



Computers for Classrooms

Your donations
can help others!



Reusing the tools to succeed Pat Furr of Computers for Classrooms discusses her mission

“My summer job going from high school to college was working at Stanford Research in 1956,” Pat Furr said. “My job was to keep track of the paper trail for the engineers—they were building their first computer for the Bank of America. The transistor didn’t come out for another two or three years, so this computer was massive. I’m sure it couldn’t do as much as my cell phone can do now, but it all had to start someplace.”

That first summer job was the beginning of a life-long interest in computers, although it would be several decades before Furr founded the non-profit organization, Computers for Classrooms, which she has managed for the past 21 years. In a cavernous warehouse on the outskirts of south Chico, Furr currently oversees a handful of employees and a revolving cast of volunteers as they refurbish old personal computers and laptops and provide them to other non-profits, schools and low-income families.

It is an undertaking Furr feels is important on several different levels.

“It really is different than most of the programs I’ve seen out there,” she said during a tour of the Computers for Classroom

facilities. “We have found a way of recycling, protecting data and making sure people have access to something they otherwise wouldn’t.”

Indeed, Computers for Classrooms is one of six R2 Certified Recyclers in Northern California, an accreditation that ensures hard drives and other data storage devices are wiped clean before reuse and that all electronic components—including some potentially hazardous materials—are handled properly throughout the chain of custody. While she clearly takes pride in the program’s environmentally responsible practices, Furr’s focus remains on the educational aspects of her work.

“Nationally, 34 percent of the population doesn’t have access to a computer or the internet,” she continued. “It’s horrifying. Can you imagine, in your life, trying to get along without a computer?”

Furr likens owning a computer with internet access to having a personal library at your fingertips, allowing for educational opportunities some low-income families simply can’t provide their children. That’s why she offers a series of personal computers priced below two hundred dollars, keeping them on display near the front of the Computers for

Classrooms office. But Furr doesn’t intend to sell the computers to just anyone.

“If you need something and can afford it, you should go buy it,” she said. “We are trying to support low-income families. That’s the most important thing. We’re not here to make money.”

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Furr recalled a customer who lost their computer out of the back of their pickup truck while they were moving. Computers for Classrooms honored their one-year warranty despite the unusual circumstance because Furr wanted the family to have access to computer above all else, she said.

Her dedication to providing educational opportunities stems from a connection with

students that runs deeper than most.

“I started off as a teacher and then I got into real estate in the Bay Area in the ‘60s, which was a good time to do that,” she said with a laugh. “We came up [to Chico] and I decided to go back to school, because they didn’t have computers when I went to school, period. They didn’t even have hand-held calculators.”

When she completed the computer science master’s program at Chico State, Furr was at a loss for how to apply her newfound skills, and the stressful and sedentary lifestyle of a programmer didn’t appeal to her. It wasn’t until she and her husband toured China in 1990 that she was struck with an idea.

“The tour guide was telling the Chinese students that if they wanted to get along in this world, they needed to learn English and needed to learn about computers,” she said. “I had been elected to the school board, so I knew that there were very few computers in schools. I thought, ‘That’s something I can do.’ I know people in business, I know computers, so I’ll get them to donate their old computers, fix them up and give them to schools.”

Providing a proper education

Mi C.A.S.A, Computers for Classrooms help rural children succeed in school

As founder of Mi C.A.S.A. (My Character, Academic, & Service Achievement) Education—an after-school program serving the children of agricultural workers in Gridley—Cathleen McKenzie understands the value of a helping hand.

“We are a non-funded program,” McKenzie explained. “Mi C.A.S.A. is run entirely by volunteers with no paid staff, and we are always looking for ways to improve the program with more experienced educators, tutors and better resources for our students.”

McKenzie said that, for the past several years, Computers for Classrooms has provided a great deal of assistance. “I’m not even sure how [Computers for Classrooms founder] Pat Furr first heard of us, but I’m sure glad she did.

“The computers have helped immensely in helping raise the standard of their education. They’ve opened the door of trust and confidence for the students.”

