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Silicon Valley Education Foundation supports students without internet access amid COVID-19

SAN JOSE, CA - When Bay Area schools closed on March 16th, students were instructed to engage in “flexible learning” at home. With nearly 100,000 San Jose residents lacking reliable internet access, online learning was not immediately available for all students. Silicon Valley Education Foundation (SVEF) stepped up to fill in the opportunity gap.

Within a few days, SVEF created integrated reading, language arts, math, and science learning activities for students in grades 3-12 that can be done at home without an electronic device. The nonprofit printed 7,000 copies of the 70-page packets in English and Spanish and distributed them at school meal pick-up locations throughout Santa Clara County.

Educators recognize that the COVID-19 outbreak is widening the achievement gap, further disadvantaging students who lack reliable internet access and electronic devices. “The students who are suffering most are those without internet—when school moves online, these children are left behind,” said Lisa Andrew, Ed. D, CEO of Silicon Valley Education Foundation. “SVEF is a nimble, responsive local nonprofit. We saw the opportunity to serve our community by providing at-home learning activities accessible to all, and we moved quickly to help.”

To date, over 6,000 packets have been delivered to districts including Franklin-McKinley School District, East Side Union High School District, and other Santa Clara County districts. SVEF is also sending math activities in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese via text message to over 5,000 families throughout the Bay Area.

Lessons are grounded in math and science and include activities about COVID-19, health, and what it means to “flatten the curve.” “The lessons give students, families, and teachers opportunities to engage in science and mathematics through real-life experiences and a way to reflect on the ‘new normal,” said Ma Bernadette Andres-Salgario, Ed.D, Mathematics

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Coordinator at the Santa Clara County Office of Education. “It’s inspiring how the activities help promote the value of good citizenship.”

SVEF, in partnership with the California Emerging Technology Fund, Santa Clara County Office of Education and the City of San Jose, is also working on short- and long-term solutions to the absence of reliable, affordable internet access in some communities. At a minimum, the 5,000 students enrolled in SVEF summer programs will receive reliable internet access and an electronic device if not currently available to them.

Silicon Valley Education Foundation’s K-10 at-home learning activities in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese can be accessed at svef.com/resources.

About SVEF

Silicon Valley Education Foundation (SVEF) is the largest educational nonprofit in Silicon Valley. We are guided by the belief that all students are capable of pursuing higher education and boosting their future economic mobility regardless of their background. SVEF has an established legacy of providing proven STEM programs and being profoundly committed to empowering students to graduate from high school ready for college and career. For more information, visit svefoundation.org.