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About Little Geeks

What is Little Geeks?

Little Geeks is a philanthropic foundation that collects, refurbishes and re-distributes, donated home computers.

The Mission of Little Geeks is to provide free computing technology and education to children and families who cannot afford these resources on their own.

Educational interaction between Mentor Geeks and Little Geeks should lead to immeasurable, long-term benefits, for all involved.

How did Little Geeks start?

Andy Walker, a technology journalist, TV personality, and author, founded Little Geeks.

Andy received his first computer as a gift from his parents in his first year of university. While his Dad's initial gift of technology has long since become outdated, Andy's love of computers and technology has never waned.

He now enjoys exceptional personal and professional satisfaction by continuing to work in the field that sparked his imagination so many years ago.

Recognizing these benefits, Andy wanted to create a program that would offer kids the opportunity to receive the same gift of technology that he did.

"I've decided it's time for me to start giving back because I have received so much from technology and the technology community in my life and career. I hope you'll be inspired by Little Geeks."

Why Little Geeks?

It's two fold:

First - the use of computers and the need for computer skills has increased significantly over the years. To improve their opportunities for a successful future, children need to be computer literate.

Andy profoundly believes in the transformative power of technology. "Computers have changed my life. And I am sure they have changed yours. They can open doors and educate. They are an enabler and an equalizer. And they can bring the world to you. Everyone should have this opportunity."

Second – old computers need a home. With hundreds of millions of them becoming obsolete every year in this country, what happens to all the stuff we don't want any more?

Andy remembers a crucial meeting several months ago. "A friend recently told me he has a room full of slightly old laptops sitting in the back room of his office. These computers could change the lives of dozens of children. But if only there was an easy way to get them out of that backroom and into the hands of deserving little geeks."

Therefore, our interests and concerns are both societal and environmental.

How is Little Geeks different?

There are programs like this out there, but none are focused on giving a computer to a Little Geek in our own community.

In the future, Donor Geeks will also have an opportunity to hear about the impact their donation has had on the recipient, Little Geek.

How Little Geeks Works

Little Geeks operates through the collaboration of three groups of dedicated volunteers, including Donor Geeks, Repair Geeks and Mentor Geeks. Donor Geeks, after giving their unused computer to the organization, have the opportunity to either adopt a Little Geek or have littlegeeks.org select a recipient automatically.

Once the unit is onsite, Repair Geeks take over and prep the Donor Geek's computer for the Little Geek. With the donated system upgraded, Mentor Geeks step in and personally deliver the refurbished computer to the Little Geek's home and help to install internet connections and troubleshoot.

The Little Geek



- Little Geeks must be between the ages of 8-17 years old.
- For now, the child must live in the Greater Toronto Area

Step 1

- Visit www.littlegeeks.org to apply for a computer
- Fill out the application form, to be completed and signed by an adult prior to submission
- Adult to agree to a terms and conditions agreement

Step 2

- Child/adult receive an email acknowledgement and user ID and password for use on www.littlegeeks.org
- The ID and password enables access to littlegeeks.org at anytime and to check the status of your application

Step 3

- The received application is reviewed by a Little Geeks staff member to ensure it meets criteria determined by the staff and approved by the Board
- Once approved it goes into queue in the system for fulfillment
- The child/parent receive notifications via email or via phone and in writing if the family does not currently have access to e-mail

The Donor Geek



- Donated computers will be refurbished and given to a child (Little Geek)
- Minimum Specs: Pentium III 500, any computers that are older than a Pentium III 500 or with non-working major components will be used for parts.

