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ADAMS SCHOOL FIFTH GRADERS EARN AND RECEIVE COMPUTERS!!

On June 3rd twenty-eight excited fifth graders received refurbished computers that each child earned through collaboration between Maine Time Dollar Network and Adams School. *Bridging the Gap with Youth & Computers* concluded its second successful year with 100% participation of the eligible schoolchildren and a room full of proud parents, teachers and supporters.

The children participated in a unique program operated by Maine Time Dollar Network. MTDN, launched in the East End in 1997, is a non-profit service exchange program that supports and builds community. MTDN has over 600 members and a service list exceeding 1200 exchanges that can be done by individuals alone, or as part of a group event. *Every service is valued equally.* For example: one hour of mowing a lawn for someone is equal to one hour of a doctor's time conducting a physical examination.

Recognizing the important link between technology and education for children, MTDN organized a collaborative between Adams School, MTDN members, area businesses, Americorp-Vista and the Agnes Lindsay Trust. Businesses donated computers that were refurbished by MTDN members. Replacement parts were sponsored by the Agnes Lindsay Trust and the Program Coordinator, Susan Roy, was sponsored by Americorp Vista. MTDN Members Mike Allen, Dennis Marchand and Nate Merrial repaired and cleaned each computer, earning Time Dollars for their work.

The key part of the program is that each Adams School child had to earn and spend 50 Time Dollars to receive their own computers. The children were creative, industrious and cheerful throughout the project, supported with ideas and enthusiasm from their teachers, Shirley Conner and Madalienne Rowell, and by the Principal. Some of the services provided by the children included:

- Cleaning the school yard and helping with meals at the school cafeteria
- Making and delivering May Baskets to Bayview Heights seniors
- Baking goods for a school bake sale
- Tutoring for the "safe and smart" after school program
- Creating watercolor art with Herb Williams as decorations for the school
- Many individual acts of service for their neighbors, teachers and local businesses

The project lasted the entire school year and every child in the Fifth Grade Class earned and received a computer, as well as a canvas bag of accessories such as a mouse pad, cool tee-shirt and office supplies. The event drew applause and compliments from remarks made by Mayor Nathan Smith, Assistant Superintendent Jeanne Whynot-Vickers, MTDN Executive Director Auta Main, Board Member Sandra Pederson and Honored Guest Speaker Alvin Black, Jr. who traveled from Chicago Illinois to praise the children. Mr. Black oversees a similar program for youth in Chicago and provided guidance to MTDN during its startup. Each of the speakers reiterated the merits of community service and told the children they should be proud of their hard work and gifts to others. The children, and their parents, beamed throughout the one hour event, but were mainly (and justifiably) fixed with one eye on the ribbon laced computers waiting for them. MTDN even supplied taxi service for families to transport their computers home. Based on the energy in the room, however, it looked as though the children could have flown home, carrying their prizes with ease. This was a happy occasion for everyone involved.

To become a member of MTDN call 874-9868 or drop by the office at 114 Cumberland Avenue. EVERYONE is welcome to join and there is no fee. MTDN believes that each of us has gifts to share and gifts to receive. Bridging The Gap with Youth & Computers is another example of neighbors helping neighbors. And as the beaming children remarked over and over, "It was wicked fun, too!"

Article Submitted by Susan Roy, Project Coordinator
Bridging the Gap with Youth & Computers