

Christians Against Poverty working with Local Churches to Provide Laptops for Local Schools

What began as finding a home for one unwanted laptop has turned into something I could never have imagined.

I offered an unwanted laptop to St Francis School and consequently found out that they had 8 families at home during the current lockdown without devices, or families using a mobile device to access their school work. As the Debt Centre Manager for Christians Against Poverty and working alongside our local church we appealed to members of our congregation to raise some funds to help them, or offer laptops that are no longer wanted.

The Headteacher of St Francis School, Hannah Stevens said this:

There has been much reported in the media about the long-term negative effects of home schooling of children, especially in regard to the children classed as disadvantaged. There is considerable concern that the attainment gap between all pupils and disadvantaged children will grow substantially over this second period of school closures.

St Francis has high aspirations for all our pupils, and as such are committed to meeting the needs of all our families in the most effective way we are able to. During this school closure period, we are providing a high-quality remote learning curriculum with 3 live online sessions a day covering our whole curriculum. To support all of our families in accessing these lessons, we have loaned out 43 devices from what we have school - and yet, there is still need.

We are now at the limit of the devices we have available to support children in accessing our remote learning, and any further support in additional devices would be much appreciated. We know that the children who are accessing the online sessions are continuing to receive excellent teaching direct from their class teacher, they are able to ask questions and stay online after the session has finished to ask questions if needed. The teacher is there to challenge, support and be that constant safe figure for the children so that they can take risks in their learning and make good progress.

The social aspect, which many children are struggling with, although not ideal on a device, does afford children with the opportunity to remain part of their class community - they can see their friends on screen and interact with each other - this is so important for the children's mental well-being. Being able to access home schooling through the use of a laptop really benefits the experience for the child and the whole family; any support that can be provided would be gratefully received.

Amazingly, within a week we had managed to find 7 of the 8 laptops, by 1 unwanted laptop being given, and raising the funds to purchase another 6. The final laptop was donated by Sainsbury's who are giving a laptop to each school making 8 altogether.

Meanwhile, I thought that if this is a problem for one school in our area, it is likely to be a problem in other schools too. So I began contacting other local schools.

The first to reply was Falmouth Primary Academy. They are in need of 40 laptops and commented '*we have a long waiting list for families who are using mobile devices and this is before we even look at the families who are sharing one laptop between several siblings.*'

This has now grown so big that we need more help in supplying laptops for the children in our own local schools. Wouldn't it be amazing if we could raise enough funds or locate unwanted devices to supply all the needs for the children in our local schools. It would be such a blessing to the children and their families and also for the teachers too who are working so hard to teach during these difficult times.

If you have an unwanted laptop still in good working order, preferably Windows 7 or above, and you would like to donate it please let me know by either emailing jacquibennett@capuk.org or phone 0737 66 55 711.

If you would like to donate something towards purchasing a laptop please use the contact details above or email budock.church@btconnect.com

Alternatively, if you would prefer to send a cheque please make it payable to St Budock PCC, this can be posted to:

St Budock Parish Church Office
Budock Water
Falmouth
TR11 5BZ

If you know of a local school that is in need of laptops, please ask them to contact me.

Thank you so much for any help you might be able to give. I think this will be a great way to show God's love to the families in our schools and local area and to let them know that the church is here to help them in both a spiritual and practical way.

Jacqui Bennett
Christians Against Poverty
Debt Centre Manager

always hope.