“She visited and brought us 10 computers and everything we needed to build a computer lab, including the chairs and tables,” McKenzie said of her initial meeting with Furr. “Since then, Computers for Classrooms has upgraded the computers, supplied new flat-screen monitors and more space-efficient furniture for the lab.”

Mi C.A.S.A., which operates out of the Butte County Housing Authorities Farm Labor Camp outside Gridley, serves 60 to 100 children each day from dozens of local agricultural families, supplying them with healthy snacks, help on homework and a safe environment. As

the children of mostly uneducated, poor, non-English speaking adults, these children face significant obstacles in obtaining a proper education.

“When we started in 2000, the farm labor children were usually the lowest academically,” McKenzie said. “Now a recent number-one graduate at Gridley High School was a farm labor child who used our program. Many students in all grades are in the top five percentile. They’ve really excelled and become some of the strongest students. The computers have helped immensely in helping raise the standard of their education. They’ve opened the door of trust and confidence for the students.”

Students use the computer lab for a variety of reasons, McKenzie said, including electronically-submitting homework, doing research and accessing textbooks and other learning materials. Programs are also available to help students develop better English skills.

Furthermore, McKenzie said Computers for Classrooms has helped supply the student’s families with home computers. Whereas few or none had computers before, she estimates about half the families now have computers at home. Computers for Classrooms has been donating about ten units every year and providing laptops for students who graduate and enroll in college.

Almost as valuable as a computer is an internet connection, which Computers for Classrooms makes available to her program and the student’s homes for a nominal price. Comcast also has a program providing free access for families of children who qualify for school lunch programs which, McKenzie said, most all of the farm labor families do.

“We’re very grateful to Computers for Classrooms. They’ve made things possible for these students and families that may not have been possible otherwise.”



THE MISSION

Nationally, California is in the bottom three states for ratio of computers to students. There is an “achievement gap” between Asian and Caucasian students and black and Hispanic students that Dr. Rob Fairlie of Santa Cruz State University has linked to computer and internet access. Dr. Fairlie found that students in their senior year of high school who own a computer are twice as likely to attend college.

The employees and volunteers at Computers for Classrooms work every day to level the playing field for students of all socioeconomic backgrounds, and that means providing access to technology that would be otherwise unavailable.

HOW TO REQUEST COMPUTERS

Members of qualifying schools, organizations and low-income families can stop by the office (315 Huss Drive) on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Schools:

As Computers for Classrooms does not receive grants of governmental support, they cannot give computers away for free. The best way to order systems is to email Pat Furr (pfurr@chicousd.org). Check out the price sheet at www.computersforclassrooms.org for a complete listing of products. For Mac products, contact Ron at (530) 895-4175.

Organizations:

Computers for Classrooms can only furnish computers to organizations that do not discriminate on any basis. Computers for Classrooms is allowed to pre-install Microsoft Office 2007 onto systems furnished to non-profit organizations. Otherwise, the procedures and products offered to schools and non-profits are the same.

Low-income families:

Most low-income families have Medi-Cal (Medicaid) cards. Other forms of eligibility like Healthy Families, Free or Reduced lunch qualification at schools, Financial Aid Recipients, persons receiving disaster assistance through the Red Cross and those qualifying for Section 8 Housing are also accepted. If you have questions as to your qualification, contact Computers for Classrooms. For schools where over 66 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced price lunch, Computers for Classrooms allows any family from the school to purchase a computer system.



Don Kinslow, Rosedale Elementary

Teacher, Computer for Classrooms provide technological boost for Rosedale Elementary

When Don Kinslow transferred from Parkview to Rosedale Elementary school three years ago, he found his new school technologically lacking.

"When I first got here, I took a survey of the situation and found that, while there were computers in some classrooms, there weren't many, and the ones they did have hadn't been kept up," said Kinslow, a fifth-grade instructor who also oversees the school's computer systems.

"I figured the first thing we needed was a computer lab," he continued, "But the principal was afraid it would be too costly. So we got a group of parent volunteers together, had some teachers donate a few tables from their classrooms, and I called up Computers for Classrooms."

