

2017-2018 ConnectHome Stakeholder Volunteer Programs, 10-30-18

Dina Lehmann Kim: Appreciate it. Good afternoon everybody and thank you so much for joining today. My name is Dina Lehmann Kim and I manage the ConnectHome Program for HUD for the Office of Public Housing Investments. I am very pleased today to have four speakers on this webinar. Amy Pierce in Marian Christmon from the Nashville Public Library will kick us off and talk about their volunteer program and how they used it for ConnectHome and they will be followed by Vernua Noble-Hanrahan and Leon Shead from the Memphis Housing Authority who will also talk about how they leveraged their partners and their housing authority staff to support ConnectHome.

And just a quick word about volunteers – very, very critical to a successful ConnectHome or ConnectHomeUSA program. And so I'm very grateful to our speakers who will share their lessons learned and best practices in this arena for you all. So thank you so much. And I will turn it over to Amy and Marian. Thank you.

Amy Pierce: Great. Thank you so much, Dana. it's a pleasure to be here and I'm joined with Marian Christmon. So my name is Amy Pierce and I run the volunteer program at the library and Marian is our digital literacy guru at the library.

Marian Christmon: Hello, everyone, I'm Marian and I manage our digital inclusion program at the library. Go ahead Amy.

Amy Pierce: Thanks Marian. So if you guys have questions related to how Marian got the team going, what the classes were like, how she got the program set up, it'd be best to ask Marian. So I'm going to be here to talk about our volunteer program and how we recruit volunteers for the digital literacy classes. So let's go ahead and get started here.

If you're like most people, when you think about the library, one of the first things that's going to come to mind are the books. But libraries are really so much more than that.

We have programming that focuses on health and wellness, like our Be Well at NPL program, where we offer free yoga classes throughout the whole system, basically. We offer story times for kids and families to come and do and watch professional puppet shows that our Wishing Chair Productions puts on. We have, of course, the digital inclusion classes, which are hugely important for educating the senior population on technology.

We have Salon at 615 which is a great way to bring big name authors like Stephen King, for example, down to Nashville to talk about their books. And for a lot of people it's just a quiet place to be. And one thing that I really love about the library is that no matter who you are, you're always welcome at the library. So our mission is just to inspire reading, advanced learning and connect the community. So in everything that we do, we strive to be that hub for people to come and feel comfortable to learn and grow in a safe space.

The Nashville Public Library system, a combined county and city system. We have 21 locations. So the main library downtown is about 300,000 square feet. The 20 branch locations throughout the county range between about 900 square feet all the way up to 25,000 square feet. And we have about about 2 million or so items in circulation. And we also won the 2017 Library of the Year. Not so much a location but a fun fact, so, putting it out there.

All right. For our volunteer program we have about 350 volunteers throughout the whole library system; so all locations. And we have about 375 staff members or so. So that's almost a one-to-one ratio between volunteers and staff. So what do the volunteers actually do? How do they help support us? In a lot of ways the volunteers are helping with book management, so that's helping to go pull books that people have put on hold or to go and reinvent retail books after they come back in.

They also help with programming support. So for example, the story times that we run there might be a volunteer who comes in to set the room up to also be there with the staff member as the story-time is going on to just help kids with crafts and to help clean the room up. Or they might be the ones running the program. So for example, I mentioned the yoga classes earlier. We have volunteers to go out and run those yoga classes as well, too.

So they are the programmers as well. In addition, we have events where we might ask volunteers to help us sign people up for library cards. So volunteers will go and lend a hand with that as well. The talking library is a division of the library that is specifically for people who have any type of vision impairment. So we want for people with any type of vision impairment to have an easy way to gain access to newspapers and books and magazines.

So we have three members of the staff on-site dedicated to this program and we have about 50 volunteers or so. And it's a division that we would not be able to run without our volunteer support, so it's hugely important to us to have volunteers for that. But the way our volunteers help is they will read the newspaper live in the morning and it's broadcast out through a special radio receiver.

And then a book and magazine segments are recorded and aired so that people can listen to it instead of reading it. The digital literacy classes, which are huge – that's why most of you are here probably – those are a great way for seniors to be able to learn more about how technology works. And so we utilize volunteers to go out and assist staff members when they're out teaching out in the field for these classes.

