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Technology Goes Home Evaluation – Executive Summary

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Technology Goes Home Evaluation – Executive Summary

Technology Goes Home (TGH) is an innovative program designed to bridge the digital divide by bringing technology into low-income families' homes. This Boston Digital Bridge Foundation (BDBF) program strives to prepare adults for employment opportunities and to help children improve academic performance by offering computer training and equipment to families in Boston neighborhoods and schools. Classes are offered in groups, with parents and children learning together in order to strengthen families and build community as well as skills. Neighborhood programs are operated in six communities through Neighborhood Technology Collaboratives, coalitions of community-based organizations. These coalitions select participating families, and provide training, practice lab space and ongoing support. The TGH@school program uses a similar model through which parents and their children participate in technology training delivered by fourth-grade teachers.

For the past year, the Center for Social Policy (CSP) staff have been engaged in a comprehensive evaluation of the program. In addition to working closely with TGH staff to refine methods and implement lessons from findings, evaluation methods utilized thus far have included the following:

- Site observations at both neighborhood and school-based programs;
- Focus groups with front-line providers from both models (TGH and TGH@School);
- Focus groups with former program participants, adults and children;
- Analysis of feedback data collected from participants during class sessions;
- Pre- and post-program participation skills assessments;
- Pre-, post- and follow-up questionnaires assessing program goals, achievements and satisfaction.

This summary report outlines CSP's evaluation findings thus far.

PROGRAM GOALS

TGH's original goals included developing and implementing an effective program to select and train low-income families for distribution of computers to homes in a manner that encourages:

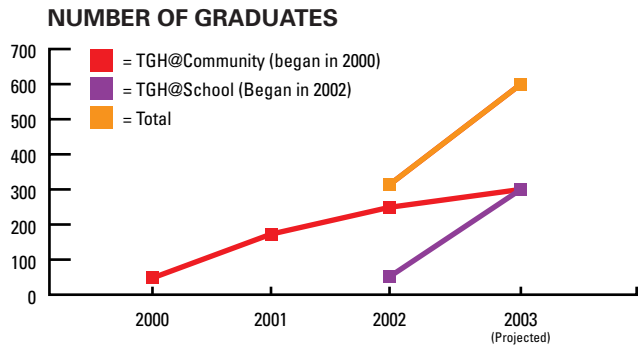
- Increased Community Collaboration and Cooperation;
- Enhanced Employment Opportunities for Adults; and
- Improved Academic Performance for Children.

FINDINGS

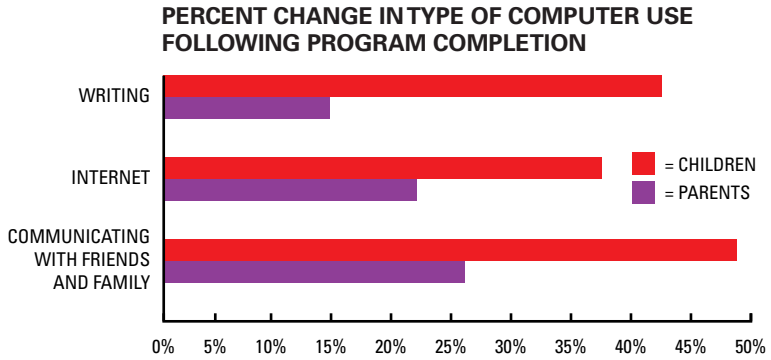
Evidence collected thus far in the evaluation process clearly demonstrates that:

- **Families are interacting and changing through TGH participation.** Participants are expanding their knowledge of computer technology, and strengthening relationships within their family, with other families, and within their communities.
- **The program environment is conducive to both learning and building connections** within and between families. Teachers offer students a great deal of individual attention, patience, and ongoing encouragement, and are able to teach to a variety of skill levels.
- **Families become closer through the shared experience of learning together.**
- **Families also develop strong connections with community agencies,** seeking support from TGH Coordinators even after program completion. Some participants report forming community with the other TGH graduates.

PARTICIPANT NUMBERS



TECHNOLOGY UTILIZATION



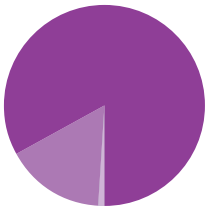
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

- **92% Women**
- **On Average Children Are 12 Years Of Age**
- **60% African American, 25% Latino**
- **55% With High School Diploma Or Less**
- **60% Employed**
- **65% Earn Less Than $20,000 Per Year**

PROGRAM SATISFACTION

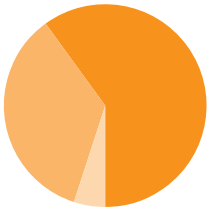
Participants rated the program and its impact in various areas:

Program Satisfaction



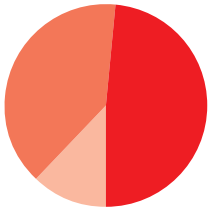
Very Satisfied	84%
Satisfied	15%
Other	1%

Effect on Computer Skills



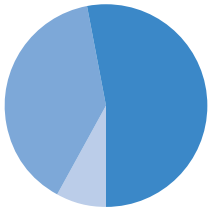
Very Strong	60%
Strong	35%
Other	5%

Influence on Connection to Community



Very Strong	48%
Strong	39%
Other	12%

Effect on Child's School Performance



Very Strong	53%
Strong	39%
Other	8%

RECOMMENDATIONS

We encourage the BDBF to build upon this success in order to meet the program's longer term goals of impacting work and school performance, by:

1) **Decreasing the administrative burden** on Coordinators and Teaches so that they can focus most of their energy on teaching and building relationships;
2) **Providing alumnae support** through funded Alumnae Coordinator positions to work with TGH graduates on career planning and child academic supports;
3) **Creating structured follow-up programs** through which TGH graduates can continue to build skills and link with community supports as they improve their lives.

Through these programmatic changes, TGH will achieve its long-term goals of improving the lives of low-income families and the community as a whole.

"The program gives hope to the residents and the community." – A TGH participant.