With a little elbow grease and more than 20 computers provided by the organization, Kinslow and a team of parents and teachers transformed an empty classroom into a modern computer lab the school still takes pride in today. The lab cost little to start, the work was done in a few days over the summer and it was up and running by the first day of school.

Over the course of the next year, Computers for Classrooms delivered more machines until every staff member had a computer and every classroom had several. Today, Kinslow estimates the school has about 150 computers. If they break down or

need replacement parts, Kinslow simply calls Computers for Classrooms and they switch them out. Kinslow particularly appreciates that the old computers are refurbished or recycled.

"We try to teach kids to respect the environment. Most of the kids here know what happens to the computers, and can see that we aren't just using words, but living what we teach."

"We got a group of parent volunteers together, had some teachers donate a few tables from their classrooms, and I called up Computers for Classrooms."

Kinslow said students at Rosedale are exposed to technology early on, as teachers integrate the technology into their lesson plans. Younger children use programs like Read Naturally to help develop fundamental skills. By the time they are in fourth to sixth grade, many students are proficient in programs like Photo Story 3, Power Point and even video-editing software like Windows Movie Maker.

For Kinslow and his fellow teachers, knowing they have reliable technology available is essential for creating lesson plans. The computers are equally beneficial for students, providing a readily-accessible

resource for anyone from a struggling student to someone trying to go the extra mile.

Kinslow related a story about two girls who used their own recess and lunch times to put together a report on Ceaser Chavez—which was then projected on a large screen in the lunchroom—merely because they were interested in knowing more about him and had the technology to do so at their fingertips. But his favorite example of what computers can do for a student occurred a few years ago, while he was still at Parkview.

"I had a student who was very quiet and rarely spoke. She was a wonderful child and a great artist. The students were doing book reports that included standing up in front of the class and giving a presentation. I was thinking about her and thought this is going to traumatize her; this is not going to be a positive experience.

"She took Photo Story 3, created sketches of scenes of the book and we scanned them. At home, in her comfort zone, she narrated each picture. She just had to stand up for a second and introduce the book, then just stepped to the side and we projected her project. It was the first time many of her classmates, some who knew her since kindergarten, heard her speak more than a few words at a time. Had it not been for the technology, she might've stayed home that day or had an awful experience."

Donating computers and office supplies to classrooms in need

When it comes to her job, Pam Cline of California's Emergencies Services Agency in Sacramento has plenty to be proud of, and not just because she works for an agency in the business of keeping the people of California safe. Cline also appreciates the agency has a commitment to education in the community.

Cline serves as the California Office of Emergency Services' property controller, a position in which she must account for all supplies maintained by the agency, including office supplies, computers and furniture. Providing the best possible emergency services requires the latest technology, so the agency updates its computer systems often. If it weren't for Cline, the old equipment would most likely be shipped to another state agency where it would be sold at auction.

"When I see the Computers for Classrooms truck pull up in the yard, I get a good feeling because I know the items are going to a good cause."

Cline encourages her agency to work with Computers for Classrooms instead of sending the items to another agency to dispose of them.

"I try to steer things to Computers for Classrooms whenever I can," she said. "We give computer monitors, copiers, even used binders in good condition and obsolete office supplies that we no longer use."

For Cline, participating in the Computers for Classrooms program is a good way for an agency to help schools burdened by severe budget cuts.

"When I see the Computers for Classrooms truck pull up in the yard, I get a good feeling because I know the items are going to a good cause," she said. "The schools' budgets have been cut and they can't buy these things. Our agency is way ahead in terms of technology because of the sensitive nature of our work. We watch for tsunamis and earthquakes, so we have very high-tech stuff, and the technology changes constantly. Items that are obsolete for us can still be used in the classrooms."

When the agency updates its computers, the sheer size of the donation can be tremendous.

"When we have a new computer rollout it can be about 500 computers at one time for the schools," Cline said.

Because the agency is mandated to upgrade its equipment every three years, the PCs and laptops the California Office of Emergency Services donates are often only a few years old.

