

# Need a Free Computer? Go Back to School

**By Gary Buiso**

When students in one Kensington intermediate school graduate in a few years, they'll be leaving with more than a diploma—they'll also get to keep the desktop computers they were given last weekend.

At Ditmas Intermediate School (I.S. 62), every student received a new Gateway desktop computer, courtesy of a program sponsored by Chase Manhattan Bank.

And school staffers—including teachers, cafeteria workers and custodial staff—will also be wired. Staffers were given Micron laptop computers, also courtesy of Chase.

The Chase program, ON DEC (Our Neighborhood Digital Education

Community), