May 12, 2020

Dear Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors,

As a resident of Santa Clara County, I am writing to ask the Board to work with the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) to provide devices, hot spots, and data plans for the 15,000 families identified by SCCOE who are currently without Internet access. Please vote to approve the referral submitted as Agenda Item 16: Closing the Digital Divide for Vulnerable Families.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposes the need for online access to critical government services like medicine, housing, food and education. I am writing on behalf of our most vulnerable students and their families. Students must have internet access in their homes to receive critical government services like CalFresh, CalWorks, MediCal, and WIC benefits that fulfill their basic needs.

Students also must have Internet access to participate in distance learning and not fall further behind their peers. Current solutions like sitting in a parking lot to access the internet and do your schoolwork from a car are not acceptable. Internet access must be in the home so that students have access to the same education as their peers and can have streamed classes that are so critical to effective learning.

This should be a top priority. If even we, in Silicon Valley, cannot provide internet access to the people in our community who most need it, it is unclear to me what our priorities are. We must use the wealth we have generated here from the internet, to ensure that everyone has access to its resources.

Thank you for your hard work keeping our county safe during this public health crisis. We urge you to vote on Tuesday to facilitate digital equity in our community by approving this referral and working with SCCOE to support vulnerable families. While this short-term emergency solution has the potential to address immediate needs, we also hope the county continues to partner with cities to address broadband gaps through long-term infrastructure development.
Sincerely,

Sean White
Resident & Parent, Santa Clara County
Chief R&D Officer Mozilla
Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors,

My family lives in Santa Clara County and goes to the public schools. I am writing to ask that you vote to provide devices and hot spots to families in need to enable distance learning. If there isn't a base level of internet access for all students, then the schools cannot in good faith plan to use modern online learning tools like streaming videos or video conferences. Those methods are being developed right now based on what the county can give students. This is a very clear case of inequality of one student impacting the quality of learning for all students.

Thank you
Indy Siverd, Resident and school parent

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Indy M. Siverd
Dear Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors,

As a resident of Santa Clara County, I am writing to ask the Board to work with the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) to provide devices, hot spots, and data plans for the 15,000 families identified by SCCOE who are currently without Internet access. Please vote to approve the referral submitted as Agenda Item 16: Closing the Digital Divide for Vulnerable Families.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposes the need for online access to critical government services like medicine, housing, food and education. Students must have internet access in their homes to receive critical government services and participate in distance learning and not fall further behind their peers. In China, they have achieved distance learning country wide even with students in remote villages. It is difficult to image that we, in Silicon Valley, cannot provide internet access to the people in our community who need it most.

This should be a top priority. Internet access must be in the home so that students have access to the same education as their peers and can have streamed classes that are so critical to effective learning. We must use the wealth we have generated here from the internet, to ensure that everyone has access to its resources.

Thank you for your hard work keeping our county safe during this public health crisis. We urge you to vote on Tuesday to facilitate digital equity in our community by approving this referral and working with SCCOE to support vulnerable families. While this short-term emergency solution has the potential to address immediate needs, we also hope the county continues to partner with cities to address broadband gaps through long-term infrastructure development.

Sincerely,

Li Quan
Resident, Santa Clara County
Parent, Mountain View Whisman School District