"Some of these schools are working with computers that are 15 to 20 years old that will not even run current software, so they are just thrilled," Cline said.

The process is actually easier than sending the items to another agency, Cline explained.

"It benefits us because it's an easy process. All I have to do is make a phone call and Computers for Classrooms comes for a pick up. I don't have to go and order movers and stress out about scheduling. I get to stand there and watch them load it up."

The agency donates other items to the program as well. A couple of recent office moves in Sacramento and elsewhere in the state will result in office furniture donations.

Pam pushes her agency to donate to Computers for Classrooms because she knows students in a critical stage of intellectual development will reap the rewards. Though she has no children of her own, she wants to make sure her tax dollars benefit students as much as possible.

"That's the bottom line—the kids are going to benefit," she said. "Even if it is just a dry erase white board, the kids are going to benefit. It's a wonderful program and I don't want it to go away."



Computers for Classrooms accepts computers, monitors, television sets, accessories, printers, servers, cell phones and most electronics schools can use (even nonfunctional items).

Individual donations:

You can donate directly to Computers for Classrooms in Chico by visiting the facility at 315 Huss Drive between 9am and 5pm weekdays.

Once a month in Sacramento Computers for Classrooms will collect donations from individuals at the SN&R facility parking lot between 10am and 2pm on a Saturday. Look for the date in future editions of SN&R. Call 1-800-208-3482 for further information. Documents verifying your charitable donation can be furnished.

Larger donations from schools, businesses and governmental agencies:

Computers for Classrooms provides free pick-up services for those having larger donations. A lift-gate truck and experienced professionals will handle your equipment. Documentation of hard drive wiping and some asset management services can be provided. Computers for Classrooms can work with hospitals, medical centers, superior courts, cities, etc and will travel throughout Northern California for larger donation pick-ups. Call Ozzie Serrano at 530-566-6480 or 1-800-208-3482 to discuss your needs.

R2 Certified Recycler



Computers for Classrooms is the only non-profit R2 Certified Recycler in Northern California. To receive accreditation, the program must conform to strict guidelines:

Data security

- All R2 certified recyclers are required to sanitize, purge, or destroy data on all hard drives and data storage devices.
- Data destruction processes are reviewed and validated by an independent party periodically.
- R2 recyclers are required to have a security program in place that is appropriate for the equipment they handle and the customers they serve.

Environmental practices

- R2 defines focus materials, or materials that can pose environmental concern, and outlines how these materials should be managed to ensure environmental and worker safety.
- Requires due diligence on all “downstream” vendors handling focus materials to ensure materials are handled properly throughout the chain of custody.
- Prohibits the export of equipment and components containing focus materials to developing countries unless the transaction is legal under both the export and import countries’ laws and the receiving facility is state-of-the-art.

Proper e-waste disposal

- R2 requires that all recyclers send materials to licensed and permitted facilities.
- Rigorous shipping and material tracking systems are employed by all R2 certified recyclers.

Remarketing and reuse

- Establishes a “reuse, recover, dispose” hierarchy all along the chain of custody for material handling.
- Tests equipment diverted for reuse, and confirm key functions of the unit are working.
- Requires recyclers to have systems in place to ensure that all equipment can be recycled, rather than recovered for reuse, if the client wishes.

For more information visit www.r2solutions.org.

Recycle vs. Reuse



100 Computers Recycled:

- Saves enough electricity to power **2.75 U.S. households** a year.
- Equivalent to removing **1.95 cars** from the road a year.
- Equivalent to removing the solid waste generated by **1.8 households**.
- Reduces CO₂ emissions by **129** metric tons.
- Saves **\$2,708** in replacement costs.



100 Computers Reused:

- Saves enough electricity to power **68 U.S. households** for a year.
- Equivalent to removing **48 cars** from the road a year.
- Equivalent to removing the solid waste generated by **1.8 households**.
- Reduces CO₂ emissions by **3,183** metric tons.
- Saves **\$66,801** in replacement costs.

