

Humboldt County foster youth receive laptops

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Representatives from the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC,) the National Homebuyers Fund, Inc. and iFoster provided seventy-nine current and former foster youth in Humboldt County with laptops this month to help them access important documents, improve success in academics and employment and stay connected with friends, family and services.

More than 1,100 laptops were provided to foster youth ages 16-21 throughout the state's 25 rural counties as part of the program.

One local foster youth, Steven Combs, spoke to the Humboldt Board of Supervisors on Tuesday after receiving the laptop.

"It feels amazing to be getting chosen for a laptop," he said.

Levi Frisk, the Independent Living Skills Coordinator at the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services Transition-Age Youth Division, said some of the local foster youth who have heard about the program can't wait to see their social worker, which he said is not always the case.

"We know that success in education is one of the number one indicators of your future well-being," Frisk said. "A lot of the young we work with are disadvantaged, they haven't had the same type of opportunities and as you all know a laptop now is just critical to your daily work, to research, to school, to employment."

RCRC vice president of external affairs Justin Caporusso said the laptops were designed by Microsoft and Intel, have an 11-hour battery life and contain helpful programs like Microsoft Office Suite.

One of the unique features about the laptops, Caporusso said, is they also include a transition-age youth services portal, which he described as a "digital locker of sorts to store important documents, access resources that are unique to them through this portal."

RCRC and the National Homebuyers Fund Inc. contributed \$200,000 each to the program.

First District Humboldt County Supervisor and RCRC President Rex Bohn said many of the laptops are going to youth from the eastern and southern portions of the county.

“Our foster youth face real challenges that others don’t, and something as fundamental as a computer can provide a sense of stability and security for some of the most vulnerable children in Humboldt County,” Bohn said in a statement Wednesday. “RCRC and their partners are truly committed to improving the quality of life in California’s rural counties. I am proud to be part of an organization that invests its resources in our local communities.”

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