



**United Way
of Greater Mercer County**



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2020 Operational Report

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PLEASE NOTE: Pictures in this document showing people without masks were all taken pre-covid.



1. Introduction

TDI Connect is currently an all-volunteer group that creates partnerships and collaborations with regional groups in order to make PCs available where they are needed.

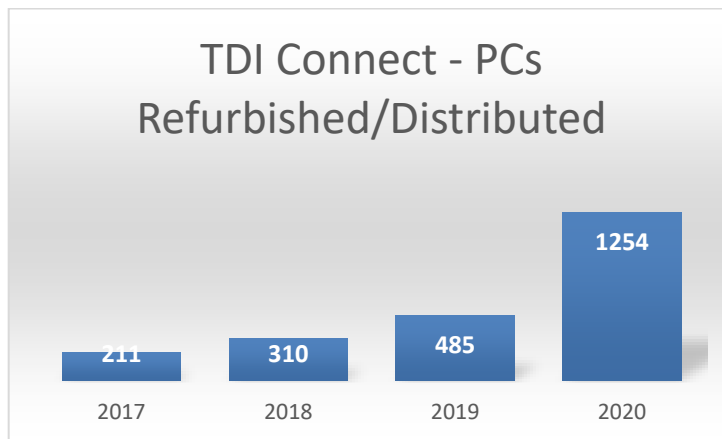
This has been a very unusual year with significant operational restrictions placed on all organizations... so, the first thing to do is to sincerely thank our volunteers. They have worked at our location, appropriately socially distanced, and supported us by also volunteering from home.

The dedication of our volunteers has enabled us to continue providing the donated and refurbished PCs to those in the community that have a need. We thank them profusely.

This year we have expanded and streamlined our operations, expanded the geography we have been serving, expanded our partnerships and donor bases, began the processes involved in supporting more activities needed in closing the digital divide, and refurbished over 1,250 donated PCs.

We also put in place online systems for managing requests for PCs and managing the hardware donation, refurbishment and assignment processes. These systems allow us to support a growing delivery area and to support growth of the TDI Connect model.

Thank you to everyone who has provided supported to us through this year.



| PCs Distributed in 2020: | Laptops | Desktops | Totals |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| January - March | 29 | 162 | 191 |
| April - June | 160 | 201 | 361 |
| July - September | 212 | 111 | 323 |
| October - December | 150 | 229 | 379 |
| Totals for 2020: | 551 | 703 | 1254 |

2. PC Distribution to the Community

While supporting the ability of individuals to request PCs directly through our website, our primary distribution channels are the regional non-profits and groups that are our partners in the community.

This year we partnered with 39 varying groups, as well as supporting numerous individuals directly. The PCs, along with the open source software we provide on the PCs, are being used in a wide variety of situations:

- Computer/Internet Access Centers that serve the community for general access and specific training
- Elementary, middle and high school students (public, charter and private)
- Families and individuals that need equipment to be able to work at home
- Students going to college or at college without digital access for remote learning
- Supporting high school equivalency, and non-traditional students
- Workforce development and individuals participating in programs being run by our partners



This year we partnered with the following organizations in distributing our refurbished PCs:

Age Out Angels
 Bible Way Church
 Boys & Girls Club of Mercer County
 Catalyst Solutions
 Christopher Columbus Elementary School
 Children's Home Society of New Jersey
 Connect4Success
 East Trenton Collaborative
 FedCap Opportunities Center
 HelpSelf
 HomeWorks
 Howards Healthy Choices
 Isles
 Kappa Robotics Program
 Latin American Legal Defense & Education Fund
 Mercer County Community College
 Mercer Street Friends
 Mount Moriah Church
 Oaks Integrated Care

Parents Connect
 Partnership for America
 PJ Hill Elementary School
 Read Ready Day Care
 Reading Senior Center
 S&S Family Learning Center
 Salvation Army
 Sheltered Yoga
 Shiloh CDC
 Shoemaker Mastery School
 Skylark Motion
 Smith Family Foundation
 South Jersey Veterans Center
 Spectra Care Foundation
 Sprout U School of the Arts
 State of New Jersey DYFS
 Trenton Area Soup Kitchen
 Trenton Literacy Movement
 UIH Family Partners
 United Way of Greater Mercer County

3. Hardware Donations and Donors

This year we received hardware donations from 18 different organizations as well as from a number of individuals.



