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Computer Science Partners with PCs for People

Summary: The Computer Science Discipline recently donated 31 computer systems to PCs for People, a nonprofit organization providing computer equipment to low-income families.

(October 17, 2012)-The Computer Science Discipline at the University of Minnesota, Morris recently donated 31 computer systems to [PCs for People](#), a Saint Paul-based nonprofit organization that provides personal computers and education to people who have limited experience with technology. Since its founding in 1998, PCs for People has refurbished and supplied more than 2,000 computers to low income individuals and families.

Morris faculty and students first learned about PCs for People when founder Andy Elofson and executive director Casey Sorensen delivered the keynote address at the 2011 Midwest Instruction and Computing Symposium. Prior to the conference, the discipline had already collected a significant amount of older computer systems and was looking for a manner in which to responsibly dispose of them.

After clearing the existing donation materials of some particularly old pieces, Josh Johnson '13 spent the summer painstakingly sorting the equipment and ensuring that all the hard drives were properly erased. According to Nic McPhee, professor of computer science, “[Johnson] did a great job with this tedious, time-consuming stuff.”

McPhee feels that the donation was a worthwhile mission for the program, citing “putting [equipment] in the hands of people who would benefit from having a computer” as its primary benefit. He identifies with the nonprofit’s mission of increasing access and availability of computers and computer literacy and is already looking forward to another donation.

While McPhee anticipates that the next donation will be smaller than the first, he believes that Morris can continue to have a large impact on PCs for People. “I think there are other units on campus that have equipment they’d like to recycle, and this is a way to do that if they’re so inclined.” While the possibility of selling old equipment exists, he feels that this kind of donation is a “much better deal to us.”

Photos of the PCs for People pick-up are available [online](#).

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