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LOCAL NEWS

Nonprofit hands out 30 free laptops to students in St. Clair Shores

Technological tools donated by Human-I-T Detroit



South Lake

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Christmas came a little early for a select group of students in the three St. Clair Shores school districts, who will receive free, brand new laptop computers.

Mount Clemens-based We Are Here Foundation partnered with Human-I-T Detroit to provide the 30 Acer TravelMate Spin B1 laptops, which were handed out last week.

Organizers contacted the superintendents of the public school district in St. Clair Shores to ask them to recommend 10 overachieving students who could make use of the laptops.

According to its website, the all-volunteer We Are Here Foundation distributes donated school and office furniture to districts, churches and nonprofits in southeast Michigan.

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“I recently got a phone call from Human-I-T Detroit asking if I knew of any schools that could use some brand new laptops,” said Tom Cleaver, the organization’s founder. “And I said ‘we’ll gladly find some financially challenged students to do that.’”

Sure enough, Cleaver contacted superintendents from the Lake Shore, Lakeview and South Lake school districts and found willing takers for the free technology.

Ted Von Hiltmayer of South Lake Schools, said the district has been provided with several resources from We Are Here Foundation over the years.

“This is first time we’ve been able to provide some 11th or 12th students with something like this,” Von Hiltmayer said. “We greatly appreciate their generosity, especially at a time like this, with the holidays. It’s great for the kids who will receive the laptops.”

Human-I-T takes donated technology and refurbishes it to provide low-income individuals and nonprofits with devices, internet and digital training, according to its website.

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“We’re happy to partner with the We Are Here Foundation for this,” Leo Kowalyk said in a statement. “It’s thanks to local companies donating their decommissioned technology to Human-I-T that we are able to help deserving students and families here in the Detroit area with the tools they need to succeed in the digital world.”

We Are Here Foundation has donated truckloads of school items to districts from Detroit to Romeo, other nonprofits and churches. The 23-year-old foundation also has sponsored and participated in the Nautical Coast Cleanup.

Cleaver started the foundation in 1998 as a means of cleaning up the polluted lakes and rivers in southeast Michigan including the Clinton River. In the past 20 years the group’s volunteers have removed almost 9 million pounds of debris.

The foundation’s primary source of income comes from donated boats. Volunteers fix up the boats and sell them with money from the boat sales pays for moving expenses.

For more information on the We Are Here Foundation or to make a donation, call 586-463-9400 or email Tom Cleaver at cleave@aol.com. The website address is www.weareherefoundation.org.