



**Media Contact:** Jessica Ditto  
[jditto@connectednation.org](mailto:jditto@connectednation.org)  
(202) 251-4749

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## Area Head Starts Benefit From Computer, Printer Donations

*Computers 4 Kids, AT&T donation aids Four Head Start facilities*

**LEBANON** – Several Central Kentucky Head Start locations got a boost in their efforts to promote the school readiness of children from birth to age 5 through new computers and printers donated Wednesday through the ConnectKentucky Computers 4 Kids program.

The distribution, held at the Lebanon Head Start and made possible by a contribution from AT&T, covers several Central Kentucky Head Start locations:

- 8 new desktop computers (2 each for 4 Head Start facilities in Hodgenville, Lebanon, Bradfordsville, and Vine Grove)
- 6 new laptop computers (to be used at Head Start locations for people working on their GED or other educational goals)
- 1 network printer for the Lebanon facility
- 3 donated Lexmark printers (1 each for Hodgenville, Bradfordsville, and Vine Grove)
- \$320 subsidy for broadband service for New Haven location

This project started when Josephine Nuckols, a local resident, approached state Sen. Jimmy Higdon when she realized that Head Start did not have sufficient access to computers it needed to support children's education.

"I think children should have what they need for their education. When I grew up we did not have anything, the school only had one typewriter, so I would like to see children today have the computers they need to do well," Nuckols said.

Among those attending the distribution event were Head Start Director Pamela A. Smith, Community Action Director Thomas Moorman, Marion County Schools Superintendent Dr. Chuck Hamilton, State Senator Jimmy Higdon, AT&T Regional Director, External and Legislative Affairs, Nancy Jarett, Marion County Judge Executive John Mattingly, and

State Rep. Terry Mills.

“ConnectKentucky is proud to work with AT&T to support the programs that are making a positive impact on the lives of children and others across Kentucky,” said ConnectKentucky Executive Director Rene True.

“We are very excited and pleased with this donation,” Smith said. “As you know everything is about technology; our assessments, our communications, education and everything that we do, and so we needed to upgrade our technology. We do work with 100 percent of families under the poverty rate in this area. Our goal is to have every child graduate high school; of course we work to get them ready for kindergarten first.

“We want to give them everything that we can give them to get them ready,” she said. “We don’t want them to be surprised by technology when they get to kindergarten, we want them to be ready.”

Smith said these computers are strategically placed in a technology center where every child can access a computer and participate in educational activities. Teachers can then track performance and identify those kids who need more help.

“Parents can check out the donated laptops and take them home - that’s our way for supporting parents to get jobs, take their GED, or stay in school,” she said.

“Any time you have an organization like ConnectKentucky that provides an opportunity for us to have these conversations about providing for our students and prosperity for Kentucky, it’s a wonderful thing to pull partnerships together,” Hamilton said. “We have been fortunate to provide smart technology in all our classrooms. We are currently working on a Nook initiative in the high school and we are making the slow transition from textbooks to e-books.”

“Thank you to ConnectKentucky for the good work they do across the state,” Higdon said. “AT&T joins a long line of great corporate citizens here in Marion County. I am just starting to realize with grandchildren that 2, 3, and 4 year olds are like sponges, they can absorb anything and to have computers here for them to be educated is priceless. With limited government resources, we appreciate contributions from ConnectKentucky.”

“I love the idea of the families being able to take advantage of the laptops,” Jarett said. “The whole community is impacted – families, schools, the community, and everyone. Our legislators are having to do more with less and less and so they are getting creative about making connections, and that’s exactly what happened here. We all made connections. We have been a longtime supporter of Computers 4 Kids; we can make a donation and ConnectKentucky has the expertise to do necessary assessments for the technology. I’m just pleased to be part of the connection that it takes to make something like this happen.”

**Photo caption: Head Start students check out new computers donated Wednesday through ConnectKentucky's Computers 4 Kids program as Suzanne Peterson, Central Kentucky Head Start director, looks on.**

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**About Computers 4 Kids:** Computers 4 Kids (C4K) is an innovative project that brings together public and private partners to help disadvantaged children and their families join the Information Age. This is accomplished by placing computers in the hands of disadvantaged populations so that they have access to abundant technological resources and can perform basic computing functions. Computers 4 Kids has successfully facilitated cooperation among private partners, corporate foundations and state government to place computers into the hands of underprivileged and disadvantaged individuals. ConnectKentucky's C4K is meeting the challenge of including these citizens in the digital age through these creative public-private partnerships. C4K, as an initiative, is as flexible as today's technology. C4K has delivered nearly 4,000 Internet-ready computers to disadvantaged individuals and populations across the state.

**About ConnectKentucky:** ConnectKentucky, a subsidiary of the national nonprofit Connected Nation, is leading the way into a new economy for Kentuckians. As an independent technology-based economic development organization, ConnectKentucky works to ensure that Kentucky remains the place of choice to live, work, and raise a family. ConnectKentucky is an alliance of technology-minded businesses, government entities, and universities working together to accelerate technology in the Commonwealth.