

INFO-BYTES

New Certification Classes at Byte Back!

Byte Back's course catalog has several exciting new courses to prepare our students for computing certification exams! We are currently offering an A+ course, designed to prepare students to pass the CompTIA A+ certification exam. A+ certification is the industry standard for computer support technicians. For our students, passing this exam equips them with highly desirable qualifications.

Last fall, Byte Back offered Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) classes for Microsoft Word 2003, and we plan to offer even more Microsoft user certification prep courses. As soon as we upgrade our systems, we will offer a class to prepare students for the Microsoft Certified Application Specialist (MCAS) exam. Similar to MOS, MCAS certification provides a globally recognized measure of proficiency in Microsoft desktop software, but with a focus on more recent versions, such as Microsoft Office 2007, Windows VISTA and Windows 7.

In the upcoming months, we plan to offer even more certification prep courses, including Microsoft Project Certification Program, Microsoft Certified Desktop Support Technician (MCDST), CompTIA Network+ and Linux. These courses will help our students obtain highly marketable certifications that will put them at an advantage in today's competitive marketplace.

For more information, please visit our website at <http://www.byteback.org/training/course-catalog> or contact Betty Benningfield at 202-529-3395 or bbenningfield@byteback.org.

Microsoft
CERTIFIED

Application
Specialist

Microsoft
CERTIFIED

Desktop Support
Technician

CompTIA.

A Quarterly Newsletter
WINTER 2010

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BYTE BACK

Training for Successful Futures

815 Monroe Street, NE

Washington, DC 20017

Phone 202.529.3395

Fax: 202.529.4684

Email: info@byteback.org

www.byteback.org

CFC# 73543/United Way #8073



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Kelley Ellsworth, *Executive Director*

RAMPING UP MAKES US MORE COST EFFECTIVE

As each month goes by, we witness increased demand for three of our key programs. Five years ago, it was possible to function without the use of a computer, but in 2010, computers are a vital tool for everyday living. District residents must now register their children or grandchildren for kindergarten online. Most employers now require applicants to email their resumes. Yet there are thousands of Washingtonians who have never before used a computer. Byte Back is addressing this issue on a city-wide level. We offer our basic computer literacy classes at Catholic Charities and the Perry School (both in Ward 6) and at Byte Back and Academy of Hope (both in Ward 5). In addition, we are offering customized computer literacy classes for senior citizens at two neighborhood libraries: Francis Gregory (Ward 7) and Woodridge (Ward 5).

As our city continues to suffer from high unemployment levels the pain is not shared equally. While the unemployment rate was 3% in Ward 3 in November 2009, it was 29% in Ward 8, 20% in Ward 7 and 16% in Ward 5. These are the wards where most of our students live, and our programs are helping to combat these figures. During our second quarter, we provided basic job training to 104 students, almost tripling our quarterly figures from FY09. Our Office Track program trains students for administrative positions such as word processor, bookkeeper, secretary, executive secretary and administrative assistant, with median salaries ranging from \$33,220 to \$48,510. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the top job markets in the coming years will be in Healthcare, Technology, Education, and Business/Professional Services. All will have administrative positions.

But many of our students are hungry for more. They want to turn economic lemons into employment lemonade. If there are few

jobs available right now, why not take this time to obtain added training? In FY10, we will also train students to become Computer Support Specialists and Network Administrators, with median salaries of \$55,350 to \$75,920. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that nationally more than half of all job openings between 2008 and 2018 will be in middle-skill occupations, those jobs that generally require some significant education and training beyond high school but less than a bachelor's degree, such as vocational certificates or on-the-job training. According to a recent study by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, "strategies must be implemented that offer multiple opportunities to engage and re-engage workers." For just this reason, Byte Back has begun to roll out the first of seven certification programs, which will allow our students to move up the career ladder.

None of our ramping up process would be possible without critical assistance from volunteers. Recently I looked at our volunteer numbers from the last three six-month periods. Byte Back volunteers have always been very special, devoting many hours each month to the organization. In the first half of FY09 (July 1-December 31, 2008) 20 active volunteers spent an average of 8.5 hours at Byte Back each month. By the second half of FY09 (January 1-June 30, 2009), 32 active volunteers each spent an average of 14.5 hours each month. By the first half of FY10, that had risen to 35 volunteers, each spending an average of 25.8 hours per month. When you add it up, during the first six month period, Byte Back was graced with about 39 hours per month of volunteer time, during the second that number increased to 149, and during the most recent 6 months, we averaged 338 volunteer hours per month, an almost 9-fold increase!

