

Organizations donate three dozen laptops to local foster youth

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Matthew Keys

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Nearly three dozen Yolo County foster youths were given a free laptop loaded with education and productivity software as part of a statewide donation program that seeks to tackle resource challenges associated with being in the foster system.

The laptops were donated by iFoster, the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) and the National Homebuyers Fund to 33 foster youths at a closed-door event on Monday, June 11.

In a phone interview with the Express, RCRC spokesperson Justin Caporusso said foster youths were selected among 90 open cases in Yolo County based on certain qualifications. That criteria included teens and young adults who had no known gang ties, were not susceptible to human trafficking and other traits evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Caporusso said the selection process was intended to ensure the machines would be used as a productive tool and not for “ulterior motives.”

Organizers did not have information on how many foster youths were selected from the city of Winters and would not provide names due to privacy concerns. In a follow-up e-mail, Caporusso said not all of the 33 selected attended the June 11 event, and that the remainder of the laptops would be distributed by county staff during regularly scheduled visits with their clients.

Both the RCRC and the National Homebuyers Fund pitched in \$200,000 for the statewide initiative that saw the disbursement of 1,100 laptops overall. The \$400,000 one-time donation was able to secure the acquisition of semi-rugged Acer laptops with donated copies of Microsoft Windows, Office Suite and Adobe Reader.

Once distributed, the laptops become the property of the foster youths who received them, Caporusso said. The laptops feature HIPPA-compliant storage software for storing personal documents as well as Internet connectivity and a webcam, and the machines are backed with a full warranty and service plan.

“Owning a computer addresses additional challenges for foster youth, including accessing needed resources and the loss or misplacement of important life documents as youth move from placement to placement,” a press release issued by the organizers

said. “When provided with a computer, 98 percent of youth reported using it on a daily or weekly basis, and statistically significant improvements were found in academic performance, social [connectivity], and life satisfaction.”

In a press release on the laptop initiative, Matt Rexroad with the Yolo County Board of Supervisors praised the RCRC for its “commitment to improving the quality of life in California’s rural counties.” Along with being a county supervisor, Rexroad is also a delegate with the RCRC, something he acknowledged in his statement.

“I am grateful for this contribution to Yolo County’s foster youth, and I am proud to be part of an organization that invests its resources in our local communities,” Rexroad said.

<https://www.wintersexpress.com/community/ifoster-laptop-donation-yolo-county/>