



NEWS RELEASE

Project Success, the University of Illinois, and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Partner to Provide Computers and Internet Hotspots to Georgetown-Ridge Farm CUSD #4 Families In Need

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**Georgetown-Ridge Farm
CUSD #4**

Project Success and [Georgetown-Ridge Farm School District #4](#) partnered with the [University of Illinois Urbana Champaign's Community Data Clinic](#), the State of Illinois, and [PCs for People](#) to expand Internet and technology access for families. 101 laptops and Internet hotspots were distributed to Georgetown-Ridge Farm families during school registration this week!

This partnership was made possible through a grant to the University from the Illinois' Community Data Clinic from the [Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity \(DCEO\)](#) Regional Engagement for Adoption + Digital Equity (READY) program. PCs for People is a national nonprofit which refurbishes computers donated by corporations and nonprofits and then makes those devices available for families in need.

Over 1.1 million Illinois households lack at-home computer access. Recent reports have revealed that more than a third of Illinoisans can't cover a basic survival budget, with an estimated 11.9% of the state's population in 2019 living at or below the poverty line according to the U.S. Census Bureau. East Central Illinois demonstrates even higher than average need among its 331,000 residents, with four counties – Champaign, Vermilion, Ford and Iroquois - flagged as poverty "watch" or "warning" counties by the Heartland Alliance's Poverty report in 2019. The region's six-county average for poverty was measured by 2019 census data at 12.1%; while two of the six counties - Champaign and Vermilion - demonstrate particularly high poverty rates of 19.9 and 16.8% of the county populations respectively. Initiatives like the distribution of computers at Georgetown-Ridge Farm in partnership with the University of Illinois' Community Data Clinic, PCs for People,



and DCEO help to bridge the digital divide for equitable advances in remote learning, work from home, telemedicine, and other requirements of everyday life.

"Research has shown how uneven economic recovery in Illinois has been since the end of the Great Recession in 2010, with more than a third of Illinois households not earning enough to even cover a basic survival budget," said Dr. Anita Say Chan, director of the Community Data Clinic at the University of Illinois. "Following COVID, families continue to face challenges because of low wages, sparse savings and the increasing cost of basic household goods and services, including the internet. We at the University of Illinois and the Community Data Clinic are grateful to be part of committed civic partnerships that can help to address the deep need for economic and digital access support for East Central Illinois families."



Companies and nonprofits who would like to donate multiple computers to PCs for People for refurbishment for future distributions throughout Illinois should go to the PCs for People website at www.pcsforpeople.org/illinois for more information. Meloney Jones-White, Community Outreach and Fundraising Manager, PCs for People - Metro East states, "PCs for People-Illinois (Cook County and Metro East), strives to build and secure the bridge that closes the digital divide for the 1.1 million digitally disconnected households in the state of Illinois. We are able to accomplish this goal through partnerships, such as this one, with an end result of making life more equitable for those most in need. Seeing the PCs for People's mission in action, one city at a time is extremely rewarding! Thank you Georgetown Ridge Farm School District, Project Success, the University of Illinois' Community Data Clinic and DCEO for championing a successful tech deployment."

Mr. Trent Eisenbarth (Director of Data and Technology) stated, "Georgetown Ridge Farm School District's partnership with Project Success, the University of Illinois' Community Data Clinic, Illinois DCEO, and PCs for People provided an exciting and energizing opportunity for our families by providing them with access to internet connectivity and access to laptops and desktops for their household. This has allowed our district and community families to close the digital gap for connectivity and access to technology devices."

Kimberly David, Associate Director of Project Success expressed that "It was amazing to witness our partners pulling together to provide an essential resource for Georgetown-Ridge Farm families. This is a resource we would not be able to provide to families without this collaboration."