We have a college internship program. so we have some internships that you would think a library would have, such as archival processing, for example. And we have a few that you maybe wouldn't think that a library would have like gender studies or interior design or social media. So we offer a wide range of opportunities for college-age people to get involved with us too. And last not least our English Conversation Clubs, that is a great way for for people who are non-native English speakers to get together in a group and just practice informally with what it feels like to have a conversation with other people.

So we have volunteers to go out and lead those groups. Right. So a little bit about the structure of the volunteer program. We have a couple of requirements. So for the library, for you to be able to volunteer, you would need to be 13 years old or older. For the digital literacy classes, specifically, we asked the volunteers be 16 or older. We think that's a better age range there. And we do also ask for 50 hours of service minimum and that looks like about six months or so, of regular weekly service of about two to three hours.

Why do we ask for that? Part of it is for training of volunteers and part of it is, if it's an adult, we run a background check as well, so it gives us a chance to kind of balance that out. Plus we rely so much upon our volunteer staff, or our volunteer support, rather, that we want to know that they're going to be with us for a little bit of time. So we do ask for a little bit of a time commitment there.

Most of our opportunities are setup in a way that they're going to be regular and recurring. So for example, shelving books, going out to put books back on the shelf or go into pull holds. That's something that we're always going to be doing. It's kind of an evergreen opportunity. So the way that we handle those as we look for a long-term volunteer who can commit to that 50 hours of service or more to plug into a regular weekly recurring schedule and just continue that on say Tuesdays from 2:00 to 4:00 and just keep on rolling with that until they at least hit 50 hours of service or beyond that, as well.

The flip-side of that is that we sometimes have opportunities come up that are either not planned, where we need an extra hand, or a mini project that comes up where a staff member will just say, hey, Volunteer Services, is there a way that we can get somebody to help with XYZ? And we have a team of volunteers called the Swift Team who we call on to help with that. And it's basically an e-mail list where I e-mail out to anyone who can help with a certain project. And those projects range from say, building an Excel spreadsheet based on certain information to going out to an event to help sign people up for library cards.

We also do one-time needs or events. And that's the way that we approach the digital literacy classes, which I'll be explaining in a little bit more detail in just a moment, but the one-time needs are just ones where people can sign up, it's open to anyone in the general public to get in there and sign up and it's for a finite time period. So just a specific day and time and then they're done. How would you come on-board if you were wanting to volunteer with us? Well, the first step is to go online and fill out an application.

Once you do the application online, you're going to get an e-mail back from us that has interview questions in it and we take a kind of hybrid approach. You can either get in touch with us and let us know what time that would work and we have a phone conversation for the interview or if the time doesn't work you can e-mail back your answers to the interview questions because those are provided once you apply. So once the person would turn in their interview responses, we check with different locations to see where it's going to be a good fit for them and then ask about placing them in.

Then once that's agreed upon for them to come aboard, we do an orientation and there are two forms for an adult or three if they're a minor – one's a parent release – and then if they're 18 or

older, we do a background check as well, which we cover the cost on and it's handled through a company. For us, we use a company called Verified Volunteers as our partner. Where do we have our volunteer information?

Okay. For us, we use Volgistics, which is an online database. If you're not familiar with Volgistics or other online databases and you're looking for a way to house your volunteer information, I would do a bit of research to maybe find out what works best and would mesh well with your organization.

But Volgistics works very well for us and it helps us keep track of the contact info for our volunteers, the volunteer leaders, which are our coordinators who are onsite staff members at all the locations and divisions, keeps track of that information, keep track of the volunteer schedules, volunteers logged their own service time, and we can also pull reports. So there's a way to find out how many volunteer hours of service we had in the last year or fiscal year or we can even drill it down as far as how many hours did somebody shelve at the Inglewood branch last month? We can go down that deep into it.

So Volgistics is very handy for organizing our volunteer information. Where do we go to recruit? So in Nashville, one of the major places that potential volunteers go if they're looking for opportunities is to Hands On Nashville and I know Hands On has a network through several different cities. So I would say if you're looking to try to get volunteers in, and you're not sure of where to go, ask around. Ask your friends and family where they would go to look for an opportunity.

You might even try asking some of your local volunteer coordinators at different organizations around you, where do you go to post your opportunities? But Hands On Nashville has been a fabulous partner for us to be able to really spread the word if we have an opportunity and get so many more eyes on it than it would be just sitting on our website for example. So we use Hands On Nashville to post opportunities and people can express interest and we follow up and get back with them.