PROTECTING PRIVACY

Computers for Classrooms maintains a strict security policy. All hard drives (including those of laser printers) received by the program receive a three-pass wipe to United States Department of Defense standards using Blancco, a state-of-the-art wiping solution—even if the donor states the drives have been wiped, they do it again, just to be certain. Any drive not wiped completely is sent through a DeGausser, which sends out a high burst of magnetic energy which penetrates the drive to erase all data from the disc, unfortunately rendering it unusable. Hospitals, medical facilities, courts and individual donors are secure in the knowledge that the highest standards of data destruction are followed and audited.



Power My Learning

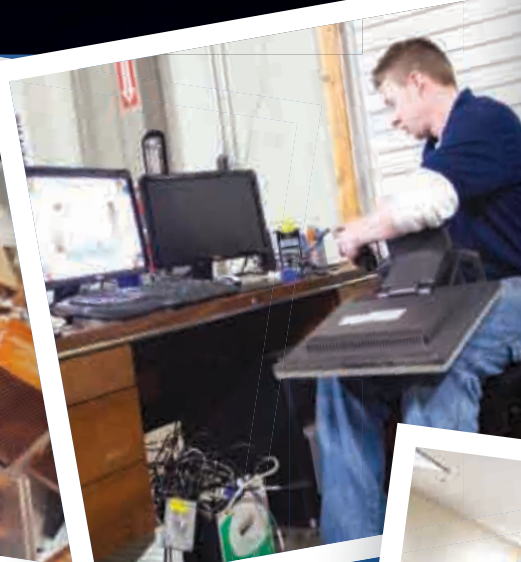
Every family computer includes a link to www.PowerMyLearning.com. This website includes 700 free software programs listed by subject and grade. Kids will love these "games," which are also available in Spanish. With a family computer your children can have fun learning to type and explore.

Providing professionally refurbished PCs

Computers for Classrooms is a Microsoft Registered Refurbisher, installing Windows 7 in the computers they repair. Windows 7 helps refurbished PCs be more reliable and responsive, making everyday tasks easier and providing customers with a professionally refurbished computer that comes preinstalled with a legitimate Microsoft software license.

As a Microsoft Registered Refurbisher, Computers for Classrooms can install MS Office 2007, Home and Student on computers going to low-income families and non-profits. These are fully-licensed versions including Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Microsoft Security Essentials, an anti-virus program.

Computers for Classrooms offers a one-year warranty on the hardware and software installed on refurbished desktop computers and a 90-day warranty on laptops.



Comcast Internet Essentials

For families with children in the Free or Reduced Lunch program at school, CFC will help provide high-speed internet through Comcast's Internet Essentials Program for just \$9.95 a month.



Get involved!

Office: 530-895-4175
Toll Free: 1-800-208-3482
Fax: 530-895-4075
Spanish: 530-566-6480

Visit our website at www.ComputersForClassrooms.org **Watch our video** at www.turninggreentv.com/CFC.html

Larger donors: We will come to you! Computers for Classrooms urgently needs Duo Core or faster computers for school use. Schools need quantities of the same make and model to simplify technical support and standardization. Computers for Classrooms has many requests from classrooms needing computers. Please donate for reuse rather than just recycling for the commodity value once the systems have been parted out.

Small donors: Donate to Computers for Classrooms during our monthly drop-off event at the Sacramento News & Review parking lot.

Schools and Nonprofits: Email or call Computers for Classrooms to see how we can help. Email: pfurr@chicousd.org.

Low-income families: Come to SN&R on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 1pm and 5pm to buy a low-cost computer system (1124 Del Paso Blvd.). Bring your proof of being low-income, such as a Medical Benefits Card, Healthy Families, food stamps, free or reduced-price lunch qualification, etc. Also bring cash, as we do not accept credit cards or checks. See various models in operation. Lots of educational software is included for free. Call 1-800-208-3482 for English speakers or 530-566-6480 for information in Spanish.

Community Organizations: Our Computer Mobile can visit your community and bring computers for your low-income families to buy. Call or email us so we can develop a flyer to let your families know what we have to offer.

