

New Computer Learning Lab Opens at CMHA Cedar Estates

A new 26 station computer learning lab opened at the Cleveland Metropolitan Housing Authority's Cedar Estates for neighborhood residents to receive computer training, as well as have access to computers and the internet for homework, job searches and other activities.

The launch of the lab is one of many resources in the Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood. One Community's "Connect Your Way," project provides training, low-cost equipment, support, and affordable Internet for low-income individuals and their households. CMHA also contributed to the purchase of equipment and provided space, with the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland spearheading the project.

CMHA residents and neighbors are invited to enroll in Connect Your Community's training, which covers basic computers skills, including using a mouse and e-mail, as well as more advanced training in internet research, including health and education research, and paying bills or applying for jobs online.

The computer lab is wonderful for this community," said Delores Gray, LAC President at CMHA's Cedar Estates. The educational programming for both children and adults will help them with their school work and to ultimately get them a job. We are thrilled to have this fantastic resource right here at Cedar Estates for the community to utilize."

The digital and technology divide remain a critical barrier to connecting to academic and economic opportunities, particularly in low-income neighborhoods. Residents who complete the training can qualify to receive a free or very inexpensive home computers and one year of low-cost internet service.

Several "Promise Ambassadors," Central residents trained and empowered to lead, build, sustain and monitor the planning and implementation of the Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood through a process of relationship building, connection and advocacy, are receiving advanced computer training to be able to work with residents and students, offering tutoring, computer training and other supportive services.

One Community received nearly \$19 million in federal stimulus funds to help low-income residents in Northern Ohio, Detroit, Ohio's Appalachian region, and communities in Kentucky, North Carolina and Florida.

Locally, the Cleveland Housing Network is the lead partner. The goal is to train and connect more than 5,000 residents in the Cleveland region by the fall of 2012.

"CMHA is proud to be a part of this significant partnership in providing residents with the necessary tools to help them succeed," said CMHA Acting CEO Jeffery K. Patterson. "We are excited to see the meaningful impact this will have on the residents' families and the surrounding community."