Volunteermatch.org is similar where we go onto their website and post information and then people can get back with us. We have a Facebook presence for the library as well as a specific group for our volunteers on Facebook and that's a good way to get the word out as well, our website, of course. And then word of mouth. So many people have great memories of the library and volunteering here thankfully. So it's something where our current volunteer team and our staff members help us spread the word about needs as well.

All right. So for the digital literacy classes, what you'll probably want to consider when you're looking at your volunteer opportunities, when are you going to need help? So when are you running those classes? What type of students will you have? Is it going to be seniors? Is it going to be – you know, what age range of people are you going to have and how many people will there be? What are their needs? What are they looking to get out of your classes and how can you best accommodate that?

And then, how many volunteers would be useful? One? Three? We use between one and three here with our classes. Too many people and it might be a little much. So it's good to have a good balance between how many you'll need there.

So when Marian and Susan and Danny were getting together with us to talk about pulling in volunteers for the digital literacy classes, they first gave me a little bit of information about what the program is all about and how it was going to work. And then, they let me know what timing – when they're going to be running the classes. And what we ended up doing was we decided to post these on Hands On Nashville so that anyone in the general public could sign up to help for these classes.

We have a short description on there to tell you what the volunteer is doing and to make it interesting, you know, what type of person would want to do this type of opportunity. We do have the age limit in there, which is – in Hands On Nashville, that's something that we can specify, but if you're using a different service or you're just posting up the opportunity, you'll definitely want to put in if there is an age limit and what the consideration is on that. And then also if you're looking for a certain sort of person, for example, the patient kind who's willing to sit with their mom or dad on the phone for an hour and talk through how their cell phone works; that type of person.

That's probably a good fit for the digital literacy classes. So it's good to put in there with if patience is something that that would go over well or if that's the type of person that you're looking for. So volunteers will go to Hands On Nashville. They'll choose a date and time that works for them that we're running a class and sign up for it directly through their website. That's how we have it set up.

What happens on the back end is that I get an e-mail that lets me know that someone has signed up and I'll send the confirmation that will loop in the teacher who's going to teach the class, as well as the students, so that they have each other's contact information. That lets the teacher know that somebody has come in and I signed up and also gives a student or volunteer, rather, a way to get back in touch with them if they need them.

And also they will get an automatic confirmation from Hands On Nashville, as well. And the way that we handle the time and how to log service hours for our Digital Literacy Program is we have a Google document that's a shared spreadsheet between the teachers and I and they list the student, or the volunteer, rather, the location, the time that they volunteered, and that information is housed in the spreadsheet. And then I go back on the back end and add it into Volgistics for the service. So that's what it looks like for us to build the digital literacy volunteer opportunity. I'm available if anyone has any questions. And Marian is as well.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Thank you so much, Amy. This was enough. I think what we'll do is we'll hold questions to the end and we'll move on to the next presentation with Vernua and Leon. Thank you so much Amy and Marian. Thank you two. I know we'll get questions for you at the end. If not I'll, ask them. Thank you.

Amy Pierce: Great. Thank you.

Vernua Hanrahan: Okay. Leon and I – I'm Vernua Hanrahan – but Leon and I wanted to basically look at the way that we had to structure it, is that we built on programs that we had in house, but the approach that we looked at is, our people basically give us time, they give us their talent, and they give us their money. And when we were looking at where do we start, we started in house first. And the programs that we have that have community input and people that are associated in the greater community are ROSS Grants.

And that's the service coordinator grants, the Jobs Plus, and the social service coordinators that we have in our senior and disabled buildings. And we also looked at the fact that we had another group of people that we could work with, which is from the Choice Neighborhood Implementation grant. They have a group of people that are health coordinators, they're education coordinators, so we wanted to use them as well.

And then Shelby County government gave us interns during the summer so that they could work with us on our computers and just making sure that if we had questions and followed up, they gave us those interns and usually the interns were either high school students, they were also college students and in some cases, they were the bridge – the people that are graduating, or just now getting ready to be a freshman in college.

And then the city of Memphis gave us interns and also from the University of Memphis and Lemoyne-Owen College to work with the social service side with our people one-on-one. And so, what we were looking at is that every program that we deal with and I'm sorry I didn't advance the slide. Okay. But every program that we deal with must have community partnerships and they must have input from the residents.

