could not otherwise afford one. To date, over six thousand complete systems have been provided. At the recent Kiwanis District Conference in Gatlinburg, TN, a participant noted **“Sounds too good to be true”**. More on how Kiwanis can be a part of this success in a moment... Ten years ago TAP was formed when founders recognized that without a home computer it is difficult for children to thrive academically. Research necessary for homework assignments, student creative endeavors and communication with other students and teachers were difficult – a significant disadvantage in today’s educational environment. The solution was at hand – local families who had upgraded their computer systems wanted to keep replaced equipment out of landfills; companies that had replaced equipment needed a way to dispose of it without additional expense. TAP, a Microsoft Certified Refurbisher, accepts these components, upgrades the equipment to meet performance standards, installs a current Windows Operating System together with supporting Utilities and productivity software, assembles them into complete, powerful systems and donates those systems to qualified families. The underlying financial benefits for businesses and individuals donating equipment are attractive. Business equipment that has been depreciated retains a fair residual commercial value. Donating equipment to a 501(c)3 organization permits writing off that value for taxes. Personal equipment that has been donated and, receipted, can be taken as a tax deduction. What about the cost of the refurbishing, upgrading? All TAP “employees” are volunteers; there are no salary costs. 1. Microsoft provides a substantial Operating System copy discount for certified refurbishers when equipment is designated for charitable purposes. 2. Where necessary, components are purchased and costs are covered by the host Computer Users Club and grants from United Way, Walmart and others. 3. Obsolete equipment is disposed of in an ecologically sound, no-cost way. 4. Free Utilities, Productivity Systems compatible with Microsoft applications are installed.

Eligibility? TAP – The only requirement is that there is no operable computer in the home and that a referral is provided by a 501(c)3 organization or school. **Broadband Access** – Most Internet Service Providers have a discounted “hardship” access program – often qualification for this program is simply answered by this question: “Is there a recipient enrolled in the Federal School Lunch Program?” **Why a Kiwanis / TAP partnership?** Kiwanis and TAP share a common focus on children. TAP has, to a large extent, satisfied the need for computer systems among eligible families in the immediate Knoxville counties. The Kiwanian Club structure can, however, provide an opportunity to extend the reach of this program to families well beyond those counties. TAP invites Kiwanis Clubs to consider a “Club Project” – partnering with TAP to get these systems into the hands of qualified families in your area where they can make a big difference.

For further information, Contact Warren Sanders, (865) 332-5313

“Too good to be true??? No, not at all!

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