

Columbus School for Girls Coming Back To Teach Computers at JESS

Public asked to drop off old XO laptops

By Jaime Elliott
St. John Tradewinds

For the fourth year in a row, a group from the Columbus School for Girls in Columbus, Ohio, will be spending a week teaching computer lessons at Julius E. Sprauve School, and they need the public's help.

Working with the One Laptop Per Child organization, CSG teacher Christine Murakami will bring down six sophomores and juniors in her OLPC learning course. The students will distribute 40 XO laptops to JESS students and teach the students how to use them, Murakami explained.

"We'll be distributing about 40 laptops to the younger kids and we'll teach them EToys computer language," she said. "The program is very creative; you make everything from scratch so the kids really will gain a lot."

Older students at JESS will have the opportunity to learn computer repair by working on broken XO laptops, and that is where the public can help, Murakami explained.

"Last year a lot of kids mentioned that they had laptops at home that weren't being used or weren't working," said the CGS teacher. "We'd love to have parents or kids or anyone with an old XO laptop that they aren't using or that isn't working to bring them to JESS so we can work on them."

The CGS students will use the broken XO laptops to teach older

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— Christine Murakami, CSG teacher

students computer repair, Murakami added.

"The older students really enjoyed learning how to take a computer apart and put it back together again," she said. "We're hoping to teach them a lot more this year with the additional computers people hopefully bring in. A lot of the kids were good with the tools and they really thought computer repair could be something they could do here."

Residents can have their repaired XO laptops returned or donate the machines to the OLPC program.

Over the past several years, Murakami has seen the OLPC teaching program impact both her students and St. John students, she explained.

"There are a lot of things that I like about the program," said Murakami. "I like the changes that I see in my students; they feel like they are contributing stuff to the

world. I also see changes in the JESS students who really like learning from our group."

"The older students saw computer science as a viable career choice for them to not have to leave the island," Murakami said.

The CGS group will be on St. John May 19 through June 1. The group will stay at Cinnamon Bay during their trip and spend their weekdays at JESS teaching computer science and computer repair. The CGS students will also keep a blog, at www.csgolpc2013.weebly.com, which will share details of their trip.

Anyone with an XO laptop which is not working or not being used, should drop it off at the JESS main office before May 19.

"We keep bringing more and more laptops down there and they kind of disappear," said Murakami. "This year we'd like them to reappear and get them back into use."

Friends of VINP Scholarship Available

St. John Tradewinds

Friends of V.I. National Park's annual Scholarship Program is again being offered to Virgin Islanders at the university level studying in fields related to marine biology or natural resource management and protection.

Eligible students must have Virgin Islands residence, have completed high school in the Virgin Islands (or are currently in their last semester of high school senior year), and have attained a B (3.0) average during their previous three semesters of high school or university.

In addition, Friends is offering a scholarship for

children of VINP staff at the university level. Eligibility requirements are the same as those listed above. Priority will be given to students pursuing a degree related to cultural or natural sciences. Both scholarships will be in the amount of \$1,000 per academic year.

Applications for Friends' scholarships can be obtained from the organization's office or from all high school guidance counselors. The deadline for applications is May 3.

Contact Karen Jarvis at Friends for more information at (340)779-4940 or kjarvis@friendsvinp.org.



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