# Final Report

**Improving Tech Equity in SW School Families**
SWNI Schools Committee

**Project description, including outcomes**

**The need:** **T**he digital divide separates neighbors in Southwest Portland just as it does
elsewhere.  This divide especially separates our children, who are growing up in a digital age
with widely different access to needed technology in their homes**.**  Direct, focused activities
can establish on-going relationships with underserved families, and reach people who do
not respond to formal presentations and school activities.

**The project:  Hands-on Activities for Underserved Families**
This is the second of three linked projects working toward closing the digital divide by
leveraging neighborhood and school resources to improve the use of technology by families
of students in our schools who need additional identified resources.  The first was the 2015
TechConnect event at Jackson Middle School.  This 2016 project focused on piloting whole-
family activities in a more personal setting for cross-generational activities.  The third 2017
project will spread the work to the larger community, supporting partners like libraries,
schools, Neighborhood House, SUN and Stephens Creek Crossing in their own projects.

**It was carried out in three phases:**
1. **Connect To Families To Learn Needs –** Beginning in February, we gathered information on
   the current technology needs and interests of families of color and low-income families,
   through interviews with a sample of families and staff at Stephens Creek Crossing.  Interests
   ranged widely, but clustered into two main areas:  for students, coding related to games
   and homework, and for parents, internet safety and appropriate use for children.  We tried
   using questionnaires at Back to School nights, but the events were too crowded for
   effective interviewing, and the attendees were primarily students from families already
   well-versed in technology.

2. **Hands-on Activities –** We held 2 hands-on workshops at Stephens Creek Crossing (SCC) in
   their large community room.  The March 23 workshop was to develop relationships with
   families, continue to gain information, and pilot the format of the evening.  15 participants
   of all ages took part in a lively evening of exploration, discussion and food.  Based on what
   we found at that session and our interviews, we held a second session at SCC, with 30 to 35
   people from SCC and the Markham School area speaking a variety of languages including
   Spanish, Arabic, Somali, Russian and English.  The number varied because people came in
   and out at different times.  Students from 1st grade through a couple of high schoolers
   worked with a variety of devices on coding and exploring the Internet.  Their families did
   some hands-on work but primarily discussed effective ways to help their students and use
   the Internet responsibly The wide variety of cultures and interests gave us a breadth of
   ideas for further focused workshops, including makerspace use and visits to libraries to take

advantage of existing library programs in use of technology for research and school.

3. **Analyze and Publicize Results –** We produced a digital resource guide and links to useful sites to distribute to families. Participants were overwhelmingly in favor of continued activities like this, based on informal exit interviews. This area is continuing, and will be completed as part of the third project later in the school year, including video and media clips about the activities and our findings, follow-up interviews and ratings, and documentation in a public report.

**Results:**
a) It increased the number and diversity of people involved in their communities and neighborhoods by special outreach to low-income communities and communities of color, and engaging neighborhood partners in that effort.

b) It strengthened neighborhood and community capacity to build community, identity, skills, relationships and partnerships through community word of mouth endorsement of the work, and energy from the core group of families who take part.

c) It has partially increased community and neighborhood impact on public decisions at the school-district and city level by publicizing the equity needs of SW school families and increasing the pool of informed and motivated neighbors to address these needs, but more needs to be done as part of the third project which will emphasize this dissemination.

d) Areas for improvement: alert families so they expect specific activities such as a structured workshop in coding; pre-load Chromebooks with a limited set of apps rather than have students choose from a wide variety. Further improvements will be made in the 3rd phase.

e) The whole-family design cost much less than expected, especially in three areas. 1) Interpretation and childcare costs were eliminated because the whole-family design leverages the families' cross-generation support structure for childcare and interpretation. 2) Professional-level support was donated by skilled staff in our partner organizations who took part because it was an exciting extension of their existing core mission, not an added, unrelated burden. 3) Promotion and dissemination costs were reduced because the face-to-face outreach gave effective communication by word of mouth, supplemented by door hangers and staff contact with families. Some of these savings went to pay for a second session's food, which is an important incentive in bringing a whole family to an event.

f) Project costs were also reduced by unusual circumstances in two areas. All materials were donated, so the materials budget was not used. In addition, a final work session got snowed out, so overall costs were reduced even further. These are not likely to occur again. We will budget more conservatively in future projects, to avoid tying up unused funds.

In short, this project showed a real potential for spreading useful whole-family tech-related activities to other organizations within affordable budgets.

# Project Budget

| Item | Budgeted | Actual | Leveraged $ | Donated Material & Services |
|------|----------|--------|-------------|------------------------------|
| **Income –** | $940 | $940 | | |
| **Expenses** | | | | |
| Personnel | $150 | 0 | | Planning: 72 hrs<br>Mar. 23: 6x3.0 hrs<br>Nov. 2: 7x4 hrs<br>Review: 37 hrs<br>Total: 155 hrs<br>@$21.50 = $3,333 |
| Promotional Materials/Printing | $150 | 0 | | ($150) All donated |
| Event Related Expenses | $250 | $455.05 for meals | | 16 Chromebooks, 8 I-pads and other tech equipment loaned. |
| Permitting & Fees | $150 | 0 | | Space at Stephens ($150) Creek Crossing |
| Participant Support | 0 | 0 | | |
| Project Materials Writing materials, resource guides | $140 | 0 | | ($140) All donated |
| Additional Expenses | $100 | 0 | | ($100) Not needed |
| **Subtotals** | $940 | $455.05 | | |
| **Administration*** | 0 | 0 | | $140 4 hrs. @$35/hr. |
| **TOTALS** | $940 | $455.05 | | $4,013 |

**Thanks to our partners**:  Jackson MS, Robert Gray MS, Wilson HS, Markham ES, Stephenson ES, Neighborhood House SUN, Stephens Creek Crossing, Multnomah County Libraries, PPS IT Dept.
**Other participants**:  Free Geek, PCC Maker Space, Portland Jewish Academy.
**This project was made possible by** a Neighborhood Small Grant from the City of Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement and sponsorship from Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. (SWNI).

# Images of a Hands-on Workshop
## Stephens Creek Crossing - November 2, 2017