



COMPUTERS FOR YOUTH Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Computers for Youth (CFY)?

A: CFY is a national educational non-profit organization launched in 1999 that is dedicated to improving the home learning environment of low-income school children. Their work is built on the belief that the home holds the greatest *untapped* potential for improving children's academic and life-long success. CFY partners with schools to improve the educational resources available in children's homes, enhance parent-child interaction around learning, and help teachers connect classroom learning with the home. Their computer-based *home learning centers* are designed by software experts and tested by students and education executives from around the country. Their Family Learning Workshops are designed to improve parents' confidence in helping their children learn and increase student engagement in core academic subject areas.

Q: How does CFY select the children and their families for its program?

A: CFY does not select children and their families one-by-one, but rather selects a community of learners. CFY selects public schools with high poverty statistics (more than 75 percent of students must be eligible for the federal free or reduced lunch program), and offers all the sixth graders and parents the ability to participate in the CFY program. CFY's goal is to return to selected schools year after year, thereby saturating the entire community of sixth, seventh and eighth graders and their families.

Q: How does a school apply to be a part of CFY's program?

A: CFY has an application process for schools that are interested in participating in its program. The process includes a formal request, a site visit, and an interview. CFY selects schools based on poverty criteria (more than 75 percent of students must be eligible for the federal free or reduced lunch program), a commitment to involving families in children's education, and a vision for how to use technology as a tool to empower students as learners.

Q: Why does CFY start with sixth graders?

A: CFY focuses on sixth graders in order to intervene just as children's disengagement from family and school begins. Research shows sixth grade is right when parents begin to feel less capable of helping with increasingly complex homework assignments, and when there is the steepest decline in academic achievement.

Q: What are CFY's *home learning centers* equipped with?

A: All CFY *home learning centers* come with award-winning educational software in English Language Arts, math, science and social studies; tailored Web content; and ongoing tech support.

Q: Where do CFY's computers come from?

A: CFY receives donations of computers primarily from major corporations. CFY relies on donations of 30 or more computer systems so they can equip an entire classroom of families with the same hardware. Once computers are received, CFY's technical staff turn them into CFY *home learning centers*.

Q: How is CFY different from other organizations focused on middle-school children?

A: Programs that improve the home learning environment of low-income children during the vulnerable adolescent middle school years are virtually nonexistent. Research shows that parenting practices account for up to 25 percent of the achievement differences between higher- and lower-performing students, but school systems spend less than two percent of their budgets on parental involvement activities or interventions that can improve the home learning environment. To meet this need, CFY brings learning home—the place that receives the least attention from policymakers and educators, yet holds the greatest *untapped* potential for improving children’s academic and life-long success.

Q: How many families have benefited from CFY’s program?

A: Last year CFY gave a *home learning center* to its 10,000th family.

Q: What impact has CFY had on the families it helps?

A: *CFY has achieved positive outcomes the following areas:*

- Academic achievement: CFY is proud to announce that its newest research study using logistic regression shows a significant relationship between the CFY program and math achievement levels. CFY will be working with its research partner, ETS, to continue analyzing this data and disseminate their findings.
- Student engagement: Children participating in CFY’s program increased their class effort (as measured by their teachers), while a comparison group of students did not. In addition, 70% or more students reported using their home PC to help write at a more advanced level or help practice or improve their math skills.
- Parental involvement: More than 90% of parents feel more confident in helping their children learn, more than 70% say they use their home computers to help their children with homework, and more than 90% report feeling more connected to their child’s school.

Q: Who are some of CFY’s most prominent donors?

A: CFY receives contributions of cash, products and services from individuals, foundations, corporations and local governments. Some of CFY’s most prominent financial supporters include Advanced Network & Services, the Goldman Sachs Foundation, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, the Lone Pine Foundation, New Profit, the Picower Foundation and the Starr Foundation. CFY’s corporate computer donors include Goldman Sachs, Time Warner, Prudential Securities, NASDAQ, Clifford Chance and CIBC World Markets. CFY’s software donors include Digital Directions International, Microsoft, Riverdeep/Houghton Mifflin Learning Technology, Scholastic and Thinkronize.

Q: What are the CFY Tech Leadership Awards?

A: The Tech Leadership Awards is a fundraising event hosted by CFY annually that recognizes the best family learning software of the year, innovation in digital leadership, and social responsibility among IT executives. Members of the Student Software Team are also on hand to demonstrate the software titles nominated during Education Executives Day. The 2007 Tech Leadership Award recipients were Craig Newmark, founder and customer service rep of craigslist; Becky Blalock, CIO of Southern Company; and Bruce Aust, Executive Vice President of NASDAQ. The winner of the 2007 Family Learning Software award is *ClueFinders* by Riverdeep/Houghton Mifflin Learning Technology.

Q: What are CFY’s future goals?

A: CFY’s goal in the next five years is to operate in five cities, including its existing offices in New York City and Philadelphia, serving almost 10,000 families per year overall. CFY opened its Atlanta office in fall 2007.

For more information about Computers for Youth please visit www.cfy.org