



News Release

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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Team Charleston contributes time to Computer Help for Teachers Program

CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C. - Working through the 437th Airlift Wing's Honorary Commanders Program, the 437th Communications Squadron and the Charleston Rotary Club launched a joint community service effort to assist an inner-city school located in downtown Charleston by offering basic computer training to faculty members April 3.

The program, Computer Help for Teachers, officially kicked off with praise from South Carolina First Lady, Rachel Hodges, who was in attendance supporting her Reading with Rachel literacy program. Sixteen volunteers from Charleston AFB, all from the 437 CS and the 437 AW Information Management community, are matched with 12 Sanders-Clyde Elementary School teachers and meet, on average, one or two times per week during the teachers' free periods.

Although each school classroom is equipped with two computers for teacher-student use, maintaining pace with technology is a challenge for the school, which enrolls over 400 students in first through sixth grade.

Training and troubleshooting sessions run the gamut from instruction on working basic software programs, such as Microsoft PowerPoint, to installing educational games and programs teachers will utilize in the classroom.

Staff Sergeants Theodore Lee and Patterson Collins, both Network Control Center Helpdesk technicians, are matched with a third-grade teacher. They installed a new classroom printer on their first visit to the school.

“Even though what we did was small, it helped her out a whole lot,” Lee said. “It’s a privilege to serve those in the community who support us everyday.”

Passing knowledge on to teachers will eventually help the students, according to Senior Airman Kim Sonnenberg, 437th Comptroller Squadron information manager.

“Every little bit helps,” Sonnenberg said. “Whatever we can show the teachers will be passed onto the students. The teachers can also share their skills amongst themselves. If one teacher is really good with one program, they can help train the other teachers on that program and in turn, the students will benefit.”

Some volunteers also hope to share their computer skills through direct interaction with the school’s students. Master Sgt. Douglas Wagman, section chief of NCC Network Administration, anticipates not only working with his teacher, but also instructing a class of fourth grade students on simple lessons including, “What is inside a computer?” and “How does a computer work?”

“Computers aren’t mysterious and they shouldn’t be afraid of them,” Wagman said. “That’s what I hope to walk away with them knowing.”

Maj. Douglas Taylor, 437 CS commander, worked hand-in-hand with Honorary Commander Robert Baldwin, head of Charleston’s Family Management and 10-year Rotary Club leader, to establish a partnership that both hope will continue to grow.

“We’re thrilled to be working with the Rotary Club that does many things to support these Sanders-Clyde Elementary School children.” Taylor said.

Baldwin is optimistic the Computer Help for Teachers Program will enhance ongoing initiatives that the Charleston Rotary Club has launched to support Sanders-Clyde, including both youth sponsorship and reading programs.

“There are a lot of people on the base doing positive things for the community that many may not recognize,” Baldwin said. “This program is doing really positive things to help local education, and it really is a win-win situation. To continue to work together as a team would be fantastic.”

(For information or to set up interviews, call Staff Sgt. Pamela Smith at 963-5589)

