## Ted's Project Volunteers Give New Life to Old Computers

It's 8 p.m. on a Friday evening, but the DRM offices are anything but quiet. No, a server hasn't crashed and the website is running fine. It's not a work emergency that has kept staff members at work after hours, but a special project that provides refurbished computers to nonprofit organizations.

Senior Systems Analyst Ted Harold started Ted's Project 10 years ago after learning how costly it was for a local nonprofit to raise funds to replace an outdated computer system.

"So many companies buy new equipment after just a few years," he said. "Although those computers are no longer brand new, they're often a lot better than the computers nonprofits can afford. I found a few volunteers, and we started spending a few Friday nights every month refurbishing donated computers. I never expected it to go on so long."

Over the years, Ted's Project volunteers have spent countless hours refurbishing 1,341 computers. This year, the group hopes to break last year's record of 492 refurbishments. Donated computers come from a variety of sources, including old DRM machines and donations from family, friends and the public. Cassie O'Reilly, office support coordinator, and Alycia Wayne, marketing coordinator, contact local businesses and arrange pickups of corporate donations.
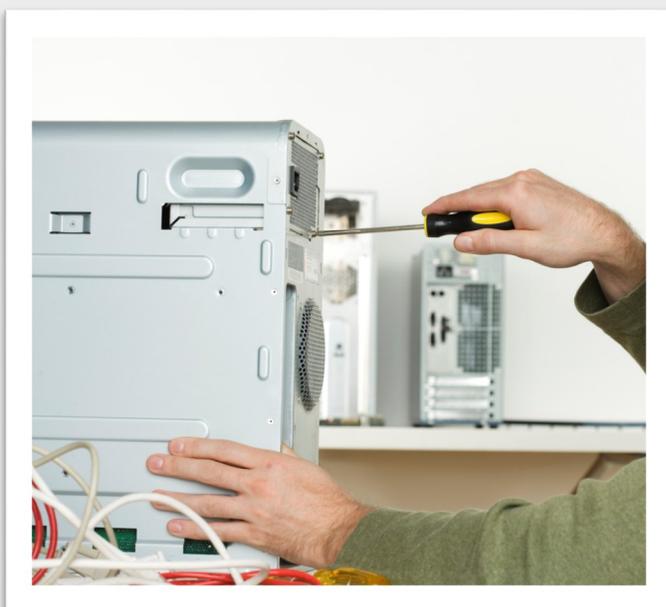
"It's a great feeling knowing that we've helped these organizations. Many of them couldn't afford decent computers otherwise." said Mike Johnson, UNIX administrator. "I've helped deliver a few of the computers, and the employees of the organizations are always so grateful."

Interested nonprofit organizations complete a form, available on the DRM website. Ted's Project review requests and meet with the nonprofits to determine their needs. Computers aren't the only equipment the groups receive. They're also given monitors, printers, routers and basic software.

"We want to make sure they have everything they need to be up and running quickly," Ted said.

If you have a computer, printer or monitor that you would like to donate, give Ted a call at extension 25. Computers must be no older than five years old.

Benefits Open Enrollment for 2014 will be held November 11– 25.

Information on available plans and benefits can be found in the email you recently received or by visiting the DRM Intranet site. Have any questions? Call Sherri Fortunato at extension 11.

Mind Your Manners

Whether you're visiting a client site for the day or working a long-term contract, keep in mind a few basic rules of conduct and etiquette to help avoid unpleasant situations.

1. **Keep your opinions to yourself.** It's fine to join a discussion about last night's baseball game or TV show, but it's a good idea to stay away from discussions about religion, politics and other sensitive topics. Those discussions can be heated and no matter what your opinion, someone's bound to disagree with you, which can lead to the kind of tensions you don't want with a client.

2. **Don't eat food unless you've received an invitation.** When there's free food at DRM, everyone's welcome to partake, but that might not be the case at a client site. Before you grab that hoagie, make sure your hosts specifically ask you to join in. If you're not sure, ask an employee if the company frowns on contractors sampling the food.

3. **Be polite.** Say *please, thank you* and *you're welcome.* Find creative ways to avoid swearing. "Oh fudge!" might sound a little ridiculous coming out of your mouth, but it's better to amuse your hosts than appall them.

4. **Let the people you work with at the client site know if you'll be late or out of the office.** Although you probably spoke to your DRM supervisor regarding time off, it's just good manners to make sure the client company also knows when you will and won't be there.

5. **Stand out for the right reasons.** It's a lot better to be remembered for your impressive computer skills than for your smelly shirts or your habit of taking two parking spots in the employee parking lot. Be courteous, kind and helpful to everyone you meet. If you don't know something, take the time to find out and get back to the person with the answer.

6. **Don't repeat anything you hear.** Whether it's juicy personal gossip or company secrets, it's a good idea to resist the urge to pass on the information.
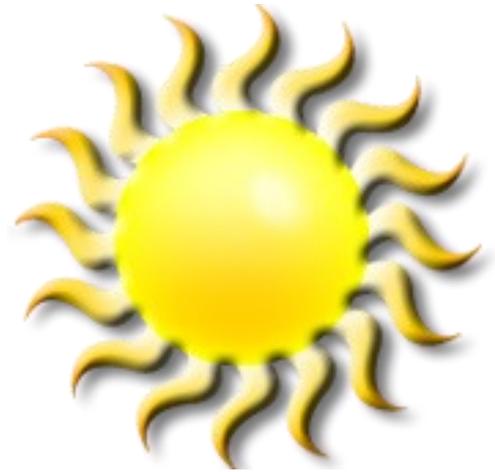
There's Always Tomorrow

Late nights are a fact of life when you work in the IT business. When things go wrong, we're the ones who receive those middle-of-the-night phone calls.

Crucial situations require immediate solutions, but there are times when a problem can wait until the next day. In fact, it might even be better in some cases to tackle the problem when you've spent some time away from work and have had a full night's sleep.

If it's 7:45 and you're still at your desk, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is it likely that I'll solve this problem tonight?

- Does the problem affect the function of key systems or processes?

If you answer "no" to those questions, pack up, go home and give your brain a chance to rest. Who knows? In the morning, the solution might just jump out at you when you log on to the system.