A key part of our activity during the year is building relationships with organizations that then donate their PCs to us as they are replacing them with new equipment. Our outreach is done through our volunteers' personal contacts, online and social media, and outreach through business and community groups. We also worked closely with our distribution partners to locate potential hardware donors.

As a 501(c)(3) organization, the hardware donated to us is tax deductible. This, and the fact that we are significantly extending the useful life of the donated equipment, provides an incentive for donors.

We want to thank the 18 organizations that donated hardware to us along with the numerous individuals that also donated equipment.



The hardware we accept is reasonably diverse as we refurbish both laptops and desktop machines. With the advent of the pandemic, the requirements have somewhat changed, with Zoom and similar video conferencing facilities becoming much more important, along with access to WiFi.

We thank our 2020 hardware donors:

AQUA Services
 Boys & Girls Club of Mercer County
 Chemistry Council of New Jersey
 Comcast
 eHealthcare Systems
 Gund Investment Corporation
 Internet Creations
 Dr. Kheder's Office
 Latin American Legal Defense & Education Fund

NJM Insurance
 Novo Nordisk
 Oasis Group
 Princeton University Surplus (via PA3)
 Sparta Systems
 Top Knobs
 United Way of Greater Mercer County
 Urban Mental Health Alliance
 Withum

4. Volunteers

TDI Connect is currently an all-volunteer group, so our volunteers are key to all aspects of our operations:

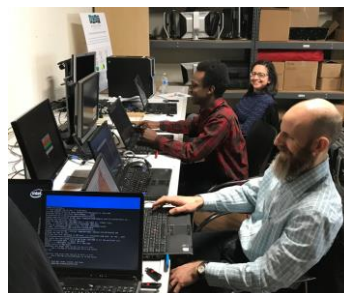
- Identification and outreach to community partners for PC distribution and other supporting activities addressing elements of the digital divide
- Identification and outreach to hardware donors
- Fundraising
- Creating, updating and maintaining the software installation procedures
- Managing requests for PCs
- Sorting and documenting hardware donations
- Installing and recovering hardware
- Installing the open source software and testing the PCs
- Preparing individual PCs and shipments for delivery



This year has been difficult for everyone, and to keep people safe we implemented strict protocols which severely restricted the number of volunteers that can be in our offices at any one time.

Typically we have a core group of volunteers and then larger groups of volunteers that come in to help out during the year. For most of this year we had to stop volunteer activities by groups and work only with a very small core group of volunteers. This allowed us to keep operations going and to maintain safety in the workplace.

