

Laptops Donated to Mendocino County Foster Youth

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Forty-two gifted laptops were recently presented to local foster youth and former foster youth aged 16-21 in Mendocino County. These laptops are part of a statewide distribution funded by the Rural County Representatives of California and National Homebuyers Fund, Inc., through a partnership with iFoster.

Through this contribution and partnership, more than 1,100 laptop computers will be distributed to all eligible foster youth within RCRC's 35-member counties.

Late last year, RCRC and NHF's boards of directors each approved providing \$200,000 to support the 1 Laptop Program for Foster Youth. Through this one-time \$400,000 contribution, eligible foster youth and former foster youth in care within RCRC's 35 counties will be provided a laptop, complete with the iFoster Transitional Age Youth Assistant, which includes a HIPAA compliant secure online digital locker, accessible anywhere, anytime.

The laptop is fully integrated into iFoster's resource portal and programs, providing access to more than 500 resources, and improved youth support networks.

"RCRC and its affiliates have demonstrated a true commitment to improving the quality of life in California's rural counties," said Mendocino County Supervisor Carre Brown. "I am grateful for this contribution to Mendocino County's foster youth, and I am proud to be part of an organization that invests its resources in our local communities."

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 2016 study of 730 youth across California who received iFoster computers found that only 5 percent of rural foster youth have consistent access to a computer in their homes, compared to 90 percent of all teens, and 79 percent of low-income teens (Pew Research Center, 2014).

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 connectiveness and life satisfaction.

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