Boeing Awards $1.5 Million to Expand Technology Access for CPS Students

CHICAGO, Aug. 20, 2020 – Boeing today awarded a $1.5 million charitable grant to support the expansion of technology access for approximately 4,500 Chicago Public Schools (CPS) students and 100 educators. The donation – which will fund the purchase of computer equipment and other remote learning technology, including headsets – will be directed through the Children First Fund (CFF), the independent partnership and philanthropy arm for Chicago Public Schools.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is creating unprecedented disruption and challenge for students and teachers here in Chicago and across the nation,” said Greg Smith, Boeing executive vice president of Enterprise Operations and Communications and chief financial officer. “With this grant, we’re proud to support Chicago Public Schools and help ensure all students have the remote learning tools they need to succeed, no matter where they live.”

CFF will distribute the computer equipment and remote learning technology equitably, based on need. Students across the district will be the recipients of items such as devices, headsets, and carrying cases. School recipients that have been selected are based on known need, in communities with a high percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch aid and with the highest hardship based on the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) hardship index. In addition, approximately 100 educators will receive new devices, webcams and headsets to enhance remote learning capabilities.

"As CPS prepares to launch the school year remotely this fall, it's vitally important that our students have the technology they need to continue learning and stay focused," said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "This initiative is a great example of the partnership we need to build on our ongoing programs such as Chicago Connected, which provides free, stable, high-speed internet to students in need. I am grateful to Boeing for this incredible donation and for stepping up to make sure our students succeed during these uncertain times."

“Our district is working to ensure that every student has the resources they need to stay engaged when we start the school year remotely,” said CPS CEO Dr. Janice K. Jackson. “This contribution from Boeing strengthens our efforts and commitment to bridge the digital divide that too often keeps our highest-need students and families from many of the opportunities available to grow academically while at home.”

In addition to grant support, Boeing has also selected Children First Fund as the recipient of the annual Liftoff for Learning back to school drive – an employee-led drive aimed at providing school supplies for students returning to classrooms in the fall. This year, monetary donations made by Chicago-based employees will help fund the purchase of laptops and other remote technology for students.

“CFF is grateful to Boeing for their leadership as we work to equitably distribute resources to our school communities for the upcoming school year,” said CFF Interim Director Mica Matsoff. “It is inspiring to see the direct impact of philanthropy as we work together to ensure that all of our students have the resources and opportunity to match their talent and potential.”

Children First Fund has developed the *Compassion Fund: Back to School*, to help promote a safe, supportive and equitable learning environment for our CPS school communities. Philanthropic support will fund learning resources, technology, early literacy and culturally-relevant books, and social emotional learning. Donations are equitably distributed to schools with the highest need for resources and support.

For more information on how to join Boeing in supporting CPS students and families in School Year 2020-21, please visit https://www.childrenfirstfund.org or find CFF on social @ChiFirstFund.

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