

DAILY NEWS

After theft, PS 7 is given computers

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A glimmer of hope is coming to a Kingsbridge elementary school after a shocking summer heist left them strapped for computers.

Public School 7 is to receive a donation of 30 laptop computers this week from the nonprofit organization Per Scholas.

The group is providing reconditioned Dell Pentium III laptops with CD burners and DVDs. The computers are valued at roughly \$7,500.

The computers are to be handed over on Thursday in a special ceremony. School librarian Tara McMaster was delighted and relieved.

“This really validated my belief that there are good people out there,” she said. “This was a horrible situation, but the community has been so kind and so giving.”

This month, teachers and students returned from summer break to find that their school had been burglarized.

According to authorities, thieves had made off with 81 laptop computers, two desktop computers, five printers and two projectors.

The stolen computers and equipment were valued at about \$100,000. There was no sign of a break-in.

School officials called the theft “devastating.”

City Councilman Oliver Koppell, a PS 7 alumnus and longtime supporter, called the theft “a serious loss for the students.”

He had hoped to secure funds to help replace the stolen equipment, but his aides said his discretionary budget had already been allocated. So Koppell reached out to community organizations.

“As soon as I heard about the theft at PS 7, I knew we could help,” said Per Scholas President and CEO Plinio Ayala.

Ayala also offered to reach out to other groups on the elementary school’s behalf.

PS 7 school officials called the groundswell of support “heartwarming.”

“We’re all just happy because the students use the computers all the time,” McMaster said. “[The donation] is wonderful. It will definitely put us on the right track.”