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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # 268-2011

LETTER TO COMMISSION

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TO: Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: October 27, 2011

SUBJECT: Student Laptop Loaner Program & Computers for Elder Residents

The purpose of this Letter to Commission (LTC) is to inform you of a new initiative we have implemented to provide free Wi-Fi-enabled, laptop computers to our City's elder residents living in affordable housing buildings, as well as the creation of Laptop Loaner Programs within our public schools.

As you may recall, as part of the Agreement with IBM for the Citywide W-Fi, the City was slated to receive 30 computers. Through renegotiation efforts, the City subsequently obtained 100 laptop computers. Staff looked at several options for the deployment of the donated computers and developed two programs focused on expanding computer literacy and use among our youth and seniors. Through this donation, the City has established a laptop loaner program in our public schools, and is providing computer stations for our community's elder residents residing in senior affordable housing buildings in the City.

Through this City program, youth without access to computers or the internet at home will now be able to harness the information and resources of the internet to enrich their academic endeavors by checking out a computer at school for home use. The student laptop loaner program provides 10 laptops for each of the following public schools serving Miami Beach youth:

- Biscayne Elementary
- Fienberg/Fisher K – 8 Center
- North Beach Elementary
- South Pointe Elementary
- Treasure Island Elementary
- Nautilus Middle
- Miami Beach Senior High

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Each school is responsible for managing the program and tracking student use. Total Bank has agreed to serve as a program sponsor by providing computer bags for the 70 computers being used by the schools.

Staff reached out to senior housing buildings in the City to gauge interest in participating. The City had previously partnered with Four Freedoms, a building that houses primarily seniors, to provide two computers donated by Dwight's Computers for Kids, a computer donation program founded by Howard Kaufman, a City resident; students from Miami Beach Senior High School assisted seniors with how to access the internet and use word processing programs. It was largely due to the success of that effort that we are using the donated IBM computers to expand the program further into additional buildings that primarily house seniors. These computers will enable our elder residents to pay bills online, shop the internet, and communicate with family and friends throughout the country and the world, while accessing the City's free Wi-Fi services.

We have enrolled the following buildings in the program:

- Blackstone – 800 Washington Avenue
- Federation Towers – 757 West Avenue
- Rebecca Towers – 200 Alton Road
- Council Towers South – 533 Collins Avenue
- Council Towers North – 1040 Collins Avenue
- Four Freedoms House – 3800 Collins Avenue
- Edwards Apartments – 953 Collins Avenue
- Shep Davis Plaza – 220 – 23rd Street
- Stella Maris – 8638 Harding Avenue
- Jefferson Apartments – 542 Jefferson Avenue
- Allen Apartments – 2001 Washington Avenue
- Coral Rock House – 1701 Normandy Drive

Each building is receiving at least two computers and free computer instruction for its residents through either Unidad of Miami Beach's Senior Community Service Employment Program or Miami Beach Adult Education. Unidad's efforts is utilizing seniors employed part-time through its employment program to guide their peers on navigating the internet and using basic computer software. Unidad is also preparing the computers for deployment. Mouse pads were donated by Humana and mouse devices were donated by Mount Sinai Medical Center.

We are excited at these new programs and partnerships, and grateful to the supporting sponsors. If you have any questions or need any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

C: Executive Staff
Anna Parekh, Director, REHCD
Maria Ruiz, Director, Office of Community Services

JMG/DM/MLR