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## TEXCELLENCE

# Digital Learning Labs and Home Computer Program

### *Bridging the Digital Divide*

**It all started with the vision of one dedicated teacher to bridge the digital divide....**

The initiative was launched in the spring of 2007, inspired by a single teacher who was rebuilding computers in his garage for kids in need. He realized that students without computers at home were falling further and further behind their classmates. They could not complete homework, research projects or even check their own school websites. How were they ever going to gain the skills they needed to succeed in class and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace?

### HOME COMPUTER PROGRAM

The Education Foundation, in collaboration with Sarasota County Schools and with the support of generous donors, scaled up that teacher's vision and took it county-wide to start the Home Computer Program. Qualified students and their families –those eligible for free or reduced price meals who have internet access at home and complete a digital training class– receive a refurbished computer. Recipients learn how to use the computers, flash drives, and educational software that complement what the students use in the classroom. Families are introduced to Comcast Internet Essentials, which provides students from low-income families with access to Internet service at home for \$10 per month. As of July 2015, over 7,400 students in need have received a computer through the Home Computer Program.



### DIGITAL LEARNING LABS

Home computers are not the answer for every child. At Texcellence Digital Learning Labs (DLLs), students have access to technology in safe and supportive after-school environments. Labs are developed in partnership with youth-serving organizations and Sarasota County Schools to deliver a highly structured intervention outside of school hours focusing on students who are identified as eligible for free and reduced lunch and academically at-risk. Twenty-three Digital Learning Labs are currently open (July, 2015). A total of 30 labs are planned to be opened by early 2016.



## INTERNSHIPS

DLL internships are designed to provide 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce preparation to underserved high-school students. Most students are identified as ideal candidates by their schools' guidance counselors and many are participants in college prep programs like Take Stock in Children, College for Every Student and Rotary Futures.

Through paid internships, students gain valuable workplace skills including: *accountability* (following work schedules, submitting important usage data each month, completing monthly invoices); *communications* (working with students to improve

digital literacy, self-directed digital learning, homework and projects to improve academics); *collaboration and interpersonal skills* (facilitating digital literacy classes for parents in labs, cooperating with partner DLL staff and volunteers of all ages and backgrounds); and *problem solving* (finding solutions during technical difficulties or scheduling conflicts). The skills gained through the internship translate to the workplace and classroom to create productive, 21<sup>st</sup> century-ready members of society.

## THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

In 2014, Texcellence offered its first computer coding class in the Digital Learning Lab at Selby Library. The class was held every Saturday for six weeks and over 25 students attended each week. In response to the success of the first class, additional classes including Microsoft Office tutorials, computer programming, digital storybook creation, and computer game-making are now offered. Classes are offered at no charge to students, families, and residents served by our partner agencies and Sarasota County Schools. This year, the program evolved to provide tutoring in the Digital Learning Labs and plans are to expand even further.

## HOW CAN I HELP?

The opportunities provided through the Texcellence program are in high demand and are meeting a critical need in Sarasota County. Texcellence is funded by private donors who are passionate about bridging the digital divide for the students and families of Sarasota County's public schools. For more information on how you can support this impactful program, please call the Education Foundation of Sarasota County at 941-927-0965 or visit us on the web at [www.edfoundation.net](http://www.edfoundation.net).

*The creation of Texcellence was made possible by founding funders: the **Dart Foundation**, **Advanced Network & Services**, and the **William G. and Marie Selby Foundation**.*

## About the Education Foundation of Sarasota County

The Education Foundation of Sarasota County, founded in 1988 as an independent 501(c)(3) organization, serves more than 41,200 students in 58 elementary, middle and high schools. The Education Foundation is the leading advocate for an exceptional public education for all students in Sarasota County. With strong support from donors and the community, the Education Foundation undertakes significant, high impact projects and initiatives that go beyond what tax dollars can provide. The Education Foundation encourages donors with a passion for education to express their imagination in finding solutions, to make an investment in providing new opportunities for student learning, and to share the inspiration their generosity sparks in young people whose lives are forever changed.

