

**Media release**

24 February 2009

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 4:30pm 24/02/09**



---

## **New Auckland families enjoy the benefits of technology**

13 Auckland families from refugee backgrounds will graduate from the national Computers in Homes, *Rorohiko I roto ngā Kāinga*, programme today with a ceremony at the Wesley Community Centre in Mount Roskill.

Computers in Homes brings Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) within reach of both families in low-income communities and families with a refugee background, allowing parents and grandparents to connect with their children's learning and the wider community.

Today's event celebrates the achievements of local families who have completed their ICT training which forms part of the Computers in Homes refugee programme. The families have been provided with a computer and internet access along with training, skills and support to use these technologies which help them to adjust to New Zealand life.

The graduation will be attended by Dr Jackie Blue, National List MP, Abraham Mamer, Ministry of Education Regional Refugee Education, and staff from the Computers in Homes programme.

Computers in Homes has been working in partnership with the Ministry of Education's Refugee Education division since 2004 and has provided more than 400 refugee families with a recycled computer, training and support.

"For many in the course, this was the first time they had ever been in contact with a computer in their lives. In conjunction with an English course, these 13 families are now able to search the Internet, communicate with distant relatives and use basic word processing software," says Computers in Homes' National Coordinator, Di Das.

Computers in Homes estimates that more than 100,000 New Zealand families with school-aged children in low income communities still don't have a computer and the Internet at home. The programme has recently launched the '100,000 Challenge' which aims to connect the remaining families without a computer in their homes and encourage digital literacy and competence.

"Computers in Homes provides a vehicle for practical educational opportunities while also addressing ICT access issues in this country. It's a proven programme that has reached 400 refugee families and

more than 4,000 other Kiwi families so we're challenging the Government, business sector and the community to provide greater funding support," Ms Das says.

The refugee programme has been able to provide ICT education to refugee communities in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Palmerston North, Christchurch, Nelson and Porirua. The refugee families are from Colombian, Somali, Afghani, Burmese, Bhutanese, Burundi, Eritrean, Congolese, Ethiopian, Iraqi and Cambodian backgrounds. Parents receive 20 hours of basic computer training including word processing, emailing and using the Internet, at their local migrant centre or children's school.

The training aims to empower parents to become actively involved in their children's learning, as well as increase their own employment opportunities and confidence for adjusting to New Zealand society. Results from the programme have included employment success and continued education.

"We receive numerous emails of thanks from participants in the programme. It opens up a whole new world of opportunity for families who participate," Ms Das says.

Computers in Homes is an initiative of the 2020 Communications Trust with support from the Ministry of Education and the Community Partnership Fund. The 2020 Trust continues to seek sustaining funding and support to expand Computers in Homes to all low income communities where children do not have access to computers and the Internet in their homes.

For more information visit [www.computersinhomes.org.nz](http://www.computersinhomes.org.nz). /end (552 words)

---

**For further information or images, or to arrange any interviews please contact:**

Di Das – National Coordinator, CIH  
didas@computersinhomes.org.nz  
(027) 4133-677

Jeff Louttit – Chilli Marketing  
jeff@chillimarketing.co.nz  
(021) 490-687