



**Fiscal Year End
October 1, 2010 –September 30, 2011**

Public Access and Training Program – Year-To-Date

- Community computer lab **locations** – 17 labs compared to 15 last year
- **Computers available** in all locations – 92 compared to 87 last year
- Total **user sessions** for all locations – 79,417 compared to 60,380 last year
- New participant/**users** – 157 (new stat.)
- **Classes or beginners clinics** offered – 616
- Class and clinic **participants** – 2486 compared to 485 last year
- **Volunteers** – 135 compared to 44 last year
- **Volunteer hours** served – 762
- Volunteer time **value** – \$15,240.00
- 15 FTE's compared to 3 last year

Fix-Net Program –

- **Technical Support -**
 - 2 local nonprofits received technical support
 - 3 hours billed for desktop support
- **Software Training for Nonprofits** – none for the Fiscal Year
- **Austin 501 Tech Club** Meetups hosted by Austin Free-Net for local techies serving nonprofits -
Web site: www.501techaustin.org
 - May 16 - Online scholarship programs - the technology, features and funding aspects with Robert Davis of ScholarSelect
 - October 18 - How to Select the Right Donor Management Solution (or other software) for your organization.

Portable Lab: Checkouts by 50 organizations

Disaster Response: No disasters to report

Grants Received Update

- **Salesforce.com** donated 10 licenses indefinitely. They value at \$15,000/year.
- **BTOP Grant-** On September 13, 2010, U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke announced 35 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act investments to help bridge the technological divide, boost economic growth, create jobs, and improve education and healthcare across the country. The new BTOP grants included one to Technology For All for the Texas Connects Coalition (TxC2). Key partners in the coalition include Austin Free-Net (AFN) and the Metropolitan Austin Interactive Network (MAIN). Leaders of TxC2 confirmed the award of the \$9.6 million Recovery Act grant to support the collaborative work of the coalition. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act) grant is from the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) of the U. S. Department of Commerce. Through the grant the Texas Connects Coalition will support the development and enhancement of 70 public computer center sites in Austin, Houston, San Antonio and across rural Texas.
- **AFN** has launched a new program called **Adopt-a-Computer**, integrating community support, education and computer/internet access,
 - Adopt –a-Computer programs will allow local organizations and individuals to adopt computers in AFN flagship Office-DeWitty Center. Computer stations are named for

historic figures that have helped shaped modern computing or in honor of someone who has helped Austin underserved to receive computer access and training. (**Secured \$500.00- donation**) **AFN was added to Juma-** content management system that allows donations via the web to AFN

- **Groupon G-Team campaign** yielded \$477 resulting in 67 flash drives
- **Randall's** -grocery store partnered with Austin Free-Net to offer 1% back on Randall's Remarkable Rewards Card for the month of August.
- **\$10,000 –Lola wright Grant**
- **Martix Funndraiser neted \$609**
- **Helping hands celebration**
- **Onboarded two new board members: The Honorable Wilhelmenia Delco and Mr. Kevin Enders –Dell Computer**

TOTAL USER SESSIONS PER SITE FISCAL YEAR 10-11:

ARCH (Austin Resource Center for the Homeless)

- AFN provided 5732 user sessions this year

Blackland Neighborhood Center

- AFN provided 2400 user sessions this year

Casa Marianella

- AFN provided 8710 user sessions this year

Conley-Guerrero Senior Activity Center

- AFN provided 7441 user sessions this year

DeWitty Center

- **Public Access Lab-** AFN provided 18,043 user sessions this year
- **COA-** AFN provided 3087 user sessions this year
- **IBM Training-** AFN provided 6985 user sessions this year

East Austin Neighborhood Center

- AFN provided 171 user sessions this year

Lyons Gardens Senior Housing Center

- AFN provided 6721 user sessions this year

Oaks Springs Villa Senior Housing

- AFN provided 1086 user sessions this year

Rosewood Zaragosa Neighborhood Center

- AFN provided 1898 user sessions this year

St. John's Neighborhood Center

- AFN provided 1107 user sessions this year

South Austin Neighborhood Center

- AFN provided 2811 user sessions this year

Trinity Center

- AFN provided 6904 user sessions this year

Ventana del Soul

- AFN provided 6321 user sessions this year

HIGHLIGHTS YEAR TO DATE:

- **September 2010-** AFN was awarded the BTOP Award
- **October 2010-** AFN Board of Director , and acting Executive Director Dale Thompson developed a strategic plan to deploy the BTOP grant
- **Novemeber 2010-** AFN Board of Directors sources for new Executive Director
- **December 2010–** AFN implemented new content software.
- **January 2011-** Austin Free-Net is hosting a free weekly open reading Clinic for adults every Thursday from 10:00 am until Noon. The program utilizes

Reading Companion™ to help students improve reading skills using a computer and headphones. It is self-paced and in addition to improving reading, the subject matter of the electronic books covers life skills such as creating a budget.