And so when we talk about input, we need to listen to our Resident Advisory Board and the councils at each of our properties and we let them vet or tell us what's a good idea, what's not a good idea. They evaluate and also they recruit additional resources for us. So we try to use them as much as possible. When we started the program, we had to have vision, we had to have leadership. So our approach was to start with our executive director at the time and the executive office to coordinate all the efforts, talking across departments, talking to other people that are out there, talking to some of our contractors.

And we were basically looking internally and externally to seek volunteers and then funds. Because once we got the volunteers from the agency, they basically helped us with the logistics of trying to get what the people really wanted. We were building on what was going on in the schools, where they already had computers and computer programs, but we wanted to take that, like ConnectHome says, into the home.

So we've kind of reached out to local government and the philanthropic community to assist us with funding the programs. And the partners that we recruited, we made sure that we recruited them for a specific role and in some cases they wanted a specific time that we needed their talents and their money. And so when we went to them, we basically said, guys, we need you. We need your talent; we need your ideas.

And also we need your cash. So internally, we just need to say this before I get to this slide. At the time, our information technology department was very, very small and it's still small. We have approximately 2,900 public housing folks and 18 – what was it? 8,000 households for the voucher program and a staff of 4 to cover all that. So they lead the charge at finding low-cost devices.

They also tried to negotiate prices for the residents if the residents want to continue on with the devices that we found with the connectivity. Accounting was wonderful and that they gave us a budget for what it would cost for us to maintain a thousand tablets over a two-year period and they used it, saying this is what we can do in house and this is what you guys need to go out and find. So they solidified the fundraising goal, kept the executive team informed of any income stream that might be utilized in the future.

I think one of the contracts we had, even dealt with somebody wanted to place a cell tower on one of our high rises and we were talking about using that income to help assist paying for the connectivity for the public housing resident. And so, staff at all level, we asked them, in any way possible, to help us; from distribution to inventory and to follow up contact with the program recipients.

Leon, I think, was even asked to follow up with making sure that the people were still using their devices and if not, we would contact them and say, you know, what do you need help with? I think you also troub- – well, you were doing troubleshooting at one point. Right?

Leon Shead: Right.

Vernua Hanrahan: Okay. Because when we got to a point where we were trying to make sure that they were going to become independent. That's our real goal for everybody. So the next thing that we wanted to do, is that after we use this core group from the executive team, the accounting department, we started looking out across all of our staff: property managers, maintenance men, whomever.

And because then, we used them to show we had x number of volunteers so that we could go out to the larger community for the city of Memphis. Because a lot of times what people tell you, yeah, you need our people, but what about your people? Are they really engaged? Do they really believe in this as a project that they can own and help you feel successful? So we needed the talent of the staff to attract the funds because we could log staff hours and we could log volunteer hours from our staff.

And also, a lot of times the staff, whether or not they're at the grocery store, or they know somebody that sits on a board or their banker, they're really a really good messenger to attract and keep volunteers because they really believe in the message of housing our people and giving them the tools to become self-sufficient. So selfishly, what we did, like our volunteer recruitment, we started with what's in it for and not just me, but what's in it for my organization? What's in it for the residents?

What's in it for the community? What's in it for the volunteers that we have? And the what for the Memphis housing Authority is this: ConnectHome as another tool to assist MHA when helping families to become self-sufficient, which is the goal of the agency. It also provides us with a way to communicate quickly and effectively with residents as the agency tries to ensure all are informed and aware.

We post our board minutes on there. If there's a program that's coming up, we post it on our website, then they can connect using their tablets so they know where the information is. What's in it for the residents is the connection to the larger community. Online registration: many of them wanted that for the students in the Shelby County schools. They also wanted the ability just to track their student's grades and their attendance, were they're really going?

Some of the people use the tablets for post-secondary schools enrollment and online classes. They may not be able to get out to a class on a traditional campus. They also looked at – to make sure that they could take advantage of any training programs that were out there: job searches and in some cases entertainment because amenities in some communities, because of where they're located, it's kind of limited.

And then by leveraging the staff of the ROSS Grants in our service coordinators in Jobs Plus, basically what we did is we assisted the families with recruiting families for the tablet distribution, because we needed them to help us as much get the word out that we're going to do this, the families receive assistance on using the apps for education. They kept in touch with the social service coordinator so that they can track their progress. They helped them with job searches, medical appointments and they also helped the residents prepare budgets to make connectivity past the two years that we were going to give them.

Another great thing that came out of the Choice Implementation grant, is that we now have health education counselors and they taught people how to arrange their appointments online. If they're medical refills connect with their doctors and nurses just by using the tablets. And then last but not least, again, the whole idea of education.

