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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Office of Community Planning and Development

Andrew Cuomo, Secretary

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# EZ/EC News Flash

Flash #30

March 30, 2000

## Best Practice!

### Huntington, WV - Linking the New Gates Computers to Literacy in the Community

The Cabell County Public Library in downtown Huntington, West Virginia, received \$46,262 from the Gates Foundation to place computers throughout the County Library system.

The main library, located in the Huntington, WV - Ironton, OH Empowerment Zone (EZ), utilized the funding to install computers for public Internet access and also to establish a computer lab for public use and training purposes. In addition to the hardware, numerous software programs were also furnished as part of the grant. The library staff received extensive training on how to use the new computers and software, and upon completion of training began offering instruction and classes to the public.

The computer lab is utilized daily by children and their parents to access various educational software programs and the Internet. Classes offered in the labs include basic Internet, advanced Internet, using e-mail, Microsoft Word and introduction to Windows. An additional three computers devoted to the Internet were installed with \$6,393 in funding furnished by the library. Since July 1999, approximately 400 members of the public have received computer training at the main library.

The West Huntington and Guyandotte branch libraries of the Cabell County Public Library each installed four Gateway computers, serving Empowerment Zone residents. The main library and the branches all provide informal training to individuals of the public as well. Some of the topics of these sessions include how to point and click with a mouse, how to access the Internet and type in a website address, how to use the Microsoft Word Program, and how to access the resume function.

Because of the generosity of the Gates foundation, hundreds of individuals in the community have benefited from the opportunity to receive free computer training. The majority of those participating in these computer classes had little or no previous computer experience. Because of the training provided to groups and individuals and the increased number of computers available for public use, computer literacy is growing at a

rapid rate in the EZ. This has helped to diminish the fear of new technology often possessed by traditionally underserved populations, including senior citizens.