

CTC Success Stories

Delridge Neighborhoods Development Association (DNDA)

- “The CTC has helped a lot of people who thought they didn’t know how to do anything- for example, one woman wanted to have a bake sale to raise money for community events; using the CTC, she was able to learn to use Publisher and market the sale to other residents.”
- Multiple families have learned to independently access government benefits that are useful to their families through the CTC.
- The CTC has also promoted environmental stewardship amongst youth living at Croft Place. Kids and staff in the after-school program were able to use digital cameras for a nature scavenger hunt in the wetlands at nearby Sanislo Elementary, and then upload and print their photos. S2, a staff member who has worked for DNDA for four years, reported, “They really got into it and learned about nature as well as technology.
- Government assistance - for example, last year when the Section 8 (subsidized housing) waiting list opened up 5 of our residents applied online at the CTC and 4 of those 5 were chosen in the lottery and have now been accepted for a Section 8 subsidy (where residents are allowed to pay 1/3 of their income towards rent regardless of what their income is). Section 8 waiting lists are rarely open and often people wait years to be accepted/approved.

Intel Computer Clubhouse

- At least 50% of the kids who’ve used the ICC have gone onto college
- All the kids who have been using the clubhouse for 1- 3 years have shown academic improvement
- One of the ICC kids was the youngest Microsoft intern ever and he was just 11-years old
- One of the female students participating in the focus group saw improvements in her math abilities at school. She was able to quantify the change in the form of a shift from straight Bs to straight As.
- A 15-year old male focus group participant stated that he” never knew how to use his computer and used to get in fights with it and slap it around, but now [he] knows how to think about it and think about the problem.” He is better able to conceptualize the problem and fix it.
- A 14-year old male, who has been attending ICC for three years, had too much free time on his hands before he started coming to ICC and frequently got in to trouble. He found that the activities offered by ICC provided him with a distraction and protection from earlier delinquent behavior. Now he is working on computer hardware and software and is interested in participating in the program’s computer repair business.

Jack Straw Foundation

- Success stories: There's so many. We're in the 11th year of our Blind Youth Program (summer audio production for visually impaired teens). Some of these kids have been coming for years. The oral history projects that we've done with local schools and agencies have given kids pride in their heritage, a sense of ownership of their communities, and the ability to view themselves as creators of media rather than just consumers of media. These projects and our entire organization really, exist as a means of allowing voices to be heard. We started in the community; the community is who we are.

Kent Youth and Family Services

- Once kids complete all 3 levels of computer classes they are eligible to become interns in the program. They get paid for their time here helping in the lab and fixing computers that the public brings in. Computers are fixed for a nominal fee of \$25 - \$50 to encourage the public to bring them in and also honor the fact that many people bringing their computers here are Springwood (KCHA low income) residents. This brings revenue to the Computer Lab and hopefully will spread so that we can really expand our equipment and services. Meanwhile, the kids are engaging in professional level work and feeling empowered to take their skills to the next level. It's great for them personally and great for their resumes as well.

La Casa Hogar

- From staff member: “One woman studied ESL. She went to school for cosmetology and then got a job. She came back to learn administration and helps husband with his business. He has a business, she helps manage it.”
- The administrator indicated that school-aged children benefited as there mothers were now able to help them. For example, “We had a woman with preschool children, and she saw a kid’s sheet on the Internet and asked if she could print it out to work at home with her kids. So she did, every day, and it was good for her kids.”

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- Client X shared her own story. She indicated that she is both staff and a student of the center. Here is her story.
I lived 27 years in the US. Over 20 years in Los Angeles. I came here; my daughter was sick. She asked for help. When I came here, I couldn't speak or understand English. [At La Casa Hogar] I start at English level 1. Now I am at level 5. When I finish level 5, I'd like to go to college. I like to be a nurse. Soon I take my GED. I have 4 kids. I worked for my kids. Now is time for me.
- Client Y, a 38-year old apple picker with a 17-year old son and two young daughters who has been using the center for four years said: "I've developed my English. Little by little, I can ask things and talk in English. I'm learning a little, and I talk more. Also I can find information better now. In the library, I can find it better. It just helps not to be scared!" Additionally, "It helps us as a family. It helps my kids that I am losing my fear of my computer, it's a lot better since I can help my kids now." She can provide better support for her children now, taking a more active part in their education, thanks to her improved English and computer skills
- Client Z, a 42-year old fruit picker and mother of three who has used the center since at least 2000, began attending La Casa Hogar's programs despite her husband's objections. She finds the center to be a significant factor in her turn towards learning more. She said "Before sometimes I didn't learn, [as one does] because of one's own foolishness, or because of the economy, but now I'm advancing. School is never bad. The young kids sometimes say they'll never learn. But this is why I come and come, to learn things for myself, not to be ignorant. They say "Mas viviendo, mas aprendiendo" [More living, more learning]. My husband didn't want me ever to come. I go around trying to go somewhere, and I'm better for it. At first he said no, but not now." As a result, she has learned to drive, speak and understand English better, made her children proud of her for returning to school, and become what she calls "la cucaracha de la Casa Hogar," a joking takeoff on a Mexican idiom about pious women who spend their time at church. She says she's a cockroach of the Casa Hogar—in other words, she's always there and you can't get her out no matter what you do!
- One woman made me feel so proud... She had never used a computer before she came to the center. After attending the computer classes for a while and commented that it would be really great to have a computer at home, but she couldn't afford it. We were able to get a donated computer for her about a year ago and help her install it in her house with the programs she needed. This was about the time that her youngest baby started moving around and was too big to be with mom during class but too small to be in child care, so mom couldn't attend classes. Last Spring Break this woman invited me over to her home to show me something. When I arrived she showed me the new digital camera that she had saved for, and how she's learned to use it to e-mail pictures to her family and communicate with them. They e-mail back with their own, so it's like they can see her and she can see them. When I expressed my admiration of her ability to install the software and use the camera she said, "It's easy - I can teach you."