We again wanted them to assist with job training, letting people know where they were, what were the jobs that are out there, post-secondary education, helping people even to obtain that HighSED, which is the former GED. We wanted people to have their diplomas. The what for community partners is basically this T-Mobile gave us – wanted access to our residents. That's why they gave us the tablets. They gave us a thousand tablets.

Shelby County Schools wanted to help us with the apps because they want their parents to be involved and track the progress of his or her student. And they also wanted to be able to send attendance alerts to the family if they hadn't seen someone in that seat. For the workforce investment network, what they wanted us to do, is to help give them assistance in obtaining their job training and placement goals.

They also wanted to help reduce the number of unemployed in the community and then they also have money for training and educational opportunities for residents that they may not have been

able to penetrate down to the development without our help. And then the Women's Foundation of Greater Memphis. They were the philanthropic community that came on board.

They gave us assistance because they wanted to reduce poverty in a specific zip code over a five-year period. So they were willing to give us money to help pay for the connectivity as well. And then it allowed them to have access to the residents so that they could give them program's information and helped – and that helped a whole lot. So basically, our volunteers equal success. Volunteers help with distribution of the tablets, solicitation of funds, the training of the residents.

It was not only T-Mobile that came in and did this, but they also trained students so that they could train other people at their schools and in their families how to use the devices. The volunteers allowed MHA meet the goal of promoting each family at the targeted developments – because we had four that we distribute these – and it will also allow us to find ways to still be committed and find money in our – not only our budget but other budgets and in the larger community to connect more than a thousand residents.

So the results of the partnerships that happened over this 3-year period is basically this: we garnered and distributed a thousand residents for residents from T-Mobile. They gave us a lower connectivity rate of free hardware. They loaded it, trained our students. The Shelby County School system provided the apps to be used online for registration homework and to access the grades and progress of the students so that the parents know in real-time what's happening with their child.

They also identified students and teachers that will be trained to assist the residents in their community-centered. And then the Workforce Investment Network – which is WIN – provided the links for job search and educational opportunity, job training and placement. And the Women's Foundation of Greater Memphis provided the funding to assist with paying for two years of connectivity and they also gave us volunteers from the companies that sit on their board of directors like FedEx, like some of the banks, which is Independent Bank.

So these were not necessarily people that we would work with in our everyday world, but they allowed us that opportunity. Okay. Like I said, my name is Vernua and –

Leon Shead: Leon Shead.

Vernua Hanrahan: – Leon's here. He did the bulk of the work because we actually had to label some of the tablets ourselves. Okay. So we're available for any questions and comments. Thank you.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Thank you so much. Vernua and Leon. Brie, do you want to start taking questions?

Briana Alterman: Yes. Q&A is now open. As a reminder, if you would like to ask a question, you can either use the chat box or the hand-raise button. I see we have one question from Carandus?

Carandus Brown: Yes ma'am. My name is Carandus Brown and I'm calling from Rockford Housing Authority. My question is, as far as like with the ROSS Grant, and the ROSS participation goes, is it built into the program or is it like separate and you just, you guys just have the ROSS worker working with them?

Vernua Hanrahan: What we did is they already were working with our residents and basically what we tried to do was to add another facet by getting them involved so that they could even show some of our residents in the meetings they had in the one-on-one sessions how to use the tablets. And they were really helpful especially with some of the younger parents that were enrolling their children because we do a pre-registration in Memphis in Shelby County via the web. So it was, it was just an enhancement to the program, to the ROSS Service people work.

Carandus Brown: Okay. Well, I thank you for answering that question for me.

Briana Alterman: We have another question from the chat box directly to Vernua. They wanted to know what volunteer software you use to log hours?

Vernua Hanrahan: For the volunteers, we don't necessarily use – we weren't using software, per se. We did keep a spreadsheet and what we were doing is that we had sign-in sheets and we had training hours and so that's how we were basically logging how many service hours so that we could give that to the city of Memphis. So we were doing in-house tracking.

Briana Alterman: We have another question coming in from Vivian Crawford.

Vivian Crawford: Yes, [Inaudible] Vivian Crawford and I'm with the Lucas Metropolitan Housing Authority in Toledo, Ohio. I'm fairly new to the ConnectHome concept and I printed material off from the HUD Exchange and read over material, etc. And I've been asked several times by our actual manager of resident services of how to actually get the program up and going. Okay.

