

# Lutheran Social Services of North Florida



## Computer Refurbishing and Technical Assistance

### **Program Description and Implementation Strategy**

The Computer Refurbishing and Technical Assistance (CARTA) program refurbishes and distributes computers and peripherals to low to extremely low-income families and individuals in Tallahassee and the Big Bend of North Florida. These technological resources help these recipient families and individuals overcome the Digital Divide which separates our contemporary society into those that have immediate access to electronic resources, information, and communication and those low-income persons that do not. CARTA works with collaborating referral agencies (such as schools and non-profit human service agencies), technology donated by the community, student volunteers/interns under the direction of an IT professional, and R2 certified recycling agencies.

Nearly 200 computers and peripherals will be distributed in 2015/2016 which will serve 300 to 1000 low-income people in the community. These technological resources help students do their homework; veterans find employment; adults acquire their GED; disabled individuals with special needs; non-profit agencies serve at-risk youth, formerly incarcerated individuals, and refugees; all at the behest of vetting collaborative agencies.

The CARTA program is unique to our community and is an unduplicated service. It not only serves the low income recipients, but also gives hands-on experience to local university and high school students as well as providing a location for responsibly and environmentally recycling unwanted technology.

### **Need for the CARTA Program**

The Digital Divide is very well documented and is addressed via the CARTA program. This Divide bifurcates our community and Florida along racial, economic standing, age, ability/special needs, gender, and geographic lines. Access, like that provided by the CARTA program, enhances opportunities for low income students, especially minorities, allows unemployed or underemployed individuals to research and acquire jobs, provides the information for an informed electorate, etc. Statistical sources for information on the Digital Divide include US Census Bureau, US Commerce Department, Pew Research Center, Internet World Stats, and the Digital Divide Network.

### **Target Population Served**

The target populations served by the CARTA program include local low to extremely low-income clients, local area university and high school volunteers/interns, local non-profit human service agencies, and community members at large.

### **2013/2014 Fiscal Year Accomplishments**

- 180 refurbished computers and peripherals were distributed.
- 24 college and high school students gained internship experience
- Over 15 tons of unusable electronics were environmentally and responsibly recycled.
- 20 new collaborating partners were acquired.

### **Board of Directors**

The Board consists of 14 diverse, caring, and qualified individuals. In 2013/2014, a Finance Committee was formed and two new Board members were added, an educator and an attorney.

