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Rotary delivers over 200 computers to schools

Tuesday April 08 2008

by Afeefah Beharry

The Bellevue Breakfast Rotary Club of Seattle, Washington and the Rotary Club of Antigua yesterday donated over 200 computers to private and public primary schools across Antigua and Barbuda.

Antigua is the fourth country outside of the USA that is benefitting from the club's project "computers for the world."

The overall cost of the project is approximately US\$70,000.

It is part of the literacy programme for the 2007/2008 Rotary year.

The computers will be installed in 17 schools and the Rotarians will be on island for ten days.



During a short handing over ceremony held at Rotary House, former president of the Bellevue Breakfast Rotary Club Steven Lingenbrink said "computers for the world" is a district approved project where funds are solicited from outside of Rotary and other Rotary clubs.

"I think it's very significant to note that the Mill Reef Club also made a last minute contribution of about \$9,000 towards this project that we are able to use to help finance this computer project," Lingenbrink said.

Another member of the Bellevue Breakfast Rotary Club John Martinka explained that this is their fourth project and that they are bringing a total of 220 computers to the schools.

"We have been driving around and we went to some of the schools yesterday, we can just see that yes, there is a need for what we are bringing here," Martinka added.

"They all have windows XP, they all have one of the most recent versions of office, they are all ready to go on the Internet, they will be networked together in the classroom and the bigger classrooms will have printers attached to them."

Martinka also stated that they have been able to afford a special printer that prints in Braille for students of the blind school and special software for them to read the computer screen.

"Those are all in the works, some of them are different levels of software, but they will be a lot of blind or visually impaired students who will be able to understand what is in front of the computer," Martinka stated.

During his remarks, Minister of Education Bertand Joseph said the whole concept of computers for the world seems very appealing. "I am happy to know that Antigua and Barbuda is part of that world," Joseph said.

According to him, the United Progressive Party (UPP) government came into office in March of 2004 under the mandate of an agenda for change and as it relates to computers, they promised the people in Antigua and Barbuda that they would bridge the digital divide across every social stratum and across the various communities of Antigua and Barbuda.

President of the Rotary Club of Antigua Paul Ryan, Public Relations Officer (PRO) Lorraine Josiah and service project co-ordinator were present at the ceremony.

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Minister of Education Bertrand Joseph (left) accepts a banner with the name of the Bellevue Breakfast Rotary Club of Seattle from John Martinka.

(SUNPhoto by Afeefah Beharry)

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