

University student from London recognized by governor

Desire to help others led to donating refurbished computers to students

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FRANKFORT, Ky. — Elizabeth Scoville has known since she was 5 years old she wanted to help others – that’s why the 21-year-old University of Kentucky senior from London, Ky., plans to enter medical school.

But she wasn’t about to wait that long to start helping those who perhaps didn’t enjoy some of the advantages she had as the daughter of educators John and Lawana Scoville, now retired.

So, with the help of her older brother, John, when she was 13 Elizabeth built a computer and then noticed some of her classmates didn’t have computers at home. So she began collecting discarded computers, refurbished them, and donated them to other children.

Now, eight years later, Scoville is winner of the 2007 Governor’s Student Technology Award and she manages a program of nearly 300 students at 22 Kentucky schools who distribute refurbished computers to children who need them. Thursday, she was honored for her achievements by Gov. Ernie Fletcher who presented the technology awards to five recipients, including Scoville.

“I always wanted to be a doctor,” Scoville said. “I told my parents when I was five I was going to be a doctor because I wanted to help others. The computer program fuels that desire because it allows me to help people in some small way and it’s very rewarding.”

She said combating the education gap in Appalachia was important to her.

“I chose to focus on the field that I believed would have the greatest impact on allowing Appalachian students to secure and maintain well paying jobs – technology.”

Now Scoville is considering acceptance offers from the medical schools at the University of Kentucky, Vanderbilt University and the Mayo Clinic. But it was her Gold

Award project for Girl Scouts – similar to the Boy Scout Eagle Award – when she was 13 which prompted the computer distribution program.

Back then she wrote letters to London businesses and “by word of mouth” accepted donated, used computers. She refurbished them herself and then with help from school counselors and staff at the Family Resource Centers gave the computers to students who might not have them at home.

Recently, one of those early recipients received a new computer from her parents and donated the one Scoville had provided to another computer-less child.

“That’s pretty neat,” Scoville said. “I’ve seen some of those kids grow up and have seen them go into computer classes when at first they didn’t know how to use a keyboard.”

One thing has changed. Scoville is more CEO and manager of the program now. She oversees a program which relies on Student Technology Leaders in 22 schools who receive, refurbish and distribute the computers.

“The first couple of years, I basically met every one of the students, and now I can’t do that,” she said. “I miss that part of it, but it’s kind of hard to do it while in college.”

Fletcher declared Thursday as “High Tech Day in Kentucky,” and recognized Scoville and four other recipients he described as “forward thinkers who embrace, promote and advance technology in their businesses and communities.” Scoville won in the Student Category.

The other recipients were:

New Business Category: Geek Squad City, in Brooks, Ky., is the nation’s leading computer support provider and a Best Buy subsidiary. The Brooks facility is the largest Geek Squad computer repair site in the country and employs more than 600 technically skilled workers.

Small Business Category: Uncle Lee’s and Wing Supply of Greenville, the largest hunting and fishing store in Kentucky which provides merchandise through computer technology and provides services to customers outside the U.S. including Saudi Arabia.

Individual Category: Patricia Miron, Director of Joint Sales and Marketing programs with software developers at Intel Corporation.

Corporate Citizen Category: Toyota Motor Manufacturing of Georgetown which has made more than \$28 million of charitable contributions and sponsorships since 1986 for education, civic groups, health and human services and the arts.

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