

MATC Fast Fund: Digital Bridge delivers laptops to student emergency fund

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Digital Bridge, the non-profit organization that provides refurbished laptops to marginalized communities, will deliver laptops for MATC students to the Local 212 MATC FAST Fund on Thursday, November 18 at noon at the FAST Fund offices 1027 N 7th Street.

The Local 212/MATC FAST Fund received a technology acquisition grant from the United Way of Milwaukee and has partnered with Digital Bridge to provide MATC students with the technology their academic programs necessitate.

“We are delighted to partner with the FAST Fund to provide MATC students with state-of-the-art laptops and other technology resources,” said the Digital Bridge Executive Director, Jeff Hanson. “Our mission is to provide disadvantaged students with the tools they need to succeed.”

Last year the FAST Fund provided financial assistance to 433 MATC students, 93% of whom graduated or are continuing their education.

The United Way of Milwaukee provided the FAST Fund with a \$10,000 TECHQUITY Grant to purchase the electronics from Digital Bridge. According to the United Way’s David Berka, “There is a digital divide in our community that has only intensified with the Covid 19 pandemic. The United Way is proud to work with the FAST Fund and Digital Bridge to help address that divide by providing MATC students with the electronic equipment and services they need to pursue their educational and career goals. Overcoming the digital divide will help solve the state’s shortage of skilled and technical labor.”

According to FAST Fund Director, Dr. Michael David Rosen, “The FAST Fund has been swamped with requests from MATC students since the Covid-19 pandemic began. Many students lost jobs while others had their work hours reduced. Without steady income, MATC’s working class students, especially those with children, have struggled to keep roofs over their heads, food on the table and their lights on while pursuing their educations. This partnership will allow us to provide MATC students with academically necessary technology.”

“The FAST Fund is grateful for this generous donation,” said Barbara Toles, President of the FAST Fund’s Board of Directors. “This donation, along with others, serves as a lifeline for MATC students who struggle financially while trying to obtain an education to help lift them out of poverty.”

A recent survey by Temple University’s HOPE Center reported that 51% of MATC students experienced food insecurity during the last thirty days; 65% experienced housing insecurity during the last year; and 48% had a family member or close friend who had been sick with Covid-19.

The Local 212 MATC Believe in Students FAST Fund is a non-profit organization that was initiated by the MATC faculty union, AFT Local 212. The FAST Fund provides quick financial assistance To MATC students so they remain enrolled and graduate. For more information call (414) 467 8908 or email director@matcfastfund.org