So what I'm wondering is, do you all have flyers that were put together and sent out from HUD? You know, how did you actually make the connections? Because what I'm assuming, and from reading the material and from listening on one of the other webinars is that I would have to connect – have to contact either an internet provider as well as make the connections with some businesses, are local schools, universities, etc., so that I can get volunteers and bring partners on board so that we can launch it off to our residents. Is that correct in what I'm getting out of it so far?

Vernua Hanrahan: Actually we had – we were already in a relationship with one of the groups that came to us and when T-Mobile came to us, AT&T came to us and Comcast came to us.

Vivian Crawford: Oh, okay.

Vernua Hanrahan: So it's a little bit of a competition.

Vivian Crawford: Right, exactly. But you know what, that's a good thing though, to have all three of them wanting to have a partnership with you. And what I'm wondering is if there's any way if I – maybe afterwards or something – if I give my e-mail information, if you could maybe send me contact information where I can possibly contact T-Mobile, Sprint, Verizon, someone. So that we can at least start looking at forming that partnership and also, you know, here locally, I know how to go out and make those connections.

But at least, you know, be able to send me some information and let me ask you, did you all put a flyer together? You already had one already made that's universal that's used to let residents know about it; or what? Surveys; or what?

Vernua Hanrahan: We did put flyers together, but let me sing the praises of ConnectHome staff. Dina and – Dina and everybody that was with the ConnectHome basically also did some work on the national level with AT&T and other vendors to sell the idea of the fact that, you know, we need to be moving communities into the digital age. And that was a really big help because like I said, with AT&T and T-Mobile, knowing that we were a market out there, they were really – they wanted our business and they wanted the business of our residents. And I wouldn't have known about it if it had not been from HUD talking about the fact that in the programs that were out there. First starting with computers and literacy in the school and then moving to the home.

Vivian Crawford: Okay. Okay. So again.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Just going to say Vivian, hi, this is Dina from HUD and I'm happy to talk to you after this is over. We can schedule a call so I can talk you through this a little bit more.

Vivian Crawford: Wonderful. Okay. Thank you so much.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Sure. Sure.

Briana Alterman: We have one more question about how you presented your proposal to T-Mobile and Comcast. ?

Vernua Hanrahan: I'm sorry, what were you saying?

Briana Alterman: We have a new question about how you presented your proposal to T-Mobile, Comcast, etc.?

Vernua Hanrahan: Well, like I said, a T-Mobile. We were already in a relationship with them because basically, Leon didn't they have our cell phones? They had our cell phone services and AT&T wanted to also – they had our desk phone services but they also were trying to compete. And so the reason why they basically wanted it is because they wanted the larger business of the authority in regard to telephone and cell service for our staff.

And then they wanted access to our residents. So we were kind of basically able to leverage that with, okay, guys, if you want our business, you know, what can you do for us? And that's when

the guy from T-Mobile said, I'll give you 600 tablets right away and I'll give you another 400. So we ended up with a thousand tablets.

Vivian Crawford: That's Good.

Vernua Hanrahan: We did not coerce him. He offered.

Dina Lehmann Kim: And just so you know, Vivian, there are – a lot of these internet service providers have low cost offering that they were required to provide as a result of the merger that they did. So the government basically said in exchange for us approving a merger between you and another large company, we want you to do a public service and that is – one of them, is to create a low cost internet offer. And so that's why you have many companies that do have these low cost offers.

Vivian Crawford: Okay.

Marian Christmon: This is Marian in Nashville and I'll just throw in there that we were primarily here with Google Fiber and Comcast and as Dina said, because of their requirements, we really didn't have to go after them. They came to us and they wanted to – the business.

Vivian Crawford: Okay. Dina, I want to let you all know that that's really great to know that they were trying to get the business; okay? That's really great to know. So I really do want to have the opportunity to talk with you all after the webinar today, so that I can have information on how to – who to talk to, who to connect with and take it from there and make sure that our housing authority will actually be a full partner of ConnectHomeUSA.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Absolutely. We can – I can talk you through that.

Vivian Crawford: Okay.

Dina Lehmann Kim: I'm assuming – actually – do you mind checking your e-mail address in the chat box so I know I have it.

Vivian Crawford: Okay. I sure will.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Great. Brie, do we have any other questions?

Briana Alterman: No, but we do have some other – some more participants who are interested and who are typing their addresses in the chat box.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Oh, great. Okay. Well while they're doing that, I do have a question. I have two questions, but the first one I'll ask is for Amy. I thought I heard you say that there are – that Hands On exists in other cities; is that right?

