Learningtech.org

The Miller Institute for Learning with Technology
Helping people use technology more effectively for learning
A 501(c)(3) California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation

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Providing expert technology planning, E-Rate consulting, STEM enrichment, summer camps, after-school programs, professional development and technical services since 2000.

From our Executive Director

Looking back on 2015, Learningtech.org had a banner year. Several great projects we embarked upon at the beginning of the year came to fruition. The boundless passion, expertise, and dedication of our staff and volunteers continue to produce benefits for our clients and students. New offices (111 Glenn Way #8, San Carlos, CA) also helped the cause!

Our *summer camps*, *in school*, and *after school* programs have continued to grow, now including our first-ever classes in the East Bay, in partnership with Piedmont Parks and Recreation. With grant support from the Cabrillo and Pacifica Education Foundations, we have been co-teaching Computer Science, with classroom teachers, to nearly all 6th and 7th graders in those districts. Last summer, thanks to a generous grant from the Winifred Johnson Clive Foundation, we were able to include 10 foster youth in our summer camps, adding extra services to meet their unique needs.

Our Technical Services team continues to support all of our efforts, ensuring our web presence is updated, our tools and systems are current and all of our work and our clients' documents are retained and recoverable. This work is often done behind the scenes and seemingly thankless, but we are fully cognizant of their sizable contribution to our continued success. Deep insight into networking trends for K-12 sets our E-Rate consulting capability apart from the "forms filling" competition. Our staff and our many Technical Services clients could not function without the excellent support we receive from Chris Miller and his team.

With the E-Rate season upon us again, things are never dull around our new office. Read on for further details about these projects, plus a few tips on E-Rate and tech planning.

Please join me in thanking and congratulating the Learningtech.org's staff and volunteers for their amazing work in 2015 and plans for another great year in 2016!

E-Rate Team: $24.3 Million in Funding for Over 560,000 Students

For Funding Year 2015, Learningtech.org's E-Rate team applied for $24.3 million in funding and, at the time this went to press, more than $21.5 million has been approved for distribution. Public, charter, independent, parochial—all are eligible for E-Rate funding and Learningtech.org helped over 1,430 schools, representing over 560,000 students including the entire Puerto Rico Department of Education, secure critical funding for telecommunications and technology infrastructure projects.

New East Bay STEAM Summer Camps

We are proud to announce Learningtech.org's first camps in the East Bay! We will offer three camps in partnership with Piedmont Parks and Recreation:

Ages 6 - 8
- **Adventures in Robotics and Coding**

Ages 8 - 11
- **Robotics, Coding, and Tech Art**

Ages 11- 14
- **Computer Science with Art, Games, and Robots**

Our 2015 summer camps in San Carlos were completely sold out! In 2016, we have again expanded the curriculum, while expanding to the new East Bay location. We also offer before- and after-care. At the San Carlos Charter Learning Center (SCCLC), its highly regarded *Educare* program provides supervision from 7:30am-6:00pm.

Our Extreme STEAM™ Summer Camps (Science, Technology, Engineering, digital Arts and Math) are taught by senior camp instructors, including several PhDs and certificated teachers, and are staffed by interns of whom many are former campers. This allows us to provide camper-to-instructor ratios from 1:1 to 8:1 all while keeping tuition lower than many comparable camps.

We've been refining our camps for over 15 years (long before "STEM" and "coding" were considered chic!). We believe our combination of expertise, affordability and hands-on learning offers a level of quality that no other STEM camp in Silicon Valley can match.

Take a look at the partial list below gain a sense of the depth and diversity of our camps this summer:

Ages 6 - 8
- **Adventures in Robotics and Coding**

Ages 8 - 14
- **Exploring the World of Tech**
- **Beginning to Intermediate Robotics**
- **Math Explorations**
- **Web Design and HTML**
- **Tech Art for Girls (9+)**
- **Scratch and SNAP Coding: Games and Art (9+)**
- **Electronics with Arduino (9+)**
- **Games and Science Simulations with StarLogo Nova (11+)**
- **Advanced Robotics including Raspberry Pi (11+)**
- **Raspberry Pi /Python/Art/Games (11+)**

For more information, including rates, locations, times and scholarship details, please visit us on the web, at:
http://www.learningtech.org/workshops/
We hope to see your child this summer!

