

Technology Empowerment for Students,  
Teachers and Low-Income Families

Best Practices in Innovation and  
Sustainability

## **Boston Digital Bridge Foundation Technology Goes Home**

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**Program Name:** Technology Goes Home

**Current Deployment:** Building on a strong set of school-based technology initiatives, the Boston Digital Bridge Foundation launched *Technology Goes Home* in 1999. It has been in continuous operation since then, and now trains about 1,000 people annually, 500 of whom take advantage of the program's PC purchase and loan offer. Technology Goes Home operates in three Boston neighborhood community centers and fifty of Boston's Public Schools. All training is designed for a student and parent or guardian to build skills together under the guidance of a certified instructor.

**Executive Director:** Edward DeMore

**Program Director:** Jackie Collins

**Web site:**

<http://www.cityofboston.gov/bra/digitalbridge/index.html>

**Mission:** Technology Goes Home is a technology training program serving inner-city families via neighborhood collaboratives and the Boston Public Schools. The program aims to:

- Foster collaboration and cooperation in the community
- Improve academic performance for children
- Enhance employment opportunities for adults
- Enhance relationships among parents, children and teachers

**Approach:** Technology Goes Home delivers training and enhances community through two sets of programs: one conducted at the child's school, *Technology Goes Home @ School*, and the other held at a community location, *Technology Goes Home @ Community*. Both share a similar curriculum and commitment to providing technology skills and equipment to students and families. Since program participants are students with their parents or guardians, working in a school or community environment over time, the program looks to build relationships in addition to building skills.

- **Curriculum:** One of the hallmarks of the Technology Goes Home program is a commitment on rigorous curriculum. The @Community Program offers a 40-hour program; @School Programs are based on 25 hours of training. Teachers receive intensive training and support materials on three types of programs – a basic program for younger students and their families, an intermediate program for middle-school families and an advanced program for high school students. Each of the programs uses examples and projects that are aligned with both the student's grade level and the specific school-based curriculum. The intent in all cases is to ensure a base level of technology proficiency and to complement and extend in-school learning. Community-based programs use curricula and projects that complement life learning such as financial literacy and health access.
- **Value Added PC Bundle and Financing:** Microsoft®, Lexmark™, HiQ Computers and Intel® have made substantial donations enabling the production of a high-end low-cost computer especially designed for program participants. When students graduate, their families can purchase a new computer, software and printer with a three-year warranty for approximately \$25 per month through a special Bank of America guaranteed loan program. Graduates of Technology Goes Home need only a Social Security Number or Tax ID to qualify for this zero-interest, zero-down-payment financing. The guaranteed loan program also offers a tailored financial literacy curriculum for participants that help them establish credit and teaches them to manage their finances.
- **Collaboration:** The Technology Goes Home programs have been designed to enhance relationships and promote collaboration. All training is provided for a student with their parent or guardian. Many students and parents report that they especially enjoy the opportunity to spend time working together. Teachers and parents also appreciate the opportunity to spend time together in the school. Parents often become more comfortable and more actively engaged in the school overall. The best of the community- and school-based sessions build the social relationships with the classes as well. Tech Goes Home also features a special collaboration with another Boston Digital Bridge Foundation Program – Tech Boston which provides advanced technology training to high school students. Teachers can request an intern from TechBoston to participate in and support their classes. Interns are matched to classes based on neighborhood and

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language skills so that a teacher with many Korean students in one class can get the support of a Korean-speaking intern.

- **Program Delivery Options:** Technology Goes Home @ Community focuses on family technology education. Parents and students work together with the guidance of a Program Coordinator. Neighborhood organizations at each location form Collaboratives and select a Lead Organization responsible for administering the program. Lead Organizations hire a Program Coordinator, coordinate regular meetings, select applicants and locate lab space. In the Technology Goes Home @ School Program, classes are normally offered by the child's teacher with a strong tie-in to current curriculum and projects such as selecting a high school or preparing for college. The @ School programs have grown aggressively over the past years with programs now operational in fifty of Boston's schools. Implementation of the 25 hours of training for @ School Programs and 40 hours for @ Community Programs varies with some teachers meeting once a week, some twice, some on Saturdays. Schedules accommodate both the teachers and families.

**Scaling and Expanding this Model:** The Technology Goes Home programs have an excellent balance of centralized and distributed elements. At the core is curriculum, program management, common application processes, fund development, and the relationships with partners such as Intel®, HiQ Computing, HP® and Bank of America®. These core elements support specific programs in Neighborhood Centers and Boston Public Schools. The model has already been scaled to reach more schools and neighborhoods. Program materials are available online to help others who would like to model a program after Technology Goes Home. Go to the "Learn More About" boxes on their web site to download brochures (in English and Spanish), applications, lesson materials, PC purchase information and presentation materials on a range of topics in Digital Literacy.  
[http://www.cityofboston.gov/bra/digitalbridge/programs\\_programsupport.html#](http://www.cityofboston.gov/bra/digitalbridge/programs_programsupport.html#)

**Required Local Components:** Strong program management and funding for teachers are critical elements of the Technology Goes Home program. While a strong partnership with the Public School is important, the initial program ran only in the community and still delivered strong results. In addition to infrastructure of program management, curriculum and teaching, a leadership focus on collaboration and rigorous standards has allowed the program to remain true to its original intent even as it scaled across Boston.

**What makes *Technology Goes Home* Unique?** Technology Goes Home is more than a program about technology training; it is a program about relationships and collaboration. The program design fosters collaboration among community centers, between parents and teachers and between students and their parents. It also about achievement. With 25 to 40 hours of training and homework, Technology Goes Home requires participants to invest in the skills needed to use the PC effectively and to earn the opportunity to purchase a PC in the program.

**Results:** Since the program's inception in 1999, over 3,000 families have graduated from the program. Over 10,000 people have participated in Technology Goes Home Programs. The program and its partners distribute over 500 computers per year. Surveys conducted by the Boston Digital Bridge Foundation found that:

- **87%** of participants report a significant increase in the connection to the community as a direct result of the program.
- **92%** of parents report their children's schoolwork improved significantly through involvement in Technology Goes Home.
- **95%** of the participants made significant improvements in their computer skills.
- **99%** of participants were very satisfied with the Technology Goes Home program.