Step 1

- The Donor Geek gives a computer by registering it through www.littlegeeks.org
- (S)he can request that their machine be auto-assigned to a child or donated to a child of their choosing (based on their location, age range and sex)
- (S)he can also opt to give it for use in Little Geeks office operations or use by schools or not-for-profit organizations that work with children

Step 2

- On approval the computer is assigned a tracking number
- Once the donated computer is in the system, a page is generated for the Donor Geek to print and asked to attach to machine - and then asked to deliver it to our office. When it is received it is logged in the system by our office staff and assigned to a Repair Geek

Step 3

- When the computer is received, it is logged by staff into inventory

How Little Geeks Works

(cont'd)

The Repair Geek



- A repair geek is someone who possesses extensive computer knowledge
- They must be able to install software, components, and troubleshoot all aspects of the computer system

The Mentor Geek



- Mentor Geeks should have a good knowledge of computer installation, software and internet use including internet safety for children.
- Mentor Geeks are responsible for delivering the computer to the Little Geek's home, installation, setting up free internet access

Step 1

- The Repair Geek cleans it - formats the drive and erases all traces of any data with a military spec level re-formatter

Step 2

- The machine is upgraded, tested and an operating system is installed along with a software suite that includes an ID applet that reports the IP address of the machine back to the Little Geeks Foundation and reminds the child to communicate with the foundation twice a year through www.littlegeeks.org

Step 1

- The Mentor Geek matches the system with a Little Geek who has been registered on the system.
- (S)he contacts the parent or guardian and arranges for an email address to be created for the child. This is set up on the system in an email client.

Step 2

- (S)he arranges for delivery and installation of the machine and a free Internet connection through our sponsored Little Geeks ISP provider.

Step 3

- (S)he leads a training session with the child on basic usage and Internet security and provides a point of contact for ongoing support.
- If the ID applet is removed or the Little Geek's family does not stay in touch, this results in follow up by a Mentor Geek. If follow up is not successful, it results in cancellation of free Internet access.

Board of Directors

The Little Geeks Board of Directors meets monthly and guides the Foundation on issues of concern to the public. The board members also reach out to the community to assist the Foundation staff to obtain the resources needed for Little Geeks. Currently, the Little Geeks Board of Directors is made up of five individuals, including our founder Andy Walker, drawn from the technology journalist community, technology companies and political and educational organizations.



Amber MacArthur

Amber MacArthur is the New Media Specialist at CityTV in Toronto where she covers news in the Internet and technology space. Prior to CityTV, she worked for two years as a TV host at G4TechTV. She also spent many years honing her web design skills at companies in San Francisco, Boston, and Toronto.



Marc Saltzman

As a prolific freelance journalist, author, radio and TV host, Marc Saltzman is one of North America's most recognized and trusted experts in the ever-changing world of high-tech. Marc specializes in consumer electronics, computer software and hardware, video gaming, portable devices and Internet trends.

Along with his weekly syndicated columns with Gannett News Service, USA Today.com, CNN.com and CanWest, Marc currently contributes to more than 50 prominent publications, such as the USA Today, Sympatico MSN, FHM, AARP - The Magazine, Microsoft Home, Movie Entertainment magazine, Chill, HUB, Here's How and Homefront. Marc has authored 14 books, hosts two radio shows and is a regular on-air technology expert on CNN, Global TV and G4TechTV.



Benjamin Freedman

For the last 12 years, Benjamin Freedman has led companies to success by employing innovative and cutting-edge marketing strategies. In 1994, Benjamin joined a small start-up called "FSA Corporation" that specialized in security software. His efforts led to the acquisition of FSA by McAfee Associates in 1996.

Ben went on to found Jasomi Networks, a start-up in the "Voice over IP" space. He grew the firm from 4 employees to 30, and sold the company in 2005 to Ditech Communications. In addition to consulting, Ben also produces a daily Internet TV show for technology beginners called Neo-Fight.tv



Frank Linhares

Frank Linhares, was born and raised in Toronto, Ontario. He started his technology career as a teen running around with a 300 baud modem, and has since been at the bleeding edge of new media.

He is currently the host and producer of the techPhile podcast and the Simple Reboot podcast (nsight productions), both weekly tech based shows covering news, views, and reviews in the world of tech. Each show has a circulation of 30,000 online listeners a week. He is an innovator in the podcast industry with his new company podstat.net.