E-Rate and EPC: An Epic Challenge—and an Opportunity

In late 2015, USAC – the agency that oversees the Schools and Libraries E-Rate program (a $3.9B Federal discount program for technology services) – began rolling out its new information management platform: the E-Rate Productivity Center [EPC]. Intended to help the agency streamline the application process through greater automation, online form filing land centralized document and application processing,

the new system has been a challenge for applicants, consultants, and the agency itself.

Given the scale, scope, and complexity of the E-Rate program, its entirely new mandate introduced the previous year, and all of the "undocumented features" associated with rolling out a new software platform to the general public, we would like to commend their tenacity and ambition.

At Learningtech.org, we've done our best to smooth this transition for our clients. We strive to work with USAC to help them identify what's working well and to thoroughly document bugs and system inefficiences. It is clear that USAC is committed to continuing to build and refine the system. By next year (for the 2017-2018 filing window), we anticipate that their investment will start to pay off. For the 2016-2017 applications, we are inching along as new EPC features are released just-in-time for filing deadlines.

Recognizing the current challenges, the Schools and Libraries Division announced an extended application window for FY2016 to reflect the reality that "this is an initial launch of a new system, which will, despite our best efforts, likely present many opportunities for learning and improvement as users begin filing their applications."

The 2016-2017 E-Rate application window opened February 3rd, 2016 at noon and will close April 29th, 2016 at 11:59:59 EDT – a window of 87 days, approximately two weeks longer than most past funding years.

This extra time in the filing window means that schools who have not yet applied for E-Rate funding may still be able to do so for FY2016! April 1st (no fooling!) is the deadline to *initiate* the E-Rate process, which begins with a competitve bidding period of at least 28 days.

April 1st is the last possible day to start, but *start sooner* to ensure more careful planning, less stress, and success!

For schools and libraries interested in E-Rate or technology plan preparation for the 2016-2017 school year, timing is tight, but it is not quite too late to get started. Please contact Eileen Miller, our Vice President of Planning and Funding, at 650-598-0105 to learn more about how our experts can help manage your E-Rate and technology planning needs.

STEM Foster Youth Program Update

In 2015, Learningtech.org was awarded a $10,000 grant from the Winifred Johnson Clive Foundation to supplement scholarships for foster youth to attend our Extreme

STEAM™ summer camps. Clive's donation, in addition to both in-kind donations from San Mateo County and donations from private individuals, enabled Learningtech.org to include 10 foster youth (FY) in weeklong summer STEM enrichment camps, for a total of 15 student-weeks.

According to the United Way of the Bay Area, California's foster children attend an average of seven to nine different schools by age 18, less than half graduate from high school and just 2% graduate from college. For those who "age out" of the system, within 2-4 years, 51% are unemployed, 40% are on public assistance, 25% become homeless, and 20% will be incarcerated.

Learningtech.org believes that it is crucial for FY to be able to attend camps on an equal footing with their peers. Observers and students not involved in the delivery of services were completely unaware that some students were foster youth. In every way, their experience and participation was at least equal to non-FY peers. Unlike many other programs for FY, attendance was nearly 100% for the FY included in each week! Ten early-morning Digital Literacy sessions and twelve late-afternoon math tutoring sessions were provided. One student, who initially stated that she lacked skills and confidence with respect to math, later earned an A+ in her eighth grade math class.

At the end of camp, each FY family was provided with a laptop computer as well a Robot Kit, BlinkyTape, and/or other additional materials, based on their topic selections and interests during the camp. Our returning FY camper from 2014 was also provided with a Raspberry PI computer kit, for continued computer science explorations and learning.

In cooperation with San Mateo County's Human Services Agency and colleagues at Infinite Education, Learningtech.org presented this program at California's annual statewide STEM education symposium, *Californians Dedicated to Education,* in October 2015. We have also presented this work at several other conferences, including one focused specifically on foster youth education.

