PROJECT SILICON

Impact Report

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A letter to our community

We started this organization three years ago as a group of friends at the Bronx High School of Science from a place of personal struggles and from bearing witness to the post-pandemic difficulties our classmates endured without computers at home. Younger siblings doing homework on cracked phones and tablets, Internet connectivity issues, students rushing to complete assignments in the 2 hour technology use window at NYPL.

What began with cold emails and collecting old laptops in our homes has grown into something far bigger. Over 2,600 devices placed in the hands of people who needed them. From computer labs built with donor technology in downtown Manhattan for migrant families to filling classrooms in city all the way to Bangladesh. Our newly leased office downtown and storage units at the cheapest prices we could negotiate.

This report shares that journey through the people at its heart: Ernesto, who needed a computer for school. Maria, a Colombian immigrant who managed online inventory from her phone. A mother going through her education with her two children staying at a homeless shelter.

We're entirely student-run, operating without a single grant. Our work has been powered by device sales and the generosity of those who believe in our mission. Every repair, every pickup, every message has been volunteered by young people committed to expanding access to technology.

This year marked a turning point. On June 13th, 2025, we officially became Project Silicon. We signed a lease in downtown Manhattan, built new systems and a new website, and planned for what comes next – staying focused on putting technology into the hands of those who need it most.

The pages that follow share our mission, our accomplishments, and our dreams. Most of all, they reflect what we've learned: giving someone a computer is giving them a chance.

With gratitude,
The Silicon Project Team

Our story so far

Our Mission

The Silicon Project exists for one reason: so that no parent has to tell their child "we can't afford one" when homework or passion requires a computer. So that no one misses a job because the application was online-only and they had nowhere to apply.

In 2025, not having a computer locks doors. Assignments, college portals you can't access. Job applications you can't submit. We refuse to accept this as just the way things are.

We collect used computers from people and corporations who have moved on, but whose devices haven't. We refurbish them, make sure data is wiped, make repairs, install software. Then we put them directly into the hands of students and families who do need them, one device at a time, making sure fewer people get left behind.

But we've learned that a laptop alone isn't enough. Without the knowledge to use it, it's an expensive paperweight. That's why we don't stop at delivery. We follow up. We troubleshoot. We teach. We help students figure out everything from file management to college applications. The device is the beginning of the relationship, not the end.

We are not a charity that drops off equipment and disappears. We are students helping students. Neighbors helping neighbors. People who believe that what you can access shouldn't depend on what you can afford.

Our Purpose

We are entirely student-run. Our leadership, our volunteers, our web developers, our pickup coordinators are all students, and it's central to who we are. We understand the challenges facing students today because we live them. When a recipient emails us about trouble with their device, they're talking to someone who has sat in the same classrooms, stressed over the same deadlines, and knows firsthand what it means to need technology for school.

Every dollar we've spent has come from device sales, small donations, and our own determination. We've never had institutional funding or grants. Although this has proved difficult in situations, we have been forced to be resourceful, to build sustainable systems, and to prove that impact doesn't require massive budgets, but commitment.

We are tech-first. Our website, our donor portal, our inventory systems were all built by students, for our mission. Our core ethos doesn't just include distributing technology, but also *embodying it*. We believe the recipients of our devices should see technology not as an intimidating barrier but as an accessible tool, and we aim to lead by example.

We write this report for multiple audiences: for donors who have trusted us with their devices and their dollars, for recipients who have welcomed us into their lives, for partner organizations considering collaboration, and for ourselves.

2025 in review

355

Laptops, desktops, peripherals, and mobile devices **distributed**

~3,300

Pounds of technology processed, recycled, or donated
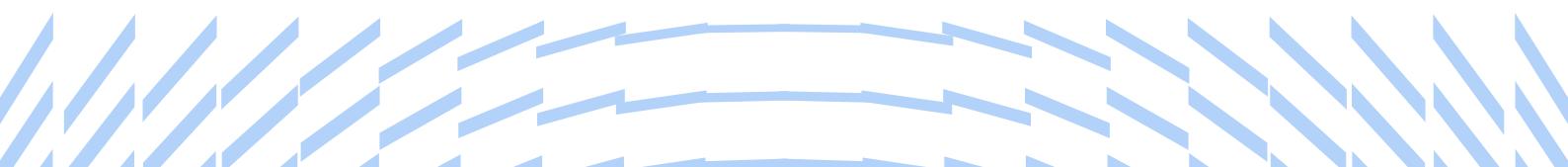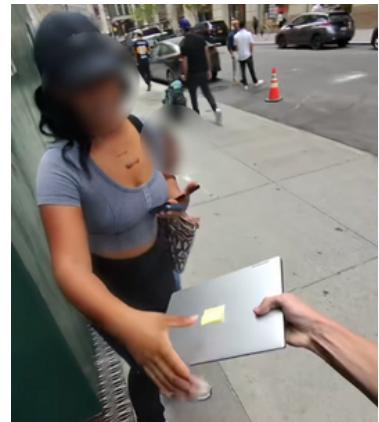
2025 in review

