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VHS students to utilize iPads

By Travis Gulbrandson
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Interaction with technology continues to be a growing aspect of most areas of life, and this month, students at Vermillion High School saw this interaction spread to their classrooms.

That's because on Nov. 13, each VHS student was provided with an iPad for use as a tool for doing homework assignments, studying and communicating, both in and out of school.

"All of their assignments will be basically developed off of this," said Jason Gault, assistant director of technology at the school. "Teachers will be able to disseminate all of their stuff to them – notes,

PowerPoints, everything that they would initially get through either paper handouts or some other source, they now can receive on their device and have at all times.

"With the device, they get the iPad itself, they get a cover for it, they get a charger, but they also get all the stuff that goes on the inside, all the programs and tools that they're going to use in their everyday schoolwork," he said.

The iPads were acquired as part of the state's "1 to 1 Initiative," part of former Gov. Rounds' Classroom Communications project to provide incentive money for school districts to initiate one-to-one laptop or tablet programs for high school students.

According to James



James McGuire, director of technology at Vermillion High School, examines one of the iPads that was distributed to all VHS students earlier this month.

(Travis Gulbrandson/Vermillion Plain Talk)

McGuire, the school's director of technology, the iPads were purchased on a three-year lease, with "a significant amount of money" from the technology budget for those next three years going toward their acquisition.

The devices arrived in the summer, at which point some of them were

distributed to teachers. A further 380 were distributed to the students earlier this month.

"Basically all the teachers K-12 have one, and there will be two carts of them at the middle school, and there will be an extra one in every classroom at the elementaries," McGuire said.

Although it has only been about three weeks since they were distributed to the students, they already are being used by classes of all kinds.

"At first it was hard because everyone was learning, but now everyone is starting to get a better

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that their father had not gotten them placed in school, which can be very expensive in Zimbabwe. Mukumba then got an idea — she could teach them. She spoke to their

father, and by Feb. 9 she had started a school in her home.

"A week later, there were two more," Mukumba recalled. "By the 11th day, I had seven children."

She now teaches 44 children out of her home and employs four teachers. Many of the students have HIV.

Some of the children

have parents who can pay a fee, but Mukumba also seeks out orphans in her community with no means to pay.

"My wish now is to look for a place and build a structure so I can accommodate those who don't have homes and make it a boarding school for those who need it," she said. "That's my dream. If

you educate a child, you educate the nation."

By extending love to others, Mukumba hopes it helps them find life a little more worthwhile — especially if they have HIV or AIDS.


"I would like to tell people they don't have to be discouraged if they find out they are HIV positive," she said. "They need to

take care of themselves, change their lifestyles, take their medication regularly and have a clean mind. The biggest thing is, they need to change their lifestyle. If they keep on living a careless life, they will infect other people.

"Eat well, dress well, live well and pray well," Mukumba said. "God is there. Some people might

not believe that, but for me, God is real. I know whenever things are hard, and I say, 'God, this is not for me,' He answers me."

For those wishing to learn more about Mukumba's school and how they can help her, email mercyemukumba@gmail.com.



THE Broadcaster

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