

# SDFF's eLearn 2 Earn Program

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The eLearn 2 Earn Program is offered to middle school age youth and is designed for use in local community technology centers and computer labs. The program allows them to develop skills and build confidence using technology.

The program provides educational learning modules based on custom content and existing online educational resources. The curriculum modules cover subjects including finance, the environment, careers, and English as a Second Language (ESL). Module examples include: *Introduction to Computers*, *Introduction to Microsoft Excel*, *Careers Helping Others*, *Summer Camp News using Video Conferencing Technology*, *Earning Money*, *Using Less Waste*, and *Exploring the Planet with Google Earth*. The program takes a range of ages and skills into consideration.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To generate an interest in technology at a young age through projects based on children's own interests;
- To improve technology skills in program participants by teaching basic computer techniques (such as keyboard and mouse skills) and basic computer applications (such as word processing);
- To increase usage of computers in the labs that use the program;
- To motivate kids to use computers for educational purposes rather than just to play games;
- To reinforce curriculum the participants are learning in school.

## eBUCKS

An innovative key component of the program is the eBucks rewards system which provides incentives and motivation for participants to achieve the goals they set in the beginning of the program. In order to be eligible to purchase items at the eLearn2Learn store, participants are required to complete a Goal Setting module in which they create a plan to earn the necessary amount of eBucks for items they would like to purchase. Upon successful completion of learning modules, participants earn eBucks which can be used to purchase items like school supplies, sporting equipment, movie tickets, mp3 players and digital cameras. Modules are worth between 5 – 25 eBucks each depending on the level of difficulty. Items in the eLearn2Earn store cost between 5 to 200 eBucks.

## PROGRAM HISTORY

The first pilot program, conducted in August 2006, was a great success. SDFF partnered with the City Heights Community Development Corporation (CHCDC) to pilot the program at two low-income housing complexes in City Heights: the Sycamore and El Cerrito Glen apartments. For two weeks, classes were conducted two hours a day, five days a week. Eleven students, five boys and six girls, participated in the pilot program. Their ages ranged from eight to thirteen. The students were Kenyan, Somali, African-American and Hispanic. Many of the students were ESL learners who speak Kiswahili and Somali as their first languages.

At the beginning of the program kids were asked to review the rewards items and choose a goal. All of the students participating in the pilot program were able to reach their rewards goals with three students earning Microsoft Xboxes (an impressive 20,000 points!). The students' success was celebrated at a pizza party where they received their well deserved rewards!

## PROGRAM RESULTS

Based on evaluations taken from the participating students and the lab directors, the students improved their reading, writing, math, and communication skills. Additionally they gained valuable technology experience with Microsoft applications (Windows, Word, Excel, PowerPoint), the Internet, and video technology.

The students reported that their favorite parts of the program were: writing about themselves and others; creating a budget; learning about money and jobs; video conferencing; having fun; learning new things; and making progress toward a goal.