"We Care Act NYC is INCREDIBLE. I needed a laptop to start school so I took a chance and filled out their short application. Shortly after, I received an email back, they hooked me up with a REALLY NICE LAPTOP. And they're even there to assist me if I need it. What a great experience! Great program, you guys keep doing what you're doing!"
— Ernesto

"I am absolutely thrilled and incredibly grateful for the laptop I received! As someone pursuing online schooling for cybersecurity, having a reliable laptop is not just a convenience, but a critical necessity. This donation came at the perfect time and means the world to me. It has removed a significant barrier to my education and allows me to fully engage with my studies and work towards my goals."
— Carlos

"I want to extend my deepest gratitude for their generosity and support. As a minority woman entrepreneur working to grow my business, Giafajas, receiving a computer from this amazing organization has been a game-changer. Their commitment to empowering small business owners like me is truly inspiring. This gift will help me streamline my work, improve productivity, and achieve my goals."
— Maria, Founder of Giafajas

"I never knew I could get a free laptop for my kids. Not only did they give me one, they gave two—one for my son, one for my daughter. Thanks to my oldest daughter that told me about this marvelous program. I am extremely grateful. Excellent service, no hard time, everything was smooth and the guys very kind and helpful."
— Yany

"I received an excellent working Dell laptop from We Care Act NYC. The process was smooth, and the team was incredibly supportive. I hope this laptop will help me a lot for my studies."
— Muhammad

"I didn't know where to donate my perfectly good new monitor, so I was very happy that they took it, even coming to my building to pick it up. My doorman committed upon how nice the person was who came by to get it. Will happily donate to them again."
— Cathy
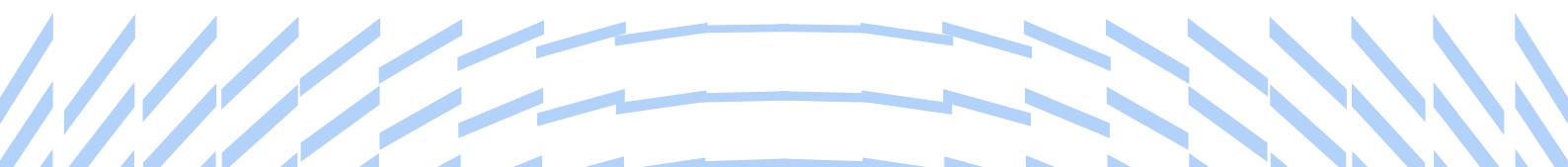
2025 in detail

1

Establish Legal and Financial Independence

For years, we operated as a chapter of We Care Act, sharing their 501(c)(3) status and infrastructure. This arrangement allowed us to start, but it also limited our ability to grow. In 2025, we officially became Project Silicon, newly registered with the IRS and Department of State. With this, we were able to sign a lease to a small office that gives our team a professional home and reduces our storage footprint from four units to two.

2

Build Technology Infrastructure That Reflects Our Values

We aimed to inspire those who receive our technology to learn how technology works. This year, we completely revamped our website to reflect this tech-first philosophy. Every page, including donor logistics software in the backend, was coded by hand by students, demonstrating that the same young people distributing devices are capable of using technology through sophisticated digital systems.

3

Deepen Our Commitment to Recipients

Numbers matter, but relationships matter more. This year, we recommitted to following up with recipients long after the initial donation. Our team attended to more 1:1 correspondences and meetings than ever to provide resources, instructions, and support. When a donation became clear the original device couldn't meet the donee's requirements, we donated an additional iMac to ensure she had the tools she needed.

4

Reframe Our Revenue Model for Sustainability

For years, we gave away every device we could. But as full-time students running operations without grants or salaries, free wasn't sustainable when we had to pay for storage units, replacement parts, and shipping labels out of our own pockets. This year, we shifted to a revenue-first model: low-cost devices available to all, and free devices for those who can't pay. It's not the pure vision we started with, but it's the only way we can keep going.

Our 2026 goals

1

Perfect Our Revenue Model for Scale

In 2026, we're pursuing grant funding, not to replace our revenue model or because we want to charge students, but to relieve pressure on ourselves so we can scale. With operational support from foundations and partners like T–Mobile, we can lower prices on our paid devices and expand who qualifies for free ones. The sales keep us alive, but the grants will let us reach further.

2

Formalize Our Volunteer Development Program

In 2026, we will expand our team beyond our 27 members, formalize our volunteer development program with documented training materials, and offer structured mentorship between experienced volunteers and newcomers. We will also expand our recruitment beyond schools, ensuring a sustainable pipeline of dedicated volunteers and employees who can carry our mission forward.

3

Reform Free Computer Program to Selective Batches

For those who were unable to fill out our form this year, we've closed off applications, but don't worry! We're processing the requests until late spring, 2026. Moving forward, the free computer program will work in batches to allow for breathing room and operational diligence among our team of student volunteers. Our online store will always be open to major discounts among those who need it the most; for inquiries, please email us your circumstances.

4

Launch Digital Literacy Curriculum

We have always provided informal support to recipients: answering questions, troubleshooting problems, offering guidance. But we've learned that many recipients **need more structured help transitioning**. In 2026, we will develop and launch an online digital literacy curriculum covering essential skills: file management, internet safety, productivity software, and navigating online systems for education and employment.

