

RSHM Life Center Students Benefit from New Computers

by Janie Rosman

Students at the RSHM Life Center's Valley Street location turned to their new Google Chromebooks, a helpful new addition to their After School Program.

"They had lots of questions about Rotary and looked online for the Rubber Ducky Derby," Rotary Club of the Tarrytowns past President Margaret Black said after visiting the fourth and fifth graders last month. She and Rotary president-elect

Gary Solomon, Assistant Vice President and Branch Manager, Tompkins National Bank, were beneficial in ensuring they keep up with their studies when the school day ends.

With help from a grant application written by Black, Operations Manager at Alan Block Insurance Agency, and funding from the bank, Life Center Executive Director Sr. Susan Gardella purchased seven Chromebooks and secured additional funds for a computer person to set up the network.

It's not the first time the bank and the Rotary Club assisted the Life Center, which received the maximum \$1,500 amount, Gardella explained. At an earlier time, the English as a Second Language adult education program received funds for Rosetta Stone® materials.

Focus then turned to kids in the After School Program who didn't have computer access at home with their different school assignments.

"Chromebooks are portable and user-friendly, and not terribly susceptible to viruses," Gardella said. "Kids use them to boost their literacy in dual-language classes."

Students can reinforce what they learned during the day, or work on specific homework assignments, by logging into their accounts. "Now the kids don't have to miss homework due to a digital divide," Gardella said.

Other Life Center news is happening outside: last month, Tarrytown Company SunBlue Energy began installing solar panels at the Life Center's Beekman Avenue roof.

"It saves money, and since we talked to the kids about ecology and saving the earth, we're jumping in and doing something to help the cause," Gardella said of the project, expected to take several weeks. "We recycle, and one piece from the solar panels let you see the energy that's being generated. "We're using this as a learning tool."



Children use new computers at RSHM Life Center.

The panels are angled to attract the most sunlight, which sends electricity made into the building's meters, causing them to run backwards.

"They provide electricity to the building, which powers the appliances," SunBlue President Chris Hale explained. "You (company) then get credit."

Software will be installed on some of the Life Center's computers so students can see how that energy is created. "They'll be able to access the performance of each of the 61 modules individually, and as a whole, at any time throughout the day," Hale said.

He's excited to be living in an area where he's working. "We (SunBlue) are tied to the community. I live in Sleepy Hollow, my installer grew up in Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow, and we're working on a community center."

Within a few weeks, students at the Life Center will be able to watch the sun's energy at work from their computer screens.

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