WKU students can lend a hand, score a free MAC

By Whitney Davis | Posted: Thu 2:55 PM, Sep 01, 2016 | Updated: Thu 11:21 PM, Sep 01, 2016

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. (WBKO) -- When you hear the job description "Coordinator of Resource Conservation," it probably doesn't mean very much to you.

As the woman who holds that title at Western Kentucky University, Elizabeth Gafford doesn't only embrace it, she excels at it.

"I work with all campus property once departments are finished with it. So that includes vehicles, house plants, desks, chairs and computers."

Gafford could have easily decided that the university could turn a small profit by selling the refurbished MAC desktop computers that lined her hall, but she found a better use for them.

"Students currently don't have options to buy personal computers affordably, so we thought we would try to find a way to make them available."

Through partnerships with the IT department and the Student Government Association (SGA,) Gafford's dream became reality.

"We've decided to reward students who work 35 hours in the community doing community service with a refurbished desktop. So, they're earning that computer through their community service," explained Murphy Burke, PR for the SGA.

Once they were approached with the idea, the decision was an easy one to arrive at for the SGA: there was no denying that college was expensive, but the ability to write your paper from the comfort of your room shouldn't have to be.

"I know how expensive it's been for me to earn what it takes to be forward thinking in my classes, and to have the materials I need, like a computer. So, making it easier for those students that might not be able to afford it, and giving them that extra step so that they can be forward thinking in their classes, that's what I love to do," said Burke.

Service hours completed on or after August 22 are fair game to count toward earning the MACs, and with only 20 to give away this semester, the race is on.

"We will confirm that they actually completed the community service, and it needs to do something to actually serve the Bowling Green community," smiled Burke.

With at least two applications already turned in for review, you could see the wheels turning in Gafford's mind as she thought of ways to expand the program for future semesters.

"Currently we can only offer MAC computers because they are more affordable and easy to prepare for reuse, so it would be great to include all of our DELL computers in the program."

Through their partnership with IT and SGA, there are more computers already lined up to be refurbished and given away next semester.

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