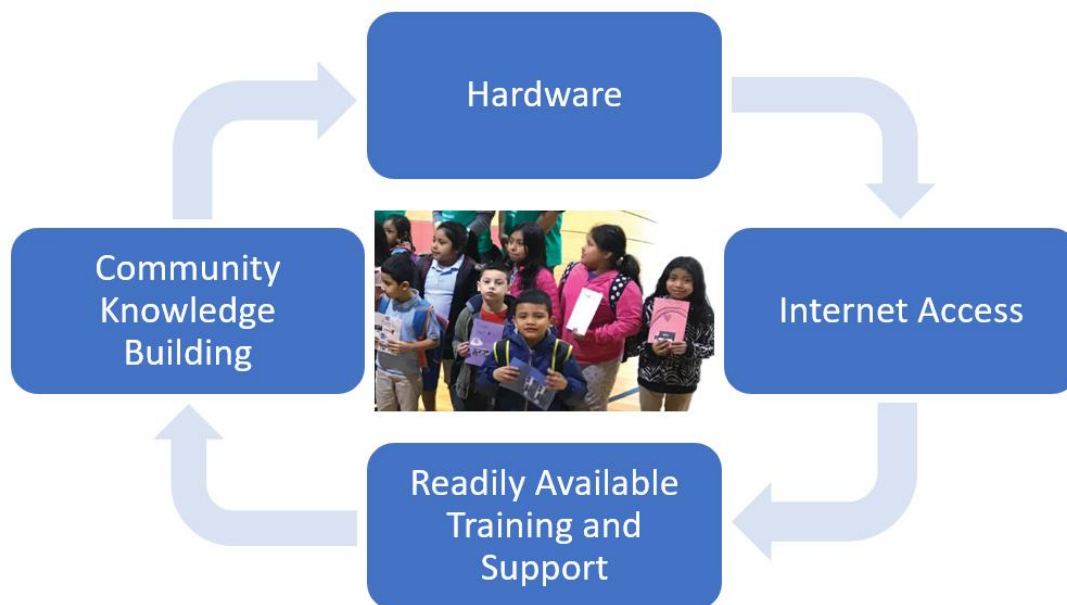
We sincerely thank our volunteers – those that worked on-site and those that provided support from their homes (sometimes both!) – as well as thanking the groups that volunteered earlier in the year.



5. Breaking the Digital Divide

The digital divide is not a simple issue, it covers multiple aspects and a wide geography across the country – both urban and rural.

At TDI Connect we have been working locally in two of the areas in the diagram below – making hardware available and working in conjunction with the Comcast Internet Essentials program to provide economically accessible internet service.



In 2020 we also partnered with Shiloh CDC and received a grant from Comcast for PC refurbishment and training in computer coding for 20 students. We provided laptops, which the attending students got to keep, and Shiloh CDC provided the trainers, the location, and the processes needed to identify and recruit the students.

This was a first step in working with partners to provide training opportunities, and we hope to partner with other groups in the future.

Also in 2020 we worked with some of our supporting organizations to identify funds to directly support internet access for households. A certain amount of funds have been identified and in 2021 we will be doing outreach through our partners to identify households that need support for both hardware and internet access.

We have also started to work with other partners more directly to identify additional, and lasting, ways to break down the digital divide, and we will be continuing this work through 2021.



Attachment 1 – Configuration for Laptops and Desktops

Open Source Software

Each machine we refurbish is loaded with a set of open source software. We utilize open source software as it provides all the needed productivity software and has no licensing fees for the recipients of the machines.

Each TDI Connect computer includes the hyper-efficient Ubuntu Operating System (a version of Linux), the Chrome and Firefox web browsers, and a suite of productivity software (Libre Office) that reads and writes Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Photoshop files. In 2020 we added the free Zoom client into our install processes.

Hardware Configuration

In 2020 we switched to primarily replacing disk drives in laptops and desktops with solid state drives (SSDs) which provide significantly increased data access speeds and enhance the usefulness and longevity of the donated machines.

A fully configured Laptop:

- Laptop
- Webcam
- Microphone
- Speakers/Headphones/Earbuds
- Power Supply
- Wifi access

NOTE: Not all laptops have cameras, WiFi access, or functional batteries.

A fully configured Desktop:

- Desktop (CPU)
- Keyboard
- Mouse
- Monitor
- Power cables (monitor and desktop)
- Monitor cable
- LAN cable
- Webcam
- Microphone
- Speakers/Headphones/earbuds
- WiFi access

These new requirements have added to the things we need to purchase in order to deliver highly functioning and useful PCs for today’s environment. All machines are reviewed to determine if the refurbishment costs will return value to the user over at least 2 years of continued usage.

Purchases for Laptops (if needed)

- Solid State Drive (SSD)
- Battery
- Webcam & Microphone
- Speakers/Headphones/Earbuds
- WiFi dongle
- Hard drive covers

Purchases for Desktops (when needed)

- Solid State Drive (SSD) and disk caddies for the SSD
- Mice and Power Cables
- Webcam & Microphone
- Speakers/Headphones/Earbuds
- WiFi dongle