## Digital Learning Lab Locations

Digital Learning Lab at:	Address	Lab Site Hours
Laurel Civic Association	509 Collins Rd, Nokomis, FL 34275	Mon-Fri 8:30-6:00PM
*YMCA Triad - North	4430 Beneva Rd, Sarasota, FL 34233	Mon-Fri 8:30-3:45PM
*YMCA Triad - South	1130 Indian Hills Blvd, Venice, FL 34285	Mon-Fri 8:30-3:45PM
Boys & Girls Club – Roy McBean	1790 21st St, Sarasota, FL 34234	Mon-Fri 11:00-7:00PM
Boys & Girls Club – Robert and Joan Lee	920 Gulf Coast Blvd, Venice, FL 34285	Mon-Fri 11:00-7:00PM
*Alta Vista Elementary School	1050 S Euclid Ave, Sarasota, FL 34237	Mon-Fri 8:30-6:00PM
Sarasota Housing Authority	1700 Gregg St, Sarasota, FL 34234	Mon-Thu 8:00-6:00, Fri 8:00-12:00
Everyday Blessings Foster Home	1084 South Briggs Ave, Sarasota, FL 34239	Restricted to residents; Always open
Beyond the Spectrum	7333 International Place, Sarasota FL 34240	Mon-Fri 8:30-2:30PM
North Port Library	13800 Tamiami Trl, North Port, FL 34287	Mon, Thu-Sat 10:00-5:00, Tues-Wed 10:00-8:00PM
Robert L. Taylor Community Complex	1845 34th St, Sarasota, FL 34234	Mon-Fri 6:00AM-8:00PM, Sat 9:00AM-9:00PM
*Emma E. Booker Elementary School	2350 Dr. MLK Way, Sarasota, FL 34234	Mon-Fri 8:30-6:00PM
Trinity Youth & Family Services	1925 Northgate Blvd, Sarasota, FL 34234	Mon-Thu 3:30-8:00PM
*Brentwood Elementary School	2500 Vinson Ave, Sarasota, Florida 34232	Mon-Fri 8:30-6:00PM
*Toledo Blade Elementary School	1201 Geranium Ave, North Port, FL 34288	Mon-Fri 8:30-6:00PM
*Glenallen Elementary School	7050 Glenallen Blvd, North Port, FL 34287	Mon-Fri 8:30-6:00PM
Selby Library	1331 1st St, Sarasota, FL 34236	Mon-Thu 10:00-8:00PM, Fri-Sat 10:00-5:00PM
*Booker Middle School	2250 Myrtle St, Sarasota, FL 34234	Mon-Fri 7:30-6:00PM
North Sarasota Library	2801 Newtown Blvd, Sarasota, FL 34234	Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat 10:00-5:00PM, Tues, Thu 10:00-8:00PM
*Cranberry Elementary School	2775 Shalimar Ter, North Port, FL 34286	Mon-Fri 8:30-6:00PM
*Atwater Elementary School	4701 Huntsville Ave, North Port, FL 34288	Mon-Fri 8:30-6:00PM
Janie's Garden	2350 Central Ave, Sarasota FL 34234	Mon-Fri 9:00-5:00PM
*Suncoast School for Innovative Studies	845 South School Ave, Sarasota FL 34237	Mon-Fri 8:30-6:00PM
*Lamarque Elementary School	3415 Lamarque Ave, North Port, FL 34286	Mon-Fri 8:30-6:00PM

**Additional labs at the following proposed locations will be open by Spring 2016:**

Girls Incorporated	201 S Tuttle Ave, Sarasota, FL 34237	Hours TBD
Children's First Head Start Program	1723 N Orange Ave, Sarasota, FL 34236	
Jacaranda Library	4143 Woodmere Park Blvd, Venice, FL 34293	
*Tuttle Elementary School	2863 8th St, Sarasota, FL 34237	
*Wilkinson Elementary School	3400 Wilkinson Rd, Sarasota, FL 34231	
*Gocio Elementary School	3450 Gocio Rd, Sarasota, Florida 34235	

**\*Designated 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers/Title I Programs**



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### Program Outcomes – 2014-15

1. **Increased access to technology:** Approximately 3,300 students and family members benefitted from access to computers, internet and training in the 23 Digital Learning Labs open as of July 2015. Over 1,225 students and family members benefitted from 409 home computers distributed by the Texcellence Home Computer Program in the 2014-15 school year. **Total access impact: 4,525 students and families.**
2. **Improvement in digital literacy skills:** 80.5% of Digital Learning Lab participants who began “Microsoft” or “Digital Learn” digital literacy curriculum attained certificates of completion.
3. **Time spent on digital learning activities:** Students participating in Digital Learning Labs increased the number of hours using technology resources (for homework, self-directed learning and scholastic research) by 69.4%.
4. **Academic achievement:** 58% of DLL participants increased their Math grades and 56% of DLL participants increased their Reading grades. (**716 students** included in preliminary year grade tracking)

— Average of +8.4 grade points in Math increases; Average of +8.0 grade points in Reading increases

Digital Learning Lab	Math grade increase	Reading grade increase
Alta Vista Elementary	61%	67%
Emma E. Booker Elementary	45%	49%
Sarasota Housing Authority	68%	64%
Boys & Girls Club – Venice	56%	62%
Boys & Girls Club – Newtown	70%	57%
Laurel Civic Association	41%	59%
Toledo Blade Elementary	54%	58%
Robert L Taylor Complex	64%	45%
Brentwood Elementary	65%	56%
Atwater Elementary	62%	51%
Trinity Youth Center	59%	53%
North Port Library	63%	53%
Selby Library	46%	58%
<b>AVERAGE INCREASE</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>56%</b>

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**Digital Learning Labs - Opening Year Cost**

<b>Expense</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Technology (includes computers, software, peripherals and incentives)	\$8,885
Charging cart/workstation funds	\$1,000
Training/Classes	\$2,000
Paid Student Internship	\$5,000
Program Support	\$2,000
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$18,885</b>

**Digital Learning Labs - Yearly Upkeep Cost**

<b>Expense</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Technology (includes equipment replacements, software renewals and incentives)	\$2,200
Training/Classes	\$2,000
Paid Internship	\$5,000
Program Support	\$2,000
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$11,200</b>