Amy Pierce: Yes. Yeah, that's true. It's a – it's part of a network in several cities. So Hands On Nashville is our local iteration of it. But yes, the Hands On Network is throughout several different cities.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Which I did not know about, so this is great. It's a network, basically, that helps organizations identify volunteers, right?

Amy Pierce: Yes, exactly. And they're like a huge – they're a great partner to have and it's like having a giant billboard. If you're talking about your volunteer opportunities, it just blasts it out to a ton of people, which is so useful.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Very useful. I can, yeah, I can see how that would be a huge, huge help. So all you ConnectHomeUSA cities out there, look to see if you're, if your community has a Hands On network. My other question was for Vernua: do you – what was – was there someone at your housing authority at MHA that coordinated the staff to do that outreach? The internal staff you talked about how they – how you have the accounting staff, IT staff, you know, so maybe you can talk with – or maybe Leon knows about this – how did you guys coordinate all of that work? All of those people reaching out to all those different organizations?

Vernua Hanrahan: Okay. Basically, like I said, it started in the executive office and it was the administrative assistant, myself and Leon that were in constant communication. The person in the right [Inaudible] IT falls underneath accounting, so that there's always a stream of back and forth about what type of device to buy and where we can use it. And so basically our executive director at – was the one and then, basically, he would say, look, you guys got to do this. Get on board, see what else and talk to your other people.

So basically, I ended up spending a lot of time talking about folks, and I lured Leon into yes to do a lot of things. And then on the back end of it though, I can't say enough about the people because we take on volunteer projects outside of the agency. But this is a volunteer project we decided that we needed to do inside the agency because it was going to benefit our families so much. So we had people from the Housing Choice Voucher side, we had people from the Public Housing side, we have people on the development and we even had residents that came in and helped us with labeling and cataloging and actually, I mean just boxing up stuff.

So when you talked about the flyers, we did that. We had someone in our community relations department that actually designed all the flyers, put it up on the website, on our Facebook page. So it was, oh God, it was so many people. We didn't even have to ask them after a while. They just saw us coming and said, what do you need?

Dina Lehmann Kim: That's amazing. Thank you.

Vernua Hanrahan: Okay. No, thank them.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Yes, also. Right. Are there any other questions?

Briana Alterman: Not at the moment. Let's see.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Okay. We have 10 minutes folks, so if you want to ask questions, now's the time. Well, if there isn't another question that I do have one more. I always have lots of questions. So regarding the Women's Foundation of Memphis, the funds that they provided: did they ask for any – because it sounds like they wanted to make a pretty significant dent in the poverty over five years. Were they asking for any data from you?

Vernua Hanrahan: Yeah, basically when they came back with – because they also help with other projects that we have – they wanted to know the number of families, where the families were located, they helped us even identify which of the - the zip code that we were talking about, 38126. So we ended up actually distributing the tablets in that particular zip code so that we can use that.

And then they helped also get information from our ROSS service coordinators about the number of families that are employed, the number of families that have graduated, or the number of families that do – have received their GED. So we kind of shared that with them.

Dina Lehmann Kim: That's great.

Vernua Hanrahan: Because it helps them. Yeah. And they really have funded other programs and other things like the high school that's in the 38126, they actually have made sure that every year, twice a year for the last two years, that we've actually given the children backpacks of necessities that they need. So they do it at the beginning of the school year and then they do it when January runs around, comes around again, they do it again.

And they've also worked to fund some of the job training, not-for-profits that are in the community. And they've also helped to meet some of the match that some of these groups need to work with our people.

Dina Lehmann Kim: So it sounds kind of like a virtuous cycle where they helped you and then they saw good results and so that further encouraged them to continue to support your work?

Vernua Hanrahan: Right. And it helps them to sell to when they can put once a year, they're – they have a fundraiser and they bring in speakers, but they also at that particular luncheon highlight all of the women that have basically either bought a house, graduated, so that people get to see where their dollars are invested.

So their human capital is really – that community impact is very important to them. And especially for the companies like FedEx and AutoZone, they want to know if their money is being well spent.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Makes complete sense.

Briana Alterman: We have another question coming in. A participant wants to know if AT&T or Comcast replaced tablets as they become outdated or broken, etc.?