For 2016, we have already applied for renewal grant funding, with our goal to *double* the size of this effort, even reaching out to a second county. Already, we have generous commitments from the county to fund a spring Saturday orientation, 2 weeks of essential bus transportation, plus direct support, totaling over $15,000 to help these students.

Our original proof-of-concept pilot has begun to bear fruit, potentially serving as a model for improving FY STEM enrichment opportunities throughout California and beyond.

Staff Spotlight!
Veteran Staffer: Tom Wilkerson

Tom Wilkerson has been with Learningtech.org since 2001. He is our *go-to guy*! Adept at all the roles, from network administration, to tech support guru, to camp instructor, to E-Rate maestro, Tom has been the ideal instructor for our computer-troubleshooting skills workshops. Last, but not least, our E-Rate team relies on Tom for generating rock-solid RFPs, even as he manages a significant number of the applications.

Although *we* know how great he is, we were pleased when Karin Shafer, Business Services Specialist at NOVA Academy Early College High School, reached out to share her own experience with us:

> *I just wanted to tell you what a pleasure it is working with Tom Wilkerson. He is so nice and sooooo patient! He takes his time explaining everything to me, sometimes more than once.*

Even though we work with technology every day, we feel the same way, Karin. Thank you, Tom!

Please Welcome Kimberly and Lea!

An engineer by training, Kimberly Oesterreich joined our team in August 2015 and has brought much-needed order to the many details that must be managed for successful E-Rate applications.

With CPA certifications in several states, Lea Gray now oversees bookkeeping responsibilities, while simultaneously ramping up on E-Rate. Lea is also our first Nebraska-based contributor!

Donations and Grants

Learningtech.org provides technology services to schools, non-profits, and learners of all ages. Our goal is to never turn a student away due to their inability to pay. Your donation will make a difference and is deeply appreciated.

Donations can be made using cash, check, money order, credit card, or PayPal. For more information, please visit: http://www.learningtech.org/donations.

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Engineering Inspiration With Educational Technology

For a decade and a half, Learningtech.org has delivered enterprise-level technology expertise in diverse educational and non-profit environments. Working with traditional districts, charter, parochial, and independent K-12 schools to offer STEM enrichment, both in school and out-of-school, our educational technology experts also provide research, development, implementation, consulting, professional development and technical support.

- Apply for **E-Rate**
- Technology plans
- Grant proposals
- Analyze emerging trends
- Track performance
- Assess outcomes

Planning and Funding

- Network design
- Site surveys
- School technology audits
- Clone laptops and iPads
- Troubleshoot WiFi issues

Technical Services

- Professional development for teachers and staff
- STEM enrichment classes and camps
- Technology integration for standards-based curricula

Education Services

[Learningtech.org] is responsive, deeply ethical and highly collaborative. Mark's expertise, experience and results are extraordinary, but don't be scared off by his training, accomplishments and long resume; time and time again, I see Mark bring his expertise to bear with genuine respect and deep humility that puts the most tech-worried administrator at ease. [His] team is as passionate and knowledgeable as he is.
— Rebecca Tomasini, Founder and CEO, The Alvo Institute

Without Learningtech.org, we would not have enjoyed the over $3 million in E-Rate awards we have received. I cannot recommend them highly enough. Hard working, honest and incredibly capable, the Learningtech.org team is the best you will ever find...
— Irene Sumida, Executive Director, Fenton Charter Schools

Donate Now

http://www.learningtech.org/donations
Your support allows us to provide cost-effective services to underserved communities.
Donations are tax-deductible.

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Mark L. Miller, Ph.D., Founder; President and Executive Director, Learningtech.org

Jack Sutton, Executive Coordinator, UCLA Academic Preparation & Educational Partnerships

Greg Wood, Chief Business Officer, Palisades Charter High School

Request a Proposal

We will prepare a proposal for your school or organization without charge or obligation.

- Technology Plans
- Professional Development
- E-Rate Consulting and Management
- In-School and After-School STEM Classes
- Summer Camps