

Pittsburgh Mayor Peduto, Veterans Leadership Program, The Neighborhood Academy, and Strong Women Strong Girls Join Comcast to Help Bridge The Digital Divide
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Company Announces Internet Essentials Has Connected More Than 8 Million Low-Income People Nationwide, Including More Than 680,000 in Pennsylvania and 120,000 in the Greater Pittsburgh Metro Area

Comcast Executive Presents Grants at Three Separate Pittsburgh Events

PITTSBURGH, Sept. 5, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto, The Veterans Leadership Program of Western Pennsylvania, The Neighborhood Academy, and Strong Women Strong Girls Pittsburgh joined Comcast at three separate events today to announce the largest eligibility expansion of Internet Essentials in Pennsylvania. The program, which is the nation's largest, most comprehensive, and most successful low-income broadband adoption initiative, will now have double the number of eligible low-income households, including those with people with disabilities and seniors.

Since 2011, more than 8 million low-income Americans have been connected to the Internet at home through the Internet Essentials program. This includes more than 680,000 residents across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, including more than 120,000 low-income people in the Greater Pittsburgh Metro Area.

"This expansion is the culmination of an audacious goal we set eight years ago, which was to meaningfully and significantly close the digital divide for low-income Americans," said David L. Cohen, Senior Executive Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer of Comcast NBCUniversal. "Whether the Internet is used for students to do their homework, adults to look for and apply for new jobs, seniors to keep in touch with friends and family, or veterans to access their well-deserved benefits, it is absolutely essential to success in our modern, digital age."

The first event held today was co-hosted by Mayor Peduto and The Veterans Leadership Program of Western Pennsylvania, where Comcast was also joined by Congressman Conor Lamb to highlight the work being done broadly to bridge the digital divide and specifically how Comcast is engaging veterans. Cohen was joined by 2018 Women's Hockey Olympic Gold Medalists Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson and Monique Lamoureux-Morando, who serve as national spokespeople for Internet Essentials, in unveiling both a mobile and in-house computer lab, funded by Comcast. Thirty veterans in need were also presented with free laptops by Comcast during the event.

"We're proud to be partnering with Comcast to help close the digital divide here in Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania," added the Lamoureux twins. "It's crucial that we help all low-income Americans gain an internet connection at home, so everyone has a fair playing field on which to compete in sports and in life."

"Digital equity is no longer a goal, it's a necessity for a healthy community. Comcast's expansion of Internet Essentials will drive inclusive innovation into the homes of those we can't afford to leave behind," said Mayor Peduto.

The second event was an assembly with 150 students, faculty, and staff at The Neighborhood Academy in Stanton Heights. There, Cohen announced a grant to support the academy's STEM curriculum and as well as help the center develop advanced digital literacy skills. Cohen and the Lamoureux twins then surprised all the students with free laptop computers and opportunity cards, entitling each student to six months of free Internet service at home.

At the day's final event, Comcast joined Strong Women Strong Girls Pittsburgh (SWSGP) in an assembly at Pittsburgh Public School's Dilworth Elementary School, site of one of SWSGP's cohorts of mentees. There, Cohen announced two grants, including a Dell equipment grant, to SWSGP, which will use the funding to support its ongoing technology programs, a mobile computer lab, and expanding into new geographic areas. Cohen then surprised all the students with free laptop computers and opportunity cards, entitling each student to six months of free Internet service at home.

Since August 2011, Internet Essentials has connected more than eight million low-income individuals, from

two million households, to the Internet at home, most for the first time in their lives. To apply for the program, low-income applicants simply need to show they are participating in one of more than a dozen different government assistance programs. A full list can be found at www.internetessentials.com.

Internet Essentials has an integrated, wrap-around design that addresses each of the three major barriers to broadband adoption that research has identified. These include: a lack of digital literacy skills, lack of awareness of the relevance of the Internet to everyday life needs, and fear of the Internet; the lack of a computer; and cost of internet service. The program is structured as a partnership between Comcast and tens of thousands of school districts, libraries, elected officials, and nonprofit community partners. For more information, or to apply for the program in seven different languages, please visit www.internetessentials.com or call 1-855-846-8376. Spanish-only speakers can also call 1-855-765-6995.

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