Beyond The Blog: Edition 8

Beyond The Blog is an evolution of The Patterson Foundation’s storytelling approach focused on creating and sharing engaging content featuring the people, organizations, and communities strengthened through the Foundation's work.
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The Power of Connection: Strengthening People, Organizations + Communities
The learning, sharing, and evolving that ultimately strengthens people, organizations, and communities is sparked by a key connection that makes it possible — such as an introduction to a potential collaborative partner or a new approach to their work. Acknowledging the role these connections play in nurturing positive impacts on a global scale, The Patterson Foundation centers its efforts on cultivating relationships rooted in trust and aimed at realizing long-held, shared aspirations.

While traditional, personal connections are essential to continued well-being and growth, our modern era continually gives rise to new, innovative ways to foster those connections digitally as well. Whether for knowledge, resources, or relationship building, digital technology empowers us to connect in ways that make us stronger and thrive.

Our work in philanthropy and the lessons learned through unique challenges our world has faced have affirmed the value of personal and digital connections, including opportunities digital technology presents to create meaningful human connection. It is why The Patterson Foundation continues to invest in efforts to help more people, especially those from asset-limited families, establish and maintain digital connectivity while collaborating with global leaders when and where they are most needed.

This edition of Beyond The Blog examines
This edition of Beyond The Blog examines what's possible by capitalizing on opportunities to create these crucial connections where they might not otherwise exist. By helping our world connect meaningfully through an increasingly digital landscape, we can ensure everyone is included in the journey toward a stronger future.

Connecting for Impact: TPF's Approach

WHAT IS IT?
The Affordable Connectivity Program is an FCC program that helps connect families and households struggling to afford internet service.

THE BENEFIT PROVIDES:
The benefit provides the opportunity for participating Internet Service Providers to offer a discount of up to $90 for eligible households and up to $75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands. You can learn more about the benefit, including eligibility and enrollment information, by visiting GetInternet.gov or by calling 877-364-2757.

AFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM: Low-cost Internet Service

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?
A household is eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program if the household income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or if a member of the household meets at least one of the criteria below:
- Participates in any of the following assistance programs: SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Veterans Pension or Survivor Benefits, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline.
- Participates in any of the following Tribal specific programs: Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal TANF, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, or Tribal Head Start Income-based.
- Participates in the Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision.
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year,
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating broadband provider's existing low-income internet program.

STRENGTHENING THE IMPACT
Through the Digital Navigator Program, a part of the Digital Access for All initiative, The Patterson Foundation is training local organizations to connect asset-limited families and individuals with opportunities to obtain digital connectivity, devices, skills, and support. Through a series of trainings, implementation meetings, and knowledge-sharing sessions with other nonprofits, consultants help participants embed the responsibilities of the digital navigator into the organization’s daily work and culture.

Scan the QR code to submit an application or print a mail-in application.
Throughout previous issues of Beyond the Blog, we shared content that explores TPF’s values, unique approaches, and several initiatives. At the center is collaboration, and with that comes connective tissue. At TPF, we make unlikely connections that result in new relationships by engaging others, listening for shared aspirations, and building trust to create new realities together.

TPF’s Digital Access for All (DA4A) initiative began as a result of the pandemic and, since 2020, has explored the efforts of multiple sectors working to enhance access to technology that connects people in ways that foster inclusion and well-being. Recently, the DA4A team gathered for a strategic positioning session to align what we have learned with current community aspirations related to the three essential elements of digital access: Connectivity, Devices, and Skills/Support.

In this edition, you can read and watch more about the DA4A initiative and current projects taking place, including the Digital Navigator Program, where TPF trains local organizations to connect individuals with opportunities to obtain digital connectivity, and The Gap, where TPF aims to create opportunities for eligible asset-limited families and individuals to enroll in the Affordable Connectivity Program and benefit from low-cost internet and devices.

This edition also includes a 10-minute podcast with Lance Pierce, CEO of NetHope. As a membership organization, NetHope partners with 60+ international nonprofit organizations to provide information and communication technology in response to disasters. NetHope’s on-the-ground efforts ensure those faced with devastation receive information communications technology to accelerate recovery...showcasing how technology can improve the world.

We hope you take time to view Beyond The Blog on your favorite device. Thanks for connecting with us and Joining the Journey.
A guest at the Backpack Giveaway at Sonshine Baptist Church on August 5<sup>th</sup> in Port Charlotte, FL, shared that she knows she’s eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program with two kids on Medicaid, but her application keeps getting rejected for some reason. She gave us her contact information so we can connect her with a Digital Navigator and she was elated for the help.
For the third year in a row, TPF will join hundreds of other affiliates and partners across the country under the National Digital Inclusion Alliance to celebrate efforts to close the digital divide during National Digital Inclusion Week, October 2–6, 2023. Activities include social media sharing of valuable digital inclusion resources, Affordable Connectivity Program Engager events in the Suncoast Region, and webversations of the TPF Digital Access for All (DA4A) initiative "Big Tent." If that isn't enough TPF/DA4A has expanded their reach to include the entire month of October 2023 as Suncoast Digital Inclusion Month. This focus on the 4-county region of Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, and Sarasota brings efforts to connect individuals and families to low-cost broadband/internet services, access to free and/or low-cost devices and connections to organizations that provide technology-based skills training and support.

Don't miss the opportunity to connect and share resources to close the digital divide during the 31 days of October 2023.

"National Digital Inclusion Week (NDIA), October 2-6, 2023, and Suncoast Digital Inclusion Month, October 1-31, 2023"
The Podcast
Featuring Lance Pierce, CEO of NetHope
In March, Rachel Ploss had an inspiring conversation with Lance Pierce, CEO of NetHope, about the criticality of digital first response.

"As a membership organization, NetHope partners with 60+ international nonprofit organizations to provide information and communication technology in response to disasters. NetHope's on-the-ground efforts ensure those faced with devastation receive information communications technology to accelerate recovery...

Lance digs deeper into the impact and influence digital access has in disaster recovery..."
Digital Navigator Program

Closing the Connectivity Gap
I loved seeing the community and local organizations rally around our veterans to support them with digital access. When I realized that our clients did not know about the services available to them and what they were eligible for, I could see how the technicalities in eligibility requirements lead people not to apply or not ask even when they may be struggling.

Digital Navigators Brent Giangregorio with Women's Resource Center and Lucero Guzman with UnidosNow

Veterans Connect Event at Goodwill Manasota Veterans Services Office: Connecting veterans with Digital Navigators and community resources
Thank you for reading
Beyond The Blog
Join the Journey