Little Geeks Leaders

Little Geeks was founded by Andy Walker, a technology journalist, TV personality, and author. Andy works closely with Little Geeks Foundation President and CEO, Lisa Shishis, a veteran nurse at Casey House. She has a career working inside non-profits and is well connected in the NGO communities.



Founder
Andy Walker

Andy Walker is one of the premier tech journalists in North America. Andy became involved in technology while working at the Edmonton Journal newspaper. His fun and friendly tech help column "Cyberwalker" became syndicated across Canada in 1995. Andy helped launch Canada.com in 1995 and in 1998 the massively popular tech help site Cyberwalker.com.

He is now a television personality, including credits as co-host of the internationally syndicated tech show Call for Help with Leo Laporte. He co-created the top video podcast Lab Rats (labrats.tv) and has written three technology books, including the forthcoming Windows Vista Help Desk (Que).



CEO/Project Director
Lisa Shishis

Lisa Shishis is a Registered Nurse with Casey House, the nation's foremost AIDS hospice. In her capacity as a community nurse, Lisa has become very familiar with the families of the Little Geeks who the foundation will help. She has extensive project management and leadership experience. In recognition of these skills, Lisa now represents her fellow employees as the local union president with OPSEU.

Lisa is currently on maternity leave from Casey House while she cares for two school-age children Griffin, a little geek himself, Maia a pre-little geek and a newborn named Zoe. She also cares for a cat, bird, hermit-crab and husband, not in that order. She can multi-task with the best!

Little Geeks Executives

Lisa Shishis has a volunteer executive that comprises staff drawn from the IT and business community, and includes web developers, tech-interested professionals and interested private citizens.



Communication
Corporate Liaison
Greg Pilsworth

Gregory Pilsworth has a BA from Concordia University in Montreal, with a Specialization in Communications Studies. He is a multi-disciplinary creative with over 20 years of production theory and experience. He is an accomplished documentary film maker who specializes in variety, sports and arts programming.

Greg is the author of the lecture, "Its Your Voice and Your Responsibility. Voice-over theory and practice for broadcast journalists." which has been presented on numerous occasions to employees of Rogers Communications. He currently resides in Toronto with his lovely partner, their three children plus a cat named Piggy, a budgie named Dora and a hermit crab named Hermie.

Little Geeks Executives



PR/Marketing Director
Dana Carter

Dana Carter moved from St. John's Newfoundland to Toronto in 2001. Working as a marketing analyst with a small Toronto-based dot com company for two years, she then moved into the marketing department of a large law firm where her position focused on winning business.

Currently, Dana works at PricewaterhouseCoopers as a proposal manager where she concentrates on client focused business development projects. Her specialty is understanding what clients want and translating these needs into strong value propositions.

In addition to her work, Dana brings volunteer experience through positions with Toastmasters International, DigitalEve Toronto and Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation.



Web Director
Chris Thorp

Chris Thorp has been serving his community for the past 16 years through the roles of Paramedic/Firefighter and Law Enforcement Officer. He became involved in Little Geeks as a way to help the numerous children he has come contact throughout the years. It is his sincere hope the efforts of this foundation allow the children of today to have a better tomorrow.

He currently lives with his wife and children. He spends his down time training for his black belt in Tae Kwon Do along with his daughters.



Repair Geeks Co-ordinator
Ryan McVey

After years of being a little geek, Ryan McVey has finally graduated to Big Geek status! From a young age, Ryan has had computers in his life and they have always fascinated him. His first computer was a Vic 20. While it wasn't much of a computer, it began what he feels has been an amazing ride.

After graduating college as a Computer Support Specialist in 1999, Ryan decided to start his own business. He now works for himself and loves every minute of it. When he heard about Little Geeks, he knew it was something that he wanted to be involved in. He believes that in today's world you need to have computer skills in order to succeed, and if getting a used computer will help even one child to better themselves then that's what it's all about. If one computer can change one kid's life, think about what 10,000 could do for Canadian children.