

# Kennedy Heights Community Center Proposal to the Digital Technology Committee

## Plan to Close the Digital Divide in the Kennedy Heights Neighborhood

**Project Summary:** The Kennedy Heights Community Center is proposing to close the digital divide in the Kennedy Heights neighborhood by sharing out the bandwidth that will be donated to the center as part of the MUFN (Madison Unified Fiber Network). The community center is scheduled to have MUFN installed by the end of 2014, we would then install wireless access points throughout the neighborhood to share out the MUFN to the low-income families that reside in the Kennedy Heights townhouses.

### Benefits of the Kennedy Heights Neighborhood and the Kennedy Heights Community Center

- Property management and property owner support the project.
- Kennedy Heights Community Center has the capacity and leadership to implement the project
- The Community Center is scheduled to have (MUFN) fiber installed in 2014.
- The Kennedy Heights neighborhood is dense and wireless access points will likely work.
- The target population, low-income families with limited Internet access, live in neighborhood.
- The Alder and the local elementary school principal support it.
- Kennedy Heights Townhouses has a single property owner.
- This project would share out donated MUFN bandwidth. No need to purchase bandwidth.
- KHCC could provide complimentary programming to make access more meaningful.
- KHCC has the capacity to evaluate the project and measure the outcomes.
- KHCC could provide outreach and education to families to ensure equitable access.
- KHCC has an established Technology Endowment Fund to support ongoing technology costs.

**Agency Description:** In 1983, residents of the Kennedy Heights Neighborhood came together with the hope of fostering a greater sense of community and creating more activities for neighborhood residents. By 1986, the Kennedy Heights Community Center was built, incorporated as a non-profit agency and began operating various programs that add to the quality of life in the neighborhood and the greater Madison community. Almost three decades later, second and third additions have been added. The center provides programming in three core areas: High quality child care and education; Adult resources and access; and Positive youth development.

The Kennedy Heights Community Center is in the heart of one of the highest densities of low-income children in the city of Madison. 163 low-income children live in the Kennedy Heights Townhouses. Thirty-eight percent of community center clients are Southeast Asian (mostly Hmong), 42% are African American and the remaining 13% are Caucasian, multi-racial and African. In 2013, well over 1000 individuals accessed a program or service at the community center.

### Intended Program Outcomes:

1. Free Internet access will be available to 104 low-income households on Madison's northside.
2. At least 500 individuals will access the Internet through the pilot project each year for at least 5 years.
3. Free Internet access will improve the quality of life, household stability, employability and / or academic achievement of the residents with access.

**Additional Letters of Support:** The following letters were provided at the April meeting: Alder Anita Weier, City of Madison District 18; Principal Elizabeth Fritz, Lindbergh Elementary School; Dan O'Connell, Chair, Wisconsin Housing Preservation Corp.; Jason Hagenow, Corporate Property Manager, Meridian Group Inc.; Alyssa Kenney, Executive Director Kennedy Heights Community Center; John Givens, Chair Board of Directors, Kennedy Heights Neighborhood Association.



199 Kennedy Heights | Madison, WI 53704 | (608) 244-0767

[www.khcommunitycenter.org](http://www.khcommunitycenter.org)

Kennedy Heights Community Center  
is a tax-exempt non-profit and 501(c)(3).

April 10, 2014

Erik Paulson, Chair and Members of the Digital Technology Committee,

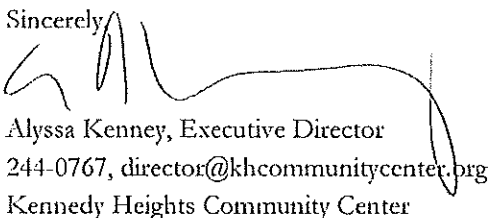
I am writing to encourage the Digital Technology Committee to select the Kennedy Heights neighborhood as a site for the Residential Internet Access Assistance pilot program. The Kennedy Heights neighborhood has both *great need* to continue our work closing the digital divide and *great capacity for success* in this pilot program.

Over 1000 people use the community center each year and almost three hundred low-income families live in the town-homes. The Kennedy Heights Community Center is in the heart of one of the **highest densities of low-income children in the city of Madison**. 163 low-income children live in the apartments. Thirty-eight percent of community center clients are Southeast Asian (mostly Hmong), 42% are African American and the remaining 13% are Caucasian, multi-racial and African. In a 2008 survey of community residents (64 of 104 households completed the survey), 10% indicated that they had a computer in the home and no families had high speed internet access. In a 2012 survey only 19% of community residents reported having regular access to the Internet. Now in 2014, more and more families are accessing the Internet through mobile devices. Unfortunately for many families, data plans are unaffordable and / or limited so that families are always out of bandwidth.