As with any enterprise, when you increase volume, you experience cost savings. Economy of scale has allowed Byte Back to be more efficient with our financial resources. In FY09, we served 442 students for a cash budget of \$322,396, averaging \$751 per student. In the first half of FY10, we served 410 students for a cash budget of \$236,685, averaging \$473 per student. We are committed to making the most of our resources to serve our students as well as possible.

YOU CAN SUPPORT BYTE BACK WITHOUT WRITING A CHECK



There are four different ways you can support the work we are doing without donating money:

- 1) Write a quick review of our work for Great Nonprofits. This is a great new site that publicizes reviews of nonprofits much like Yelp or TripAdvisor. This will help us tell our donors and funders about the work we are doing. Just click <http://greatnonprofits.org/reviews/profile2/byte-back>. Thank you!
- 2) Send your used electronics to Gazelle.com and they will turn them into cash for Byte Back. They accept items such as cell phones, computers, cameras and video games. You can get them out of your home, do some good for our environment, and raise some cash for Byte Back. What could be better? Just click <http://byteback.gazelle.com>. Thank you!

- 3) Go shopping! iGive.com is a free service which enables you to earn money for your favorite cause (Byte Back!) whenever you make an online purchase or search the web. Just go to <http://www.igive.com>, select Byte Back as your organization, and shop away. There are hundreds of businesses, from Delta Airlines and Westin Hotels to Home Depot and Staples, that will donate a percentage of your purchase to Byte Back! Have fun and thank you!
- 4) Volunteer! Byte Back is growing dramatically and we need your help to continue to meet the needs of our community. Please consider teaching a class, or assisting another teacher. You could also help design or update curriculum from home! Why not try your hands at event planning or other fundraising activities? Just contact Betty Benningfield at 202-529-3395 or bbenningfield@byteback.org.

LARGEST GRADUATION EVER!

On December 16, Byte Back held its largest graduation ceremony ever. Sixty-three students received their certificates of completion that night. The students represented 5 Office Track classes, one A+ certification class and one MOS certification class. One student, Juan Nino, completed both Office Track and the A+ certification class!

Graduates brought their family members, who were beaming with pride at their loved ones' accomplishments. The event, which was held at Brooks' Mansion across the street from Byte Back, drew a crowd of about 150.

A nice visual touch was added by our students themselves – several PowerPoint presentations compiled from the Office Track students' final projects were projected onto a large screen while guests mingled before the ceremony. The presentations dealt with topics as diverse as HIV/AIDS, nature, exercise, history and religion. This was a great way to showcase the talent and creativity of our students.

At the ceremony, we also celebrated the dedication and commitment of our 38 volunteers from the first half of the year. The volunteers in attendance received certificates of recognition and gift bags. We are so grateful for their selfless contributions of time and energy. Without them, we would be unable to deliver our much-needed programs.

All attendees enjoyed sparkling cider, pastries and other snacks as they waited for the ceremony to begin. Byte Back

board members, volunteers, staff and community partners were all in attendance.



Kelley Ellsworth, Byte Back Executive Director, and Lucas Cioffi, volunteer teacher



Ellsworth and Phyllis Brown-Robinson, Office Track graduate



Clyde Edwards from One Economy, Lowell Dodge from First Time Computers, and Matt Andrews from Cricket Communications

Byte Back invited two keynote speakers to the event: Matt Andrews, VP for Communication at Cricket Communications and Clyde Edwards, Director, Office of the Chairman at One Economy. Both gentlemen helped Byte Back to announce the new seniors' computer literacy program beginning in 2010 (see page 5), which is a result of partnership between Byte Back, the DC Public Library, Cricket and One Economy.

The crowd was very enthusiastic upon hearing of the program, but there was more in store: Mr. Andrews from Cricket told all the graduates in attendance that they were eligible to receive two free years of Cricket mobile broadband! Our graduates already knew that they would receive a free refurbished computer, but the Cricket announcement was a surprise to almost everyone in attendance. It was also a great way to kick off the seniors' program.

Finally, the moment everyone was waiting for arrived: the graduation ceremony. During the ceremony, students came one by one to the front of the room to receive their certificates and have their pictures taken. At the end of the ceremony, we took a big group picture – it's the first time so many Byte Back graduates have been together in one place!

The night was a huge success, filled with positivity and pride. We look forward to hosting the next graduation celebration!



FANNIE MAE HELP THE HOMELESS WALKATHON

By Emily Monahan, Byte Back Board Member

The dedication of our early risers was not in question on the morning of Saturday, November 21. Though temperatures were mild, they were the lowest of the season thus far and had a few



of us dressed in multiple layers of t-shirts, sweat shirts and jackets. As can be seen Jewel and Kelley were ready with signs at the meeting area so our team would know where and how to find us.

