

Immediate Release:

e-Learning Foundation Helps Disadvantaged Children in Lambeth With Access To Computers For Their Studies With Mercers' Company Grant

Lambeth Schools Aided By Livery Company Donation

April 22 2009: Four schools in the London Borough of Lambeth have been awarded grants by the e-Learning Foundation through funding won from The Mercers' Livery Company as part of 'Project Connect' to provide disadvantaged children with home access to computers and the Internet for their studies.

The e-Learning Foundation, the only national charity dedicated to erasing the digital divide in the UK, has worked closely with The Mercers' Company on charitable educational projects for over five years. This funding from the The Mercers' Company follows on from previous programmes funded in the London Boroughs of Greenwich and Tower Hamlets in association with the e-Learning Foundation.

The Mercers' Company has awarded £50,000 to the 'Project Connect' programme targeted at 14-16 year old pupils attending secondary schools in Lambeth. The initiative is centred around one to one access to laptop computers, software connectivity and other services to support home and school access to learning technologies together with a "pledge" from the learner. The project will run from 2009 to 2012 and the aim is to create a sustainable model to replicate in other London Boroughs.

Project Connect has been taken up by the Lambeth Academy, Bishop Thomas Grant Comprehensive School, Archbishop Tennison Secondary School and The Elmgreen School, the first Parent Promoted school in the UK which pays special attention to working closely with families and the local community. Provision for computers and internet access for 1,650 pupils will be made available across the four schools.

“Project Connect further enables us to further support the work of the e-Learning Foundation in creating successful and sustainable projects to enable children in deprived areas of the capital to access technology which is key to their development in the digital world in which we live”, commented Michael Marchant, Head of Education at The Mercers’ Company.

“We are delighted to continue our relationship with The Mercers’ Company,” commented Valerie Thompson, Chief Executive of the national e-Learning Foundation. “In a 21st century global economy our children will need state-of-the-art information technology abilities. Far too many of our socially disadvantaged school children are denied access to the Internet and have very limited IT skills. At the e-Learning Foundation we have been working to ensure children have these skills and we are thrilled that Project Connect will go some way to addressing the digital divide in Lambeth”.

“Access to a computer at home is no longer an option, it is essential to a child’s studies. Through Project Connect we will be able to boost the skills and improve the opportunities of many disadvantaged children in Lambeth,” commented Chris Davies, Lambeth e-Learning Foundation.

Access to technology at home has been proven to significantly influence educational outcomes. Yet 35% of families in the UK still do not have home access to the internet for their children’s studies, despite an ever increasing amount of school work being put online.

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Editor’s Notes:

About the Mercers’ Company:

The Mercers’ Company is the premier Livery Company of the City of London and was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1394.

Although the Company no longer has any trade to control, its modern life is busy and productive. Through the charitable trusts under its control, the Mercers’ Company administers a programme of charitable grant making, and is further involved in education through its 15 schools and colleges and its educational consultancy work.

The Company also provides housing for the elderly, wide ranging support for education welfare projects and has active links with many churches.

The Company's activities include the ownership and management of a large portfolio of investments, mainly properties in the City and West End of London. The surplus from the Company's corporate activities contributes to the Company's grant making.

About the Lambeth e-Learning Foundation:

Lambeth e-Learning Foundation is a registered charity, affiliated to the national e-Learning Foundation. The Lambeth e-Learning Foundation focuses on 14-16 age range with the aim of ensuring that every young person in the Borough has access to ICT for the three year period running up to their GCSE exams.

About the e-Learning Foundation:

The e-Learning Foundation was launched in 2001, to ensure that every schoolchild in the UK should have home access to learning technologies when and where they want to learn.

The Foundation, a registered charity, aims to bridge the digital divide and ensure that all children, irrespective of their background, can have the same access to technology for learning at home as their better off peers.

The Foundation is funded through the public, private and third sector in the form of Government grants, commercial sponsorship, grants and donations.

www.e-learningfoundation.com

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