

## 2017-2018 ConnectHome - Digital Literacy, 2-27-18

Marian Christmon: [In progress] -- do everything from -- they recruit people to do construction work for you if you need that. If you're trying to do like Habitat for Humanity, recruits volunteers through that same organization. So we've used them over the last couple years and it's been great.

A lot of the volunteers that we get through them come from tech companies that want to give back to the community.

Daniela Cerullo: And just to piggyback on what Marian's saying is if you do utilize college students, like I have done in the past, going to those college students who are studying computer technology that is your best bet as well, because they -- it's great when they have to show that they actually did an internship.

Whether it's an internship for grades or whether it's just an internship to gain community service credit or credits to put on your resume, they do love that, because they only would have to do it a few hours a week.

Marian Christmon: Right. This is Marian again. A lot -- we're finding that a lot of companies now are requiring community service from their employees. I think like Google Fiber and Comcast they all require community service.

Daniela Cerullo: Yeah. That's right.

Female: So do they require community service from their employees on an ongoing basis or for people who are applying to them for jobs or both?

Marian Christmon: They have to do -- their employees have to do so many hours of community service every year.

Female: That's really good to know. That's a potentially untapped resource for some of our communities. Mm-hmm. And your point, also, Daniela, about the community colleges, I know some community colleges require community service also. Some programs do.

Daniela Cerullo: Correct.

Female: So that's also something to tap into. Yeah. I think I made a -- Christina, I think I made a mistake when I said lower right-hand corner. I think folks need to click on the Q&A button at the very top right-hand corner if they have a question; is that right, Christina?

Christina Payamps-Smith: Right. So if they don't already automatically see a Q&A box at the right-hand corner, if you go to the top right-hand corner and there should be a Q&A icon box and if not, there'll be a down arrow to show you all the options and one of those options would be

Q&A. Once you click it, you'll see a Q&A box appear on the right-hand side if you're not already seeing it.

Daniela Cerullo: So we can give it a little bit more time, but again, I'm full of questions. So one question for you, Marian, is how did you and the housing authority get together originally?

Marian Christmon: I think that we probably all -- because I've been working in digital inclusion in the city, I heard about ConnectHome probably at the same time that the public housing authority did and we actually were the one who contacted them and we wanted to let them know we've done this with the school system, we've got a team of people here to get all ready and if you want to use us, we're here to help you.

Daniela Cerullo: That's wonderful. So what tips would you, as -- you know, from the library perspective, would you offer to other communities? Because most communities have libraries. So what tips would you offer for them to reach out to their libraries and have it be well received?

Marian Christmon: I would suggest -- because most libraries already have digital literacy curriculum, because they've been teaching digital literacy workshops forever now. So I would task them and they're usually happy to share what they have.

So I would contact them and if they don't have the staff to actually help do the training, they should more than likely be happy to share what they've developed over the years and they may be able to point you to some other resources too that you haven't thought about.

Daniela Cerullo: That's a great point. And just to reiterate, we do -- we, meaning ConnectHome -- we have a relationship with the American Library Association. They've committed to assist us with their local library -- member organization libraries to partner with ConnectHome sites locally.

Marian Christmon: Yes. The American Library Association has been partnered with ConnectHome since the beginning and I'll actually be doing a webinar for them too and the audience is going to be the libraries in the new ConnectHome communities.

Daniela Cerullo: Wonderful. Do we have any questions, Christina?

Christina Payamps-Smith: No. None have come in yet.

Female: No questions. I guess we were that thorough; huh?

Daniela Cerullo: You definitely were.

Samuel Wicks: I certainly hope so.

Daniela Cerullo: Well, we're nine minutes out. So I would say if there aren't any questions, we can close and if there are questions that occur to people after the webinar, feel free to send us an email at [Connecthome@HUD.gov](mailto:Connecthome@HUD.gov). But I think we do -- we might have a question here.

Lisa Booker: Hi. This is Lisa. So all three presenters talked about these programs that have continued and I know with a lot of ConnectHome sites, the question is how do we continue from our first class or how do we continue participation?

So do any of you have suggestions on how to keep classes going and having participation from instructors? And I think that's a big capacity building aspect of ConnectHome.

Marian Christmon: This is Marian. What I can say to answer your question is I think that that's where partnerships have really been invaluable for us to keep the program going, because over the last couple years, we've had some partners that drop off and then others that come, but we've -- we always maintain a large pool of partners and that's what helps us to keep the classes going.

We function now -- and when I say we, the library. We function as a train the trainer for other nonprofits and groups that we recruit to do the training, because we don't have the staff to train at all the properties. So that's how we're doing it here. Does that answer your question?

Lisa Booker: Yes. Thank you.

Samuel Wicks: Could I provide some impediments to your question? The opposite end of the question is that the --

Daniela Cerullo: Absolutely. Let's hear it.

Samuel Wicks: Awesome. Thank you. So the big challenge here in Durham is not only just for the funding that inhibits the ability for us to have ongoing and a sustainable digital literacy program, but also, our sites themselves with the infrastructure. So we have 16 sites here in Durham and there's a combination of issues with those sites.