One of the benefits to being close to the sign-in tent was that we did not have far to walk to find the coffee and donuts graciously supplied by Kelley.

Another benefit for those who are baseball fans, was the short walk to find the Washington Nationals Racing Presidents who also showed up to support the Help the Homeless event.

Here Jewel is seen motivating the group as we were waiting for the walkathon to start; or was she running to get away from the Racing Presidents?



Overall, the event was very successful and Byte Back board members and volunteers had a wonderful time walking, meeting other non-profit organizations, and being in awe of the sacrifice everyone was making here. What a powerful sense of meeting a great need we have in Washington, D.C. We are so very grateful to all those who showed up to walk with us, and to those who so graciously and generously supported our organization through donations. Your concern, time, and donations are such a great blessing - especially during the worst recession in our country's history and while many are unable to give due to economic hardships.



BYTE BACK'S NEW SLIDING FEE SCALE



After over a year of providing free computer classes to low-income Washingtonians, Byte Back will soon go back to charging a fee for courses. The good news is that we will still serve all students, regardless of their ability to pay. There are four ways to pay for tuition:



1. By paying for the full tuition amount if students can afford it;
2. By applying for a scholarship and paying the remaining tuition. We offer up to an 88% scholarship for low-income students;
3. By applying for a scholarship and working off the remaining tuition by volunteering at Byte Back; or
4. By applying for training at a One-Stop Center. If accepted, the Department of Employment Services will pay the FULL AMOUNT of your tuition and supplies (books, tools, certification exams, etc.).

TWO NEW PARTNERS: HELPING BYTE BACK AND THE COMMUNITY

By Caroline Price, Byte Back Board Member



We start 2010 with the welcome addition of two new creative and synergistic partnerships. The first is an exciting new working relationship with the DC Public Library (DCPL), the idea for which arose when we partnered with them and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) for a grant under the Stimulus Act back in the Fall of 2009. Chris Tonjes, head of Information Technology at DCPL, suggested that while waiting for the Stimulus Grant process to work, there might be some other ways in which our two organizations could begin to work together. As a result, Byte Back and DCPL soon agreed on a pilot project under which Byte Back will provide computer literacy training to four hundred senior citizens by the end of June. On January 25 and 26, 171 seniors began this 32-hour program.

The classes are provided free of charge at two local libraries – Woodridge Library in Ward 5 and the Francis A. Gregory Library in Ward 7. The ten daytime classes will be held several times a week and are open to DC residents over the age of 55. The program includes two components: PC for Beginners Parts 1 and 2—each consisting of 9 sessions. The pilot program has also successfully attracted support from First Time Computers, One Economy, Google, Qualcomm and Cricket Communications.

DCPL is providing Byte Back with \$112,000 from the Holden Bequest, towards the cost of the classes and towards providing all successful graduates with a refurbished computer from First Time Computers at the end of the course. Low income graduates will also receive a generous gift from Cricket: a modem and two years of internet access free of charge – a very useful

graduation gift worth about \$1000! We are excited about the new partnership and the program it is funding but now we need your help. Please help us get the word out to the over 55 community about the availability of the classes. If you think you might have some availability during weekdays over the next few months please contact us as we can train you to help deliver the classes.

Which brings us to our second new partnership which is with Trinity Washington University, located in Northeast DC, just blocks from Byte Back. Under a new collaboration, arising out of a conversation with the university President at the recent Washington Area Women's Foundation luncheon, they are supporting our pilot DCPL program in a number of ways. Following up her President's desire to support Byte Back, Trinity University's Dean Michelle Bowie has been instrumental in designing a program that will provide Work Study funding for students who volunteer as instructors in the Computer Literacy classes for DC senior citizens. Already eight students attended a

teacher training on December 11th and received instruction in best practices for teaching senior citizens. These new Trinity instructors are helping us deliver the training at both of the Public Library locations. This very community-minded university has also agreed to help us publicize our programs and get the word out about what classes are available and what support is needed.

What a great way to start the New Year – with new friends and good neighbors working together!



SUCCESS STORY: DWIGHT ALEXANDER

Dwight Alexander completed the Office Track course at Byte Back in the fall of 2009. Prior to that, he had not worked for some time. He was volunteering at a vocational rehabilitation program for adults with mental illness where he learned about the classes at Byte Back. Dwight had very basic computer skills and some computer hardware knowledge when he started the class at Byte Back. He wanted to work in a clerical position in an office but was apprehensive that he wouldn't have the skills. Dwight was spending his days helping other volunteers prepare lunch for more than forty people every day and was very comfortable in a leadership role in the kitchen and dining hall.



