



NEWS

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CHANGING LIVES BY CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE:

Habitat for Humanity, Redemtech Partnership Provides Refurbished Computers to Help Bring Partner Families into Electronic Age

Columbus-based Redemtech plans to expand program nationwide

Columbus, OH (June 25, 2009) – With limited education and minimal job skills, Omar had spent much of his life struggling to break the cycle of poverty. When Habitat for Humanity – Greater Columbus provided a computer for the home he'd helped build for his family, he barely knew how to turn it on.

But with training classes and help from his children, he started to get the hang of it. Soon he realized he really enjoyed working with computers – and had a talent for it. In Spring 2008, he took a major step toward a solid future for his family by enrolling in a local community college – to study computer science.

The donation was part of Habitat's program designed to provide low-income Habitat families an essential tool for 21st century success – a home computer. Other Habitat partners tell similar stories:

- Kristin, a single mother of two children, used the computer as the main outlet for communication with her fiancé when he was deployed to Afghanistan with the U.S. military, while it also enabled her son to access the same educational programs as his peers;
- Felicia, a mother of three who was never able to afford a computer for her family, now can help her children with their computer-based homework at home – instead of taking them to a public library, alleviating the stress of tight schedules and gas mileage required for frequent library trips.

While the computer donation program helped Omar and many other Habitat partner families, it was a limited time regional project.

Now, Habitat is joining forces with Columbus-based Redemtech, a world leader in refurbishing large volumes of PCs from businesses, to reignite the project and take it to the next level by expanding it well beyond Ohio's borders. The program kicks off with Redemtech's donation of 75 refurbished computers, which enables Habitat for Humanity – Greater Columbus to achieve its overall goal of providing computers for all of its 180 partner families with active mortgages through its AccessAll Columbus program and other initiatives.

"We appreciate Redemtech's willingness to build on the original concept and the company's important contribution to helping us reach our goal of providing a home computer to 180 local partner families," said E.J. Thomas, CEO, Habitat for Humanity - Greater Columbus. "Giving these families the electronic and technical resources they need furthers our mission of eliminating poverty and homelessness. Further, my goal is to engage Habitat for Humanity International and explore the objective of assisting partner families across the country in receiving a donated computer system."

The recipient families identified a need for a computer and must complete two classes – computer basics and internet safety. Adults in the partner families use the computers to manage family tasks such as budgeting and keeping up with home-care information, Thomas added, while children use the computers for homework, extended learning and entertainment.

“By providing a computer for our Habitat partners, we help them get on equal footing with others in the community,” said Lindsay Miller of Habitat for Humanity - Greater Columbus. “One recipient called us to ask if we could send her an email – the first email she had ever received. Something that simple shows you how much these resources mean for our partner families.”

Other recipients also offered their appreciation.

“Your kindness extends beyond blessing families with the opportunity to own their homes, built from the ground up,” said Constance E. Fayson, Habitat homeowner, in a letter. “You also continue to show your generosity and genuine concern by assisting with our overall needs.”

To help more Habitat families, Redemtech plans to work with its corporate clients to establish a sustainable flow of refurbished PCs for donation. Redemtech helps its clients determine the best use for decommissioned and surplus equipment, such as re-use inside the company, resale, donation, or if obsolete, recycling.

“U.S. businesses replaced about 40 million computers in 2008, yet only about three percent were donated,” said Redemtech vice-president Jill Vaské. “With our capabilities to refurbish and deploy large quantities of PCs to high standards, we can help Habitat expand the program while enabling large corporations to meet important goals for social and environmental responsibility.”

More than 75 percent of the 40 million computers American businesses replaced last year are four or fewer years old, which makes them ideal for donation to nonprofits and to Habitat families.

Redemtech’s rigorous reconditioning process meets the high standards required by the Community Microsoft Authorized Refurbisher (MAR) program, which is designed to increase the number of usable PCs available to nonprofits, schools and low-income families. Through Community MAR, Redemtech is able to install genuine Windows XP Professional operating system and Microsoft Office 2003 suite for \$5 each on computers professionally refurbished for donation to eligible charities and nonprofit organizations. Redemtech helped pioneer the program in 2006, which ensures computers are fully licensed to provide Habitat partners complete access to free web-based OS support and software updates from Microsoft.

“For companies looking to donate equipment, it’s important to keep in mind nonprofits do not have the resources to repair and refurbish the computers and buy the necessary software,” said Vaské. “Companies can outsource these tasks for significantly less cost than storing and eventually disposing of computers.”

The donated computers are from Redemtech’s [Red Rabbitt™](#) brand, which features top-brand business grade desktop and laptop computers refurbished to the highest standards. The computers are professionally packaged and come standard with new peripherals, genuine software pre-installed and a 90-day limited exchange warranty for a like-new experience out of the box.

To ensure proper disposal when the computer reaches the end of its life, each recipient family will receive free asset recovery and recycling services from Redemtech. By offering these services free of charge, Redemtech helps the nonprofit community, which often lacks funding to pay e-waste recycling fees. The free service also provides assurance to Redemtech’s clients donating computers that the highest standards of environmental and social responsibility will be maintained when the computers are retired.

About Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI), and Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus (HFHGC), is an ecumenical Christian housing ministry. Habitat affiliates work locally in communities around the world to select and support homeowners, organize volunteers and coordinate house building. Since its founding in 1976, Habitat has built more than 300,000 homes worldwide, providing shelter for more than 1 million people in nearly 90 countries. In the Greater Columbus community, Habitat has built more than 207 homes since 1987. The Greater Columbus Affiliate, through tithing to HFHI, has also helped to build more than 230 homes in developing countries throughout the world.

HFHGC is one of the only housing agencies in Franklin County targeting families who earn 30-60% of median income. HFHGC partner families are chosen after a careful review process during which Habitat assesses their need for housing; their ability to repay a zero-interest, no-profit mortgage and their willingness to partner with Habitat through sweat equity. All partner families are first-time homebuyers who earn 30-60% of the median income for Franklin County and currently live in substandard housing. Every partner family must perform a minimum of 200-250 hours of sweat equity, which includes working on their own house and those of other Habitat families, attending homeownership classes and providing Habitat program support. Every family also assumes a no-interest, no-profit mortgage with payments based on family income. Because HFHGC holds and services these mortgages, Habitat has a long-term relationship with the homeowners and the communities in which they live.

About Habitat's ReStore

Also supporting HFHGC is Habitat's ReStore, a re-sale store that accepts and re-sells reusable home improvement materials to the general public. Revenue from sales directly offsets Habitat's administrative costs and assists in both eliminating substandard housing and creating homeownership in Greater Columbus. Habitat's ReStore is located at 3140 Westerville Road, 3 miles southwest of Easton; 2 miles south of Morse Road. The re-sale store is open to the public Monday-Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

About Redemtech

Redemtech Technology Change Management (TCM) services help organizations increase IT asset utilization and assure regulatory compliance during technology transitions. Redemtech provides an outsourced solution to TCM that uses best practices and automated technologies to implement and manage processes for deploying, redeploying and decommissioning computer systems. Redemtech clients can realize a 40 to 70 percent reduction in asset recovery and disposition costs, while achieving 100 percent warranted data security and environmental compliance assurance. Redemtech is a wholly owned subsidiary of Micro Electronics, one of the largest privately held technology companies in the United States. For more information on Redemtech visit www.redemtech.com.

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We hope that you enjoy receiving news about Habitat for Humanity-Greater Columbus and Habitat's ReStore. Should you wish to be removed from the Habitat mailing list, please send an email to beverly.martin@martinmarketingllc.com