- **February 2011-** We have hired a new Executive Director; the 2nd Annual Austin Connects symposium is on the calendar, and thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) we are working on adding hours and classes at our 15 locations!
- **March 2011-** It's been a little over a month now since my first day at Austin Free-Net (February 16th) and I wanted to share some of my experiences, and the reasons I am so glad to be here.

On my first day, not two minutes after I arrived, a client (we'll call him Percy) came barreling down the hall and almost tackled **Dale Thompson** (Financial Manager) in a bear hug! At first, I thought she was being attacked but then the joy started pouring out of Percy, "Oh thank you, thank you! Austin Free-Net has been the start of something wonderful." I learned later that he had come to Austin Free-Net for basic computer training. Subsequently, he took a course that certified him to apply for specific types of City contracts. He was soon awarded a contract for \$30,000! Percy pulled out a business card and continued, "I just got another contract from the City for \$10,000!" He was back at the DeWitty center to retrieve it from his email. He now has Internet in his office, but it was down. He knew he could come here to check his email and print out the contract that would keep him working.

That same day I had my first visit at the training lab, the space for our clinics and classes. The lab was full up with volunteers, trainers and clients. I noticed one young man in a wheel chair. My first assumption was that he was here for our services but as I listened I realized that no – HE was the trainer! Later I was formally introduced to him, **Daniel Acosta**, a bright, vibrant and sweet man who has the patience of a saint and is one of our most popular trainers.

- **April 2011-** The other night a gentleman came into the clinic to learn more about computers at the suggestion of his sister. In the process of walking him through the mouse exercises, email account set up and so forth I learned he was primarily trying to find work, so we took a quick look at the job postings on Craigslist and found an example of a job he might want. The employer asked that any applicants submit a resume. "What's a resume?" he asked me. I told him it was "sort of like a giant business card with your work experience on it." We produced a resume of his work experience highlights and sent it to the job poster with his brand new email address. We shook hands and parted ways around 7:30pm; I thanked him for his participation and he thanked me for my help.

In our morning clinic the next day as students and tutors alike buzzed around the room, I noticed him over my shoulder with a big smile on his face. He told me proudly he had an interview with the company we'd emailed his resume to. I was fairly shocked – and happy for him. I haven't run into him since, that might be our schedules not connecting – or maybe he got the job.

- **May 2011-** May is a month of expansion here at Austin Free-Net! We are hiring new staff, teaching new classes and expanding hours at our locations. On May 5, the AFN team began teaching the classes at Oak Springs Villas, a senior housing community containing one of Austin Free-Net's computer labs.

Austin Free-Net (AFN) celebrates a watershed as more than half of our new computers have been deployed ([see the deployment dashboard](#))! Thanks to funding from the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) of the U.S. Department of Commerce, AFN is in the



process of updating all of our public computer labs. The out-of-date computers are being given away directly to community members. AFN also recently partnered with Computers4Kids! a local nonprofit, to distribute the computers from our site at Conley-Guerrero Senior Activity Center. M.P. "Putty" Collins, founder and CEO of Computers4Kids!, accepted our donation of 11 computers and a printer that will end up in the hands of local students. Computers4Kids! was established in 1999 with the mission of placing computers with Texas public school students.

- **June 2011** - Thanks to funding from the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) of the U.S.

Department of Commerce, Austin Free-Net (AFN) has begun expanding its technology training in the Austin community. The Austin Free-Net training team has developed a beginning computer training module that includes eleven classes which may be taught in sequence or individually, depending on the need. The classes are: Computer Basics, Mouse Fundamentals, Keyboard Fundamentals, Operating System Basics, Internet Fundamentals, Introduction to Internet Explorer 8, Internet Safety, Internet Safety for Kids, E-mail Fundamentals, E-mail Basics, and Online Document Storage. We also saw expansion of the program into nine more sites plus two more classes at the DeWitty Center, AFN's flagship location. The project pilot aims to gather important data to gauge the effectiveness of the curriculum. After completing the first five classes at Oak Springs, AFN trainer Terrence Kent said, **"We were wondering how much interest there would be and the turnout has far exceeded my best guesses. The students are emotionally invested in the classes. This is their home and we are helping to improve the quality of life. The entertainment and educational punch of the training seems to be working very well. I'm thrilled."**

Also on the horizon are training modules for Microsoft Office, including Word and Excel. Dale, a long time employee of the City, serving AFN has left the organization for new adventures.