Soon after Dwight started the Office Track course he started volunteering to help teach the beginners computer class at the organization where he volunteered. He would primarily teach people how to use the mouse and the keyboard. Soon after starting the course and working with the job counselor at Byte Back he began a temporary clerical position at Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law. He continues to work there and has been very successful. Dwight feels that the Office Track course gave him confidence that he didn't have before that made him more comfortable in an office setting. Dwight still teaches basic computer skills every Wednesday at his volunteer organization and is interested in pursuing A+ Certification classes.

SPRING 2010 CLASS SCHEDULE

Classes are now being offered at a sliding scale rate. Payment options include volunteering and scholarships. For more information on these options, please see the article on page 4. Classes must be full to start. For more information about classes or fees contact Betty Benningfield (Email: bbenningfield@byteback.org / Tel: 202-529-3395) or visit our website at www.byteback.org/training/schedule-of-classes. Register in person Monday-Friday 10:00 am - 5:00 pm, except for classes at Catholic Charities (see specific times below).

PC BEGINNERS 1

March 22-April 2
Monday & Wednesday **Mornings**
10:00 am to noon

April 5-April 21 or May 17-June 2 (at Catholic Charities¹)
Monday & Wednesday **Evenings**
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

PC Beginners 1 for Seniors (55+) at Woodridge & Francis Gregory Libraries²

March 29-April 16
Monday, Wednesday & Friday **Afternoons**
1:00 pm to 2:45 pm

March 29-April 16
Monday, Wednesday & Friday **Evenings**³
3:00 pm to 4:45 pm

PC BEGINNERS 2

March 29-April 14
Monday & Wednesday **Evenings**
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

April 26-May 12 or June 7-June 23 (at Catholic Charities¹)
Monday & Wednesday **Evenings**
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

PC Beginners 2 for Seniors (55+) at Francis Gregory Library²

March 29-April 16
Monday, Wednesday & Friday **Afternoons**
3:00 pm to 4:45 pm

INTENSIVE PC BEGINNERS PROGRAM (1&2)

March 22-March 30
Monday-Thursday **Mornings and Afternoons**
10:00 am to 2:30 pm

May 17-May 25
Monday-Thursday **Mornings and Afternoons**
10:00 am to 2:30 pm

MS OFFICE TRACK

April 6-June 17 (at Catholic Charities¹)
Tuesday & Thursday **Evenings**
6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

INTENSIVE MS OFFICE TRACK PROGRAM

April 5-April 22
Monday-Thursday **Mornings and Afternoons**
10:00 am to 2:30 pm

April 26-May 13
Monday-Thursday **Mornings and Afternoons**
10:00 am to 2:30 pm

¹ Catholic Charities is located at 924 G Street NW at Gallery Place/Chinatown. Register at 5:30 pm on the first day of class (\$10 fee).

² Woodridge Library: 1801 Hamlin St. NE; Francis Gregory library: 3660 Alabama Ave. SE

³ This evening PCB 1 class offered on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at Woodridge Library only



Byte Back, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, teaching a broad range of computer and office skills to underserved youth and adults. Our mission is to improve economic opportunity by providing computer training and employment readiness skills to low-income residents of the Washington Metropolitan area. Our ultimate goal is to promote successful futures, one student at a time!

The majority of our students are female (62%), African American (78%) and either homeless or living temporarily with friends or relatives. Byte Back enables our economically disadvantaged students, most of whom reside in Wards 5, 7, and 8, to acquire the marketable skills needed to find employment, hold on to a job, and/or advance in their careers.

The average cost of one student graduating from Office Track, not including donations of materials and volunteer time, is \$1,384. The average cost per student of our Introduction to PCs class, which first connects youth and adults to our tech-savvy world, is \$346.

Byte Back succeeds with generous donations from individuals, foundations, and corporations. YOU can help our students by:

- teaching a class;
- providing an internship or job; or,
- donating funds.

With volunteer teachers, donated equipment, and a committed staff, Byte Back today serves over 400 individuals each year. Our main classrooms are in Northeast Washington but we partner with other non-profits to serve the greater Metro area.

Volunteers – giving time and energy to our students – and donors – providing essential funding - make our work possible.

YES, I want to help students achieve better paying jobs and independence. Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Phone/Email

Method of Payment

- Check
- American Express
- Visa
- MasterCard

Credit Card #

Exp. date

Signature

I am also interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities in:

- Teaching
- Mentoring
- Event Planning/Marketing
- Designing Curriculum
- Other: _____

Please mail or fax this form with your contribution to

**Byte Back
815 Monroe Street, NE
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Fax 202.529.4684**



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Washington, DC 20017

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Fax: 202.529.4684

Email: info@byteback.org

www.byteback.org

CFC# 73543/United Way #8073