So those sites either A, they have computers in their community or recreation facility, but they don't have any Internet or it's the opposite, they have Internet, but they have no computers. And in the case of, for instance, ABCmouse, so I've been working with ABCmouse, because I want to move beyond the K-12 population and look at little ones and what can we offer.

But as you may understand, the problem is if I don't have the Internet in the community centers, then we can't offer that type of instruction of programming to little ones and it's just impossible.

Marian Christmon: My answer to what you just said is that when we go to a location that doesn't have Internet, and I don't know if you have funding for that or not, but we take hotspots with us so that we can have Internet wherever we go to teach classes and then we try to -- the PHA communities that we work for all have access to low-cost Internet access.

They can either get Comcast for \$10 a month, because Comcast covers all HUD-supported properties and then some of our properties are Google neighborhoods as well. And so Google is providing free Internet service for up to three or four years for residents in those neighborhoods. So if you -- and the funding for hotspots is really pretty reasonable for us.

Daniela Cerullo: Marian, did you purchase your hotspots with library funds?

Marian Christmon: Yes.

Daniela Cerullo: Okay. That's great. And I know that sources of funding are very limited out of the operating and capital funds, but I do like to remind people that creating a computer lab or supporting an existing computer lab you can use capital and operating funds for those purposes and if you want more information about that, please send me an email or send an email to [Connecthome@HUD.gov](mailto:Connecthome@HUD.gov).

The -- both of those funds from HUD can be used for Internet connectivity at a computer lab, purchasing equipment for the -- you know, or upgrades. It depends on what it is. And so that's why I'd want to give you more specific guidance if this is something you are interested in exploring.

But I do know that both of those have been underfunded for a long time. So it's a bit of a stretch, but I think it's still important to know.

Marian Christmon: One thing I'll add off of, this is Marian again, to what you just said is that also is where your city can come in and help you, because the city has negotiated contracts for phone service from the local providers.

So we can get hotspots through the contract with the city where we don't pay anything for the hotspot, we just pay the monthly service charge and it's like half of what a -- you know, you -- a commercial cost of the hotspot.

Daniela Cerullo: That's a really great point and you just set me up very well, Marian, because I'm going to advertise an upcoming webinar that we're going to be doing on that -- on the topic of agreements and contracts with -- between a city and a cable or Internet service provider and what cities may be able to negotiate to benefit their residents as a result of those agreements. Yeah. So thank you for that.

Samuel Wicks: I would also add, if I could, so the funding isn't necessarily the challenge either here in Durham and I really don't want to focus on the bad, but there's a lot of challenges here. I can tell you that also, there's issues of safety and security. So for instance, in the case of one of our properties here, it's just residents just do not feel safe there at night.

And I can tell you that things are starting to change. We have a new mayor in Durham and pretty soon we're going to be getting a police substation at that property. It's one of our largest properties that's over 300 residents that live there and there is a recreational community center at the top of the hill there, but people just don't want to go there at night.

And as you may understand, most of the digital literacy programming is offered in the PM hours. The other issue is transportation. So if there's issues of safety on your campus at your PHA -- and

there's also a healthy amount of divisions, too, that kind of, unfortunately, causes problems for the -- for a sense of community at our properties.

But the other issue is, too, a lot of our partners, like for instance, North Carolina Central University, they're more than happy to provide the level of instruction that we want and they also do have young women of color who are helping our residents, because they are either freshman or juniors or whatever it may be at the college level and they can offer some of the programming as well.

But for NCCU to offer that, we need to bring our residents to their facility. And so there goes the issue of transportation. And as a vista, I wasn't able to drive any of our PHA's fleet. Also, our fleet doesn't include a 15-passenger van.

So that was problematic, because we had up to 18 students and the van that we have doesn't fit that capacity and the van that we have, actually, doesn't work very well. So those are some issues you want to look at too.

Daniela Cerullo: All right. Well, thank you for that. I see a note here from Vicky Yuki in Seattle who says that, "We've actually gotten cable modems for nonprofits for free as a result of our franchise." So stay tuned for the webinar.

It's going to be in April that's going to talk about franchise and exclusivity agreements with -- between cities and Internet service providers. And our next webinar in March, Christina, you want to talk about that?

Christina Payamps-Smith: Sure. So in March, we're planning on doing our -- another webinar on program management and sustainability.

So we'll be featuring communities that are able to talk a lot about these issues that have been raised, such as what do you do when the funding gets scarce, and how do you maintain the program, and how do you keep people interested as far as your partners, and then also, people -- your residents and the people you're serving.

Daniela Cerullo: Great. So stay tuned for that. The invites will be coming soon. And I think we are now actually a minute over. So I want to thank our presenters for, again, taking the time to share their experience and expertise with us and to Christina for her help in coordinating this webinar. And thanks to our participants for listening in and we look forward to working with you and hearing from you. Thank you.

Female: Thank you. Bye.

Samuel Wicks: Thank you so much.

Marian Christmon: Bye.

Samuel Wicks: All right. So long.

(END)