- **July 2011** June has been a busy month at Austin Free-Net. We are now teaching free computer classes at 13 sites around the city! We've also had a successful Groupon campaign that enabled us to buy 67 flash drives for students. Groupon teamed up with Austin Free-Net to help us raise funds for flash drives. The fundraiser allowed us to buy 67 new flash drives for Austin Free-Net students! We'd like to thank everyone who participated as donors and give a big thanks to Groupon for donating services. Sometimes people don't understand why these flash drives are so important to our students, and we'd like to take a moment to explain why our students need them. Most of our clients don't have computers at home, and many work with job placement professionals at places like the Texas Workforce Commission, the Veteran's Administration and Goodwill Industries. Often, a student will leave the office with only a printout instead of the digital file. Now that some of our students have flash drives, they can meet with job placement professionals and take a digital copy of their resume with them to edit and keep. The flash drives also enable students to actively apply to jobs and work with job placement professionals while they ramp up on the computer skills necessary to use email and online document storage. Finally, our trainers use the flash drives as a way to give students vital information. Many times they are in need of affordable housing, help with basic needs and other important information, and the flash drives are ideal for saving resources and

August 2011 -Austin Free-Net celebrated its new growth with partners, volunteers and staff on August 23, 2011 from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at the Conley-Guerrero Senior Activity Center on 808 Nile

Street in Austin, Texas. In the last six months Austin Free-Net has added over 300 hours per month to its calendar of free computer training in the Austin community, and the organization has nearly quadrupled in size. They have replaced every outdated computer at all 15 computer lab replaced computers at all sites across Austin and added 5 more new computers. To honor these accomplishments, Austin Free-Net is hosting the Helping Hands Celebration at the site of one of its many free computer labs.

The event will feature the first ever “Golden Mouse Award” to be presented to the City of Austin’s Rondella Hawkins for her continued support of Austin Free-Net. Also on the agenda are IBM’s Beth Tracy, Cathleen Rodriguez from City of Austin Health and Human Services, Rabbi Rev. Raine Teller, PhD and volunteer recognition. Pizza will be provided by EastSide Pies.

- **September 2011**-On August 29th a wonderful thing happened. Five students who had previously been strangers came together as a family to celebrate completion of our Beginner’s Module. We at Austin Free-Net had never intended to have graduation ceremonies, but that was before our trainer Nancy Green began telling us about her amazing class.



• Nancy Green with Austin Free-Net's First Graduating Class

Offices and computer labs in DeWitty Center

- Training lab computers were replaced with 9 HP computers from BTOP grant;
- **358** Open door adult computer clinic’s were held this year compared to last year this time offering 55 clinics in 2010.
- **1594** DeWitty Client participates served this year compared to last year serving 272 participants in 2010
- **2263.50** DeWitty clinic participant contact hours for this year compared to last year this time of 542 hours in 2010
- **804** DeWitty volunteer coach hours this year to date as compared to last year serving 263 year to date in 2010.

DeWitty Center

Have you ever heard the saying, “a family who plays together stays together?” Well recently I had an opportunity to see this in action but the operable verb was “studies” not “plays.” A man wandered into the lab at Austin Free-Net just to “check it out.” He had been working in the City Employment Office across the hall and he wanted to know what happened in my lab. I introduced myself, explained what kind of programs we had available.

The next day, Derek and his wife, Liza, (not their real names) were waiting for me when I got to the lab. She wanted to improve her reading and also start the process to get her GED as a stepping stone to going to Austin Community College, getting a degree in childcare and eventually opening her own childcare facility.

Derek got a job and Liza started coming to the lab. She also did all the homework I assigned and often sent it to me via e-mail. She had lost her job in a downsizing move and although she still needed a job, she wasn't wasting the time she had. We don't know where life will take us...but what a wonderful thing to witness...a family who study together...you just know in your heart that they will stay together.