Partnership report

Capital One

Much thanks to Kaylee, Zack, and Giovanna for their continued pro-bono support of our financial operations! Their work has helped immensely with tightening our internal record-keeping and laying the financial foundation for our future donations and revenue operations.

Simons Foundation

The Simons Foundation, founded by Jim Simons, works towards advancing the frontiers of research in mathematics and the basic sciences. Thank you to Olena from the Simons Foundation for her unwavering belief in our mission, supporting our team with donations, and making the pick-up and auditing experience extremely smooth.

Broadway Community

Broadway Community is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving individuals experiencing homelessness, hunger, and poverty in New York City. We would like to extend our gratitude towards Isaac, Felix, and the community for working with us to construct accessible computer stations for those in need.

Revise Robotics (YC W25)

Revise Robotics builds automated systems to refurbish and resell used electronics, specifically focusing on laptops. Much thanks to Rupesh for working with us on our first batch of laptops to refurbish through cutting-edge technology, allowing us to scale the refurbishing phase efficiently!

Join us
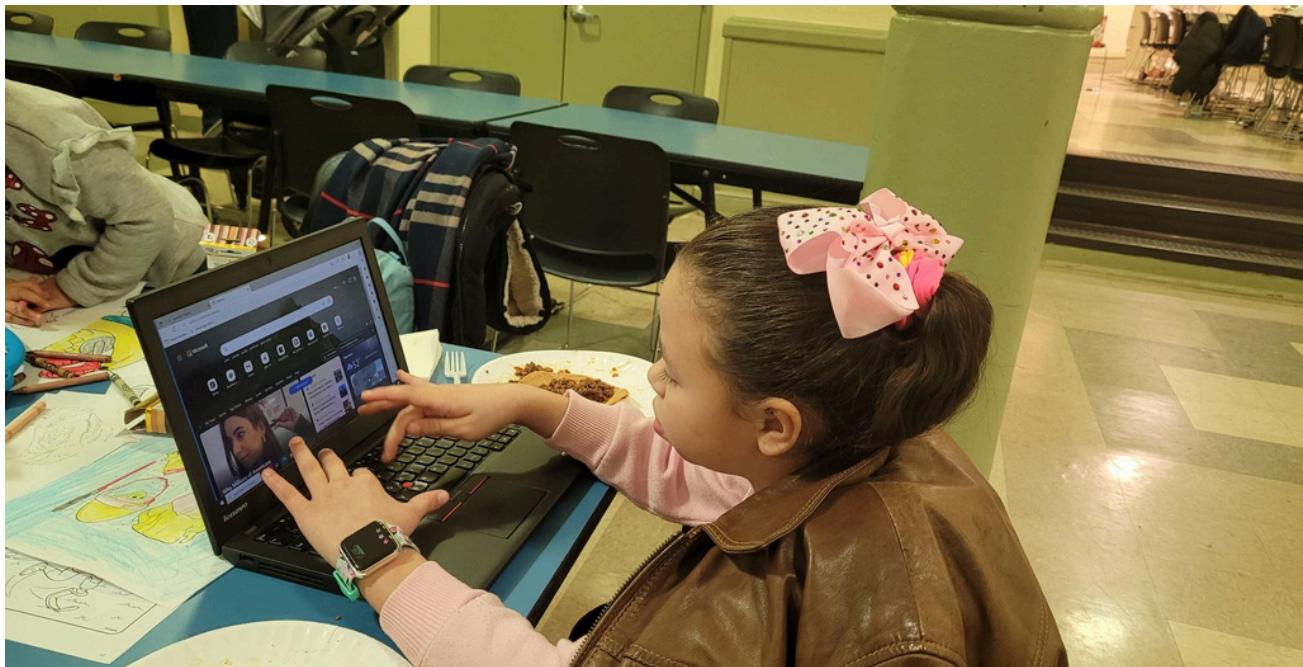
If you have a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer from 2016 or newer sitting unused in a closet, it could change someone's life. We accept donations of working devices from individuals and businesses nationwide. For donors in the NYC area, we offer free pickup services. Please fill out our online application to proceed with this process.

If you're a student looking to make an impact, we're always looking for volunteers. Whether your skills are technical, creative, organizational, or interpersonal, there's a place for you on our team.

If you represent a foundation, corporation, or community organization interested in partnership, we'd love to hear from you. Our model is proven, our impact is documented, and our ambition is to scale.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Join us in shaping the next chapter of our mission by bringing your expertise and passion to our Board of Directors. As we celebrate the milestones featured in this year's report, we are seeking visionary leaders who are committed to driving long-term strategic growth and ensuring our programs continue to serve the community with excellence.

Whether you have a background in finance, technology, fundraising, or community advocacy, your unique perspective will help us break down barriers to equity and expand our reach in the coming year. We invite you to step into this vital leadership role and help lead Project Silicon toward a future where our collective vision becomes a reality for all.

Please email us for further discussion.

We thank you for your ongoing support of our program and mission

We're providing the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs, designers, scientists, engineers, writers, and artists with the technology they deserve.