Lakewood Computer Clubhouse

- The kids really mentor one another and help each other out. Any new kid who comes in is immediately helped by other kids. This snowballs in lots of ways. One application (Word, for example) leads to another (Photoshop, for example). Kids develop teaching skills and see themselves as being competent mentors.
- Another success story about the community building nature of this place: One high schooler came here to write an essay for a contest, the grand prize being a trip to Australia. The topic he was required to write about was "Freedom." He wrote it, then passed it around to all the kids he had met here who then helped him add to it, edit it, etc. He ended up winning the contest and all of us felt like we won the contest. All of us felt like we got to go to Australia.

The Lighthouse for the Blind, Inc.

- The CTC is used by people both deaf and blind, who are often very disconnected from their families because there's no way to communicate, as the families often don't sign. Technology bridges that gap. One woman has family in Mexico, and was able to reconnect with her sister. It makes all the difference. Really good success. If you heard the people tell these stories, it'd make you cry.
- At CTP they just had the first group of students complete their first class. It's online, self paced, with a support teacher. A student completed a course in excel. The student's manager got a report from the student's supervisor, and he thought it looked very different, much more readable, much more professional. He'd had a lot of problems with the supervisor's reports in the past. He called and asked what happened, why was it so much better? The supervisor said, because they asked the student who had completed the course to do it.

CTC Success Stories

Lilac Blind Foundation

- One individual that comes to mind was a man who was severely abused as a child, and was in multiple placements in the foster care system growing up. He had a rough life, and lost his sight when he was shot in a drug deal gone bad. This person was referred to the center and used the lab to totally change his life around. He came every day, 6 hours a day, learning all he could. He teaches in the center now, helping others to learn what helped him so much.

Literacy Source

- One particular learner has made tremendous progress during her time working with the Computer Tutoring Program. This woman had a number of barriers in her job search, including both mental health and physical challenges. She got extremely nervous in group situations of any type and also had a condition that caused one hand to follow what the other was doing when she typed (consequently she was able to only type with one hand at a time). Throughout her time at Literacy Source she has been able to have the 1:1 support necessary to learn skills, feel more comfortable being in a group, and advocate for herself about her needs with tutors and fellow learners. She just landed herself a job and is filling out the paperwork tomorrow.
- Another student, who is an advanced ESL learner/GED graduate, brought her pre-literate mother into the lab recently. The older woman did not speak/read any English at all and was not fluent in reading her home language either. She was wary about using technology but with the support of her daughter and staff sat down and tried. She just "lit up" when she realized that she was able to maneuver the program to hear the English words, hear her own words, and hear her own voice speaking English.

Low Income Housing Institute

- One resident, who is no longer working because of a permanent disability, used to be a nurse. Her disability, in essence, caused her to feel/be "thrown out of the system." While participating in LIHI tech classes, she became a mentor to other residents, sharing her tech expertise and helping them learn new skills. This allowed her to regain her role as a "helper" of others.

Port Hadlock 4H Club

- CTC staff related a story about the students in the 4-H Network News program attending an academically-focused high school summer camp at WSU called Cougar Camp. These students were able to compare themselves and their skills with other students from across the state, and recognized the superior technology skills that they had developed through involvement with 4-H Network News. The staff used that experience as an opportunity to further encourage the students to pursue higher education by pointing out that they were capable of outstanding work compared to the other students, even though they were from more affluent areas and families.
- One student says that she helps her father use their computer at home and, in particular, helps him order the things he wants to purchase through the Internet. She also says she uses her computer skills to talk to her friends in Thailand. She was able to apply the photography skills she learned in the program to enter her photographs into the Jefferson County Fair in the 4-H building.
- Another says he has learned video editing, web design, HTML, CSS, Javascript and other computer applications. He has learned how to set up a home network and was able to apply his video editing skills to help the high school set up a graduation ceremony slide show. He seems reluctant to "brag" about his skills, but we later learn from the staff that he also used GPS technology to map the location of noxious weeds in the national forest while working with the Noxious Weeds Eradication Program. He has also had fun in the program, saying, "We've had some good times." He also feels "the future is working with computers and technology...this is the age of computers and you need to know about computers." He mentions that his siblings are not as interested in computers as he is.
- Student X says he has learned to edit videos using a Mac application called FinalCut, a digital editing suite used by professional Hollywood editors, and has also learned how to use HTML and edit digital photographs. He likes coming to the Center because of the people he has met and the skills he has learned, and also because it is close enough to his house to walk or ride his bike. He also thinks having a firm grasp on how technology works will be essential in the future. "Even in the grocery stores, they're not going to have checkers. They're going to have computers." At home, he helps his parents by showing them how to drop photographs from their digital camera's memory card into a computer file.

SPARC (Skagit Preschool and Resource Center)

- This center is very important for very young children who can't move around well. They are able to be less isolated by means of technology. Seeing what they can do with technology attracts other children who might not spend time with them because of their mobility problems.