East Austin Neighborhood Center

- Lab reopened after some remodeling and staff reports
- Just wanted to thank you guys so much for all you have done for us over the last several years. It's been a pleasure to work with you guys, and the support and attention you've given our lab has been a great asset to our property.

Oaks Springs Villa Senior Housing

- Starting May 5, the AFN team has begun teaching the classes at Oak Springs Villas, a senior housing community containing one of Austin Free-Net's computer labs. The project pilot aims to serve four to six students per class and will gather important data such as class evaluations and pre- and post tests to gauge the effectiveness of the curriculum. Site administrator Mary Butler has been working to promote the project. Her efforts have more than paid off, as there were twice as many students as computers at both classes. Students were able to share and switch off; however, more computers will be installed soon.

Rosewood Zaragosa Neighborhood Center

- The most amazing things can happen when people begin helping each other. Often, all it takes is getting good people into the same room. Many times our stories center around teaching students about computers, but sometimes that's only a tiny part of a much larger story. This is one of those stories, and it begins with a shy student struggling to find work – we'll call him "Stanley".

It took a while for trainer Nancy Green to earn Stanley's trust. He attended every computer lab, but he was reserved and very private. Eventually Stanley trusted Nancy enough to confide his big secret to her – he is unemployed.

After a few weeks of working together, Stanley and Nancy had a heart-to-heart talk. She discovered that Stanley had previously owned a successful food trailer business, and his dream was to get that business going again. Nancy and Stanley began to work together on a plan to make this happen.

As Stanley gained confidence, he became a more active participant in class by helping the other students. Soon, he asked if he could become an official volunteer for Austin Free-Net. He had discovered that he really liked helping people, and he wanted to make it official.

While signing him up as an official volunteer, Nancy introduced him to our Volunteer Coordinator, Meg Kee. During the introduction, Nancy asked Meg if she knew of anyone involved in the food trailer business because Stanley was looking for work in that industry. Sure enough, Meg did know someone –and then THAT person knew someone else! Stanley contacted the new lead, and his job interview went so well that now Stanley has a great shot at managing a fleet of vending trucks and carts, which will be used to feed the homeless.

This all goes to underscore the fact that our computer labs are magical places. They aren't just places where people come to learn computer skills. So many times, the people we help are inspired to pay it forward – they take the help we give them, and then they put their own problems aside to help others. Stanley is just one example of the many wonderful people we teach, and the many good things that come out of a simple, free computer class.

St. John's Neighborhood Center

- Site manager comments: Clients use computers for job-search, applying online, building résumés and finding resources through 2-1-1's web site. The two new computers have been moved to a private office space. . Clients comment that they prefer coming here because they have more privacy, less noise and it is stress-free.

Ventana del Soul

- AFN provided 2021 user sessions this quarter
I walked into my first teaching site not knowing what to expect. I was there an hour early and thought I'd be prepared for everything. What I wasn't prepared for, however, was the intense interest, gratitude and excitement that greeted me.

You see, my first class was a group of ex-offenders who are in a work study program. These men and women were starting over after serving time in a correctional institution. I expected them to want to learn, but I never expected the intensity of their determination to change their own lives. They were eager and unabashed learners, and I was humbled by their gratitude and excitement. They didn't expect me to give them anything or to do things for them – they were just flat-out determined to learn.

Throughout the class there was lots of laughter, a little frustration, a little trepidation and tons and tons of gratitude. Each person told me how much they need this help. They told me how important I was to them – how this training was exactly what they needed in order to start their lives over again. They repeatedly thanked me for giving them another chance.

In all, it was an amazing experience. I work at Austin Free-net because I believe in its mission, but this was the first time I actually FELT its importance. I started my drive home feeling incredibly fulfilled and walking on air. Even the traffic on 35 couldn't dampen my spirits! I felt like I'd already made a real difference in my students' lives – and I felt that way because each and every one of them went out of their way to convince me, not only with their words, but also with their humility, gratitude and eagerness to learn.

Total user sessions- 79,417

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Memberships and Affiliations

- Austin Connect
- Texas Connect Coalition
- 501 Tech Club
- Literacy Coalition of Central Texas
- One Voice Central Texas
- National Network of Libraries of Medicine Technology Enterprise Network
- City of Austin Community Technology Initiative

Insurance

- **Property** - \$20,000
- **General Liability** - \$1,000,000/\$2,000,00
- **Professional Liability** - \$500,000
- **Directors & Officers** - \$500,000
- **Workers Compensation** - \$1,000,000

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