Vernua Hanrahan: Well, they haven't because we haven't done the ask for the second round yet. We just, like I said, we just finished up – we are finishing up the first two years of connectivity on the tablets that we have, but they have come back – T-Mobile has and asked about whether or not we needed additional tablets. But I think the other way that we're also looking at, is maybe not just a tablet, or a laptop for the home, as well.

We're going to see what we can do to work with some of the other vendors, and again, this was from the ConnectHome conference about people that are actually refurbishing them, like the local colleges and see what we can do in that regard as well. Maybe get them to help support that.

Dina Lehmann Kim: And just so everybody on the phone knows, we did do a webinar with three organizations that are refurbishers. So if you go to HUD Exchange, you know, where you registered for this webinar, you can go back and look at and view that webinar, listen to that webinar, as well. And there's, there's a lot of good information about refurbishers.

And I would – to save you time though, I'll refer you to the national umbrella organization called well I just know the initials A, F as in Frank, T as in tom, Double R, dot org, aftrr.org. It's an umbrella organization of hundreds of refurbishers that are across the country and they're great organizations. They really care so much about making sure that tablet computers, etc., that, you know, don't have a use for, let's say a bank, find a new use. So they'll, they'll refer some wipe them clean and then reissue them for a very, very modest fee. So I would highly recommend that you check out that organization. It's aftrr.org and they have a list of all their member organizations across the country.

Briana Alterman: We have one more question from Carandus.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Go ahead. Is it by phone? Okay.

Carandus Brown: Oh, I'm sorry. I still have my phone on mute. Okay. Sorry about that. Yes, my question is concerning like myself and a coworker, we just came into the ConnectHome initiative and we are stepping into a program that's already in existence and some of the information that we have been kind of looking up and gathering about the ConnectHome initiative doesn't really kind of help us on how to reconnect the information and, like, get the volunteers out there to get the information out.

So we have a breakdown with some of the services that we used to have in place, how do I go to like reconnect with those types of services and then get the volunteers? Because we have some volunteers in place, but to get that information out to the volunteers to be able to boost the program up again?

Dina Lehmann Kim: I would ask Amy, maybe, to chime in first or Marian, you know, to see – well, any of the speakers, really. You guys are the experts.

Amy Pierce: Yeah. Just a good way to get the information out to your volunteers is by finding out where your volunteers are going for their information. So if you're already working with

some people who are currently volunteering as part of the program, you might ask them where they would go to look for that certain set of information and then go from there or you know, if you have a Facebook presence posting it there is a good way to get the word out as well. That might be my suggestion.

Carandus Brown: Okay. And then what about like reconnecting with companies? Because I know we worked – we used to work with Sprint but since we just came into the program, I don't believe we have that connection anymore and I would like to establish one with T-Mobile, so that's one I'm definitely going to look into. I think the only one we still have a connection with his, with Xfinity and then the AT&T we had a connection with, but I was just informed today that they are actually pulling their connection in our area so.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Well what I would do – this is Dina – I would all right, I have your e-mail now. I just got it, but I'll connect you to our nonprofit partner EveryoneOn. And they – they're huge – they provide huge assistance and have a good relationship with the internet service providers. So I'm happy to put you in touch with them.

Carandus Brown: I appreciate that.

Dina Lehmann Kim: Sure.

Carandus Brown: Thank you very much.

Briana Alterman: Any more questions? And we're just about at time.

Dina Lehmann Kim: All right. Well, then let me thank everybody for all the wonderful questions. This was a really great interactive session and, of course, for our wonderful speakers for taking the time out of their very busy schedule to share their expertise and experience with us. We really, really appreciate it. And as a reminder to everyone who attended, if you think of other questions that you didn't think of now, feel free to send us a message at connecthomeatHUD.gov.

And I have some of your e-mails now, so I'm happy to reach out. I know the questions that you have and I'll reach out shortly. And so with that, thank you very much. Stay tuned. We will send out announcements about our next webinar, which will be in November. And we have these every month. So looking forward to that. And Bree, can you remind everybody what the title is? I'm drawing a blank right now for next month's webinar.

Briana Alterman: Just a moment.

Dina Lehmann Kim: I'm sorry?

Briana Alterman: Yeah. The topics for next month's webinar. Yes.

Dina Lehmann Kim: We're both drawing a blank. Yeah, I'm drawing a blank. Sorry guys. But, but stay tuned for our – the announcement for the next webinar. And with that, thank you so much everyone. Thank you. Bye-bye.

(END)