

# NEW YORK POST

24 HOURS A DAY

## *A Tasty Byte of Charity*

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Some people who get new computers may consider their old ones “e-trash,” but Plinio Ayala calls them an opportunity.

“Someone’s junk is someone else’s treasure,” said the 2006 Leadership Liberty Medal winner, who is president and CEO of Per Scholas. The nonprofit Bronx organization reconditions used computers and provides them to families in low-income communities at little or no cost.

The Post’s Liberty Medals program seeks to recognize the everyday heroes who are the backbone of our city. We invite our readers to nominate people who have made a difference with their skills, energy and compassion.

A panel of distinguished New Yorkers will select the winners in 10 categories to be honored at an awards ceremony in October.

Per Scholas, which receives computers donated by corporations, trains men and women to become computer-repair technicians, helps them find jobs - and, since 1994, has given or sold at cost 60,000 computers to low-income families.

This year, it has launched two new projects: getting refurbished computers into the hands of schoolkids and senior citizens.

“The objective is to bridge the technology divide across all ages,” Ayala said. “We recognize that technology is such an integral part of the way we live that all individuals should have access to it. It’s the way of life now.”



The other program, comp2seniors, establishes partnerships with senior centers to give older New Yorkers computer training - and a computer to take home.

“It helps deal with the issue of isolation for seniors,” Ayala said.

So far, the program has given 500 seniors computers, “and the demand is unbelievable.”

Per Scholas also has a recycling center where it disposes, in an environmentally safe way, any equipment it cannot use.

Under the comp2kids program, Per Scholas has so far identified three public schools “and we gave each kid in the school a computer.”