

Martins Ferry Public Library Receives Grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

The Martins Ferry Public Library was selected by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for a matching grant to replace patron computers. This grant is being distributed over two years. The first year grant totals \$41,600 with a 25% match of \$10,400. The second year grant totals \$36,400 with a 50% match of \$18,200. The library has matched the funds for the first year with a grant from the Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley and a donation from a bequest the library received. The library has placed donation jars at all locations to help raise money for the second year match from the local communities in accordance with the wishes of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The foundation's Opportunity Online hardware grant program is designed to help the library provide free access to computers for library patrons long into the future.

The computers have arrived for Year One and have been installed in the library in Martins Ferry. The branches located in Bridgeport, Shadyside, Powhatan Point, Bethesda and Flushing will be receiving these new computers over the next few weeks. Along with the new computers, additional upgrades will be installed such as wireless at all locations, new printers with color, and miscellaneous hardware to support the new equipment. Windows 7 will be installed along with Microsoft Office 2007 Professional Edition plus other useful software. A program will be installed at Martins Ferry, Bridgeport and Shadyside that enables patrons to log themselves onto the computers with a current library card. Please excuse the inconvenience during this time of installation.

Year Two or the next year of the grant will allow more upgrades and perhaps laptops at all locations.

Due to the recent budget cuts, funding for the library has been decreased. Reduced hours and staffing have presented difficulties in every location. To receive this grant means that the library can still offer quality computer service at all locations to keep the digital divide away from our area.

Check the Martin Ferry Public Library's web page at <http://www.mfpl.org/>. If you wish to donate to this project, you may use Paypal on the web page or send a check to the library at P.O. Box 130, Martins Ferry. Call the library at 633-0314 for additional information.