



TransCOR Rugged Computer Donations Enhance Opportunities for Young Inventors, Campers and Engineers

Students and non-profit groups with a need for more durable technology are benefiting from rugged computer donations from TransCOR Information Technologies in Georgetown, MA. Supplier and integrator of wireless rugged mobile computers and peripherals, TransCOR is helping advance educational, research, and non-profit programs that require technology that can handle a few bumps and bruises.

Rugged mobile wireless computers are built from the ground up to withstand the hard knocks that can occur in the field or during research projects that require computer mobility. These computers are housed in magnesium-alloy casings with integrated shock absorption and weather proofing to handle the rigors of mobile or remote projects and programs. Not to mention - the rugged computers are perfect for to being handled by children. They can be knocked around, spilled on, dropped, kicked, and

still hold up strong. And that allows more access to technology for the children, because the worry factor is eliminated.

TransCOR has donated computers to the Engineering Design and Development Program at Rush Henrietta School in Henrietta, NY; to the Volunteers of New England, New England Chapter for Camp POSTCARD; and to the Technology/Robotics Team at Triton Regional High School in Byfield, MA. "We are thrilled to be able to contribute to these worthwhile programs," said Tom Haywood, TransCOR President. "Each one of these Toughbook donations encourages higher achievement – and we are proud to be a part of it."



Engineering Design and Development Project, Rush Henrietta School, Henrietta, NY

Engineering Design and Development students Dan Schneiderman and Mark Mattioli at Rush Henrietta School utilized the Toughbook CF-28 rugged mobile wireless computer in an Invention Class at Rush Henrietta High School to create a new concept for customer participation in restaurants. Through touch screen software development and hardware installation, the pair developed an order-taking system for restaurants whereby guests could review the menu and then enter in their dining requests via touchscreen on the rugged computer. The computer was mounted to the dining table with rotational capacity – so diners could enter their own requests. This innovative method of restaurant order taking allows for increased control on the part of the diner – and also places increased responsibility on the diner as well to confirm that the order is correct. The project included patent research,

engineering journal, drawings, data, visual aids, meeting notes and a final project. "The Toughbook was extra-beneficial because of its durability," said Technical Advisor, Norm Lein. "The Toughbook could stand up to many people using it over and over again." The rugged portability of the computer also enabled the students to work on the project outside of the school, providing the advantage of increased time available for the project, he said.

Volunteers of America, Northern New England, Brunswick, ME

TransCOR donated 10 CF-28 rugged mobile wireless computers to the Volunteers of America, Northern New England for use at Camp POSTCARD to provide computer access to more than 150 children and to help streamline the administrative capacity at Camp POSTCARD - a cooperative venture between the Maine Sheriff's Association, the Volunteers of America, and the Maine D.A.R.E. Officers Association located in Winthrop, Maine. Camp POSTCARD

provides camp opportunities to 150 children from the state of Maine, who might otherwise not be exposed to a camp experience. The camp also serves as a way to promote positive relationships with law enforcement personnel.

Camp POSTCARD offers most of the traditional activities found at a summer camp, but additionally, makes an effort to set up a computer lab for the campers. "In the past, we cobbled this area together," said Susan Giambalvo, Program Operations Director, "But this year, with the donation of the Toughbooks, we were able to offer our campers so much more access to computing." Computer lab is a very popular component of Camp POSTCARD. "Some kids don't have access to a computer at home, or can't engage in more physical camp activities," she said.

"The computers take a beating because of being in a camp setting," says Ms. Giambalvo "Having the Toughbooks that are sturdy and can stand up to the hard use and

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wear and tear is very helpful. The rugged features are very helpful with the workout the campers give the computers. "The computers really give them an opportunity to come into their own and have a more robust camp experience."

Camp POSTCARD administrators also used donated rugged computers to streamline the backroom activities at the camp – three CF-28s were networked together, and along with two donated air cards, provide wireless internet access for the camp administration. The camper database, food service ordering system, and information on the agency were all on the CIS computers at the head office. "The Toughbooks provided access to the information configuration at the head office for the first time. This was a huge help in improving operations at the camp – by removing vast amounts of repetitive paperwork which previously had been processed by hand."

"The computers were such a huge help, she said. "The USDA offers a program that reimburses us for many of our food costs. Because we had the computers, we were able to do the daily required reporting much more efficiently."

The computers also benefited the law officers who volunteered during the camp. "They were able to keep in touch with their email and the goings-on in their departments, which made it easier to be away and to volunteer," said Ms. Giambalvo. "I love the program because it creates such a neat relationship with Law Enforcement," she said.

"We've been blown away by the generosity of the donations to Camp POSTCARD," said Ms. Giambalvo. "We really appreciate the Toughbook computers, and we are looking forward to being able to do a lot more with them next year."

Technology and Robotics Team: FIRST Competition, Triton Regional High School, Byfield, MA

TransCOR's rugged computer donations to the Triton Technology/Robotics Team at Triton Regional High School upped the competitive ante for the team in its entry in the FIRST Robotics competition held in Boston – FIRST - For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology – was founded by inventor Dean Kaman to encourage more children to follow a path in engineering. To participate in the competition, teams of high school students design and build their own robots and then put them through a series of assigned tasks in a specified time period. Judges award points for each task accomplished.

The Code Bandits, Triton Regional High School's robotics team, used three Toughbook CF-28 rugged computers to program their robot for the competition using Easy-C software. "Having three computers available and loaded with Easy-C helped a great deal – we could now have seven kids programming at the same time. That's crucial when you have a small development window," said Ray Pike, Triton Math Teacher and Technology Team/Robotics Coach. "The development time is short – and having the computers available sure helped in meeting the time commitments on the project."

The Toughbooks proved their mettle in the contest as well. "We took the Toughbook into the competition. During the first stage of the, the robot has to move autonomously. The stage has several heats – and after the first heat it was easy for us to change/modify our robot's program on the fly right there at the competition based on the results of the previous heats," said Mr. Pike. "The ability for the kids to do a live program update in the middle of the competition made them see how software integrates with hardware,

and how they can adapt it in the field for improved performance. It's a beautiful example – because you are really improving the way a thing works – in real time," he said.

Ray Pike says the toughness of the computers made it possible for the students to crank on the robot's programming outside of scheduled team time. "Because the computers are rugged Toughbooks, the students can carry the computers around and use them all anywhere. They could take the computers home for the weekends to work on the projects, and they would come back in good condition. That's not likely to happen with ordinary laptops."

Toughbook durability also plays its part on the robotics contest floor. "If you are around kids in a competitive environment, chances are someone is going to step on the computer or knock it over," said Mr. Pike. "If you are working around kids, ruggedness is a great feature!"

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Rugged Computers for Tough Workers