

10 new computers fill a need at Berrytown YMCA

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By Chris Otts, cotts@courier-journal.com

O'Shay Cross, 15, and Brittany Hadder, 13, have become accustomed to using computers at the Berrytown YMCA a few nights a week. They log onto school Web sites to check homework assignments, read e-mail and listen to music.

But the [YMCA](#), at 1300 Heafer Road, has only three computers, and sometimes they are all taken, said O'Shay, a freshman at Eastern High School in Middletown.

That will be less of a problem now. The facility received 10 new, top-of-the-line Dell PCs last week.

Connect Kentucky, a Bowling Green-based nonprofit organization, delivered computers to the Berrytown YMCA and four other community centers around Louisville last week.

Also receiving computers were Lac Viet Academy, an instruction program for immigrant children in southern Louisville; Americana Community Center, also in the South End; the Salvation Army's South Louisville Boys and Girls Club; and the Louisville Central Community Center in the Russell neighborhood.

The project was funded by a \$150,000 gift from AT&T, \$28,000 in discretionary money from 11 Metro Council members and a \$5,000 gift from Hilliard Lyons.

Connect Kentucky is a public-private partnership -- two-thirds funded by the state and one-third by telecommunications companies such as AT&T, said Connect Kentucky Vice President Andrew McNeill.

The organization, started in 2001, has focused thus far on bringing broadband cable and [Internet access](#) to rural Kentucky, he said. The computers project is Connect Kentucky's first effort in an urban area, McNeill said.

Berrytown director Melanie Cox estimates only 10 percent of the households in that community have computers.

O'Shay said her family does not have a computer; Brittany said hers does, but the cable that connects the computer to the monitor is broken.

There are computers at the Middletown branch of the Louisville Free Public Library, but "transportation is an issue" in the Berrytown area, which has many low-income families, Cox said.

"This is a great day for us," she said when the computers were delivered last week.

At the South Louisville Boys and Girls Club at 1010 Beecher St., up to 15 students at a time will be able to participate in career training lessons, an improvement over the current four or five computers, director Geoff Norman said.

"It's going to open up a lot of opportunities," he said.

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COVER PHOTO: Kentucky State University members of the National Society of Black Engineers delivered computers to the Berrytown YMCA.

The number of public computers with high-speed Internet access at the Berrytown YMCA grew last week from three to 13 thanks to a Bowling Green [nonprofit organization](#).

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