The Kennedy Heights Community Center has a twenty-eight year history of providing programs and services to the community. Started as Your All Resident Association (YARA) in 1978, the organization became the Kennedy Heights Neighborhood Association in 1983 and by 1986 the community center opened and started offering a summer program to children. Today, the Kennedy Heights Community Center has a well qualified, professional staff providing programs and coordinating services. Throughout our history we have exhibited a **deep commitment helping to close the digital divide**. We have a twelve station community technology center that is open to adults and youth 5 days a week, but our center is small and the demands on our space are high. We also have experience providing basic technology education to adults in both English and Hmong. It is often difficult to provide computer access in the evening for adults when the center is full of middle school students and we are closed on the weekends. In 2013, we installed a single Meraki Mesh Wireless Access Point that is available within our building, on our front steps and to two or three apartments. Despite the small range and no outreach we get **triple digit use every month**.

The Kennedy Heights neighborhood has many other important attributes that would make us a successful pilot. Our community is dense, MUFN is already coming to our center, both the non-profit property owner and the management company support this project and we are close to more high density low-income housing and Lindbergh Elementary School, which could make future expansion easy. Further, the Kennedy Heights Community Center could manage the distribution, the maintenance, the outreach and the technology education; our agency has the skills and administrative capacity to coordinate a complex project and get the service to the community quickly. Please choose Kennedy Heights!

Sincerely,

  
Alyssa Kenney, Executive Director  
244-0767, [director@khcommunitycenter.org](mailto:director@khcommunitycenter.org)  
Kennedy Heights Community Center

John Givens, Chair Board of Directors  
866-6094, [john@cmum.org](mailto:john@cmum.org)  
Kennedy Heights Neighborhood Association

We envision a safe and vibrant community where people can connect, learn, grow and thrive.



# WHPC

Wisconsin Housing Preservation Corp.

April 6, 2014

2 E. Mifflin St.  
Suite 801  
Madison, WI 53703  
Ph: (608) 668-6306  
Fax: (608) 668-6399

Erik Paulson, Chair  
Digital Technology Committee  
[epaulson@unit1127.com](mailto:epaulson@unit1127.com)

Dear Mr. Paulson,

Board Members

James P. Carter  
Richard A. Hansen  
James J. Holt  
Erbert Johnson  
David Kruger  
John Peterson III  
Paul Senty  
David Strallitz  
Ann E. Wenzel

I am writing to request that the Kennedy Heights Neighborhood be selected as a pilot site for the Residential Internet Access program. The non-profit Wisconsin Housing Preservation Corp has owned Kennedy Heights since 2002. It consists of 104 two and three bedroom townhouses that provide quality, affordable housing for lower income families with children. Currently, the neighborhood is home to over 300 individuals including 163 children.

Children living in the Kennedy Heights neighborhood attend Lindbergh Elementary School, Blackhawk Middle School or East High School. The average annual household income is well below the federal poverty line and 96% of the children qualify for free or reduced priced lunch.

Officers

James J. Holt  
Chairman  
  
John Peterson III  
President  
  
David Kruger  
Vice President  
  
James J. Holt  
Treasurer  
  
Paul Senty  
Secretary

The neighborhood is also served by the Kennedy Heights Community Center, a busy and vital component of the community that has provided services aimed at improving the lives of residents since 1986. Among the many programs operated by the Center is an Early Childhood Program, After School Programs, Academic Support Programs that coordinate with Madison School and Community Recreation and Lindbergh Elementary, Programs for young adults, Adult Computer Classes, Adult Resource Program to support adults seeking employment or additional education and a Food Pantry to name only a few.

The wealth of opportunity provided by internet access is valuable only if individuals have access to it. We believe that Kennedy Heights is uniquely suited to become a pilot site for funding under the Residential Internet Access program. Ownership and management is established and stable, the neighborhood that would be served is compact and densely populated and is served by a highly successful community center that provides programming that would be tremendously enhanced if the families living in the neighborhood had internet access.

If selected Kennedy Heights has the infrastructure, personnel, closely knit neighborhood structure and strong ties to a multitude of other community partners and friends to ensure expeditious implementation and ongoing support.

We commend the City for their foresight in recognizing the importance of bridging the digital divide and ask for your support in selecting Kennedy Height as a pilot for this program. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need additional information as you move through the selection process. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan O'Connell", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dan O'Connell  
Wisconsin Housing Preservation Corp



April 10, 2014

To: Eric Paulson, Chair Digital Technology Committee

Re: Residential Internet Access Assistance Program for the Kennedy Heights Neighborhood

Dear Mr. Paulson,

We are very excited about the life skill opportunities this project would bring to Kennedy Heights Townhomes and the surrounding neighborhood. The residents at Kennedy Heights are in a unique position to achieve great success through this program via an established on-site community center. The community center would offer additional educational programming on using the internet and computers.

Kennedy Heights Townhomes is a low-income, Section 8 subsidized property consisting of 104, two and three bedroom townhome style units. Kennedy Heights is a very densely populated neighborhood serving 297 residents of which 162 are children. The average income per household is considered extremely low at \$16,497.00. Nearly all households living at the property qualify for a Section 8 subsidy.

It is our belief that most, if not all, residents who live at Kennedy Heights would benefit from having internet access through this program. This would be an opportunity to help close the digital divide in this community.

Please feel free to contact me at 608-836-2918 or email at [jhagenow@zmeridian.com](mailto:jhagenow@zmeridian.com) if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Jason S. Hagenow, Corporate Property Manager  
Meridian Group, Inc.

cc: Alyssa Kenny, file

| Community Center with Meraki<br>mesh network (data from<br>Meraki Dashboard) | Number of unique wireless<br>users in the last 7 days<br>(4/3/2014 to 4/10/2014) | Amount of data transferred<br>(in GB) | Number of wireless<br>access points |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Boys and Girls Club-Allied   | 146  | 13.06                                 | 3                                   |
| East Madison Comm. Center  | 59   | 9.13                                  | 3                                   |
| Goodman Comm. Center   | 597  | 22.2                                  | 6                                   |
| Kennedy Heights Comm. Center   | 44   | 61.26                                 | 1                                   |
| Lussier Comm. Education Center   | 142  | 9.67                                  | 2                                   |
| Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center  | 46   | 17.87                                 | 1                                   |

April 9, 2014

To Erik Paulson, Chair of the Digital Technology Committee, and committee members:

Kennedy Heights is a compact, low-income community that could efficiently serve as a pilot neighborhood for the Residential Internet Access Assistance Program.

The community has more than 300 low-income residents, including 163 children. The average annual household income is less than \$10,000, and 96 percent of the children in the neighborhood qualify for free or reduced price lunch.

The digital divide definitely affects residents in this community.

Kennedy Heights is also a very densely populated neighborhood with one non-profit property owner and one established management company. A community center in the neighborhood could coordinate the outreach and distribution of bandwidth, and all Madison community centers are scheduled to get MUFN this year.

I have worked with Kennedy Heights on progressive efforts such as building a popular Natural Playground. The community center offers numerous programs for children including an Early Childhood Program, Four-Year-Old Kindergarten, after school programs including a Flying Afterschool Academic Center for Excellence, a Middle School Summer Day Camp, Adult Computer Classes and an Asian Outreach Program that provides a monthly educational workshop in Hmong.

The center is extremely well run by a respected staff. The neighborhood would enthusiastically support this much-needed program.

Please consider this Northside neighborhood as a pilot site for Residential Neighborhood Access.

Regards,



18<sup>th</sup> District Madison Alder Anita Weier  
district18@cityofmadison.com (608) 320-5820



April 8, 2014

Dear Mr. Paulson,

I understand that the Chair Digital Technology Committee is considering selecting the Kennedy Heights Neighborhood to be a pilot site for Residential Internet Access. As the elementary principal for the children who live in this neighborhood, I am very aware of the need for Internet access and request that Kennedy Heights be chosen as a site.

Over 300 low-income community residents including 163 children, live in the immediate Kennedy Heights neighborhood. The average annual household income is less than \$15,000. 96% of the children in the neighborhood qualify for free or reduced price lunch. The lack of Internet access negatively affects residents in this community.

In addition to being the elementary principal who serves the children, I have also been on the Kennedy Heights Board for the past four years. The Kennedy Heights neighborhood is in a unique position for success due to the following:

- o A well established management company
- o A community center in the neighborhood
- o One non-profit property owner
- o A dense neighborhood
- o A strong director who can support new initiatives well
- o All Madison Community Centers are scheduled to get MUFN this year

For the past two years, we have paid for a web based math software program with funds from Title 1. However, we know that some of the children who live at Kennedy Heights have not been able to access this program due to lack of Internet access and as a result, are not seeing the same level of improvement in their math scores as students who use Reflex Math regularly. We also know that students struggle to complete homework assignments because they do not have Internet access.

There is no doubt that being selected as a pilot site for Residential Internet Access will benefit the residents who live at Kennedy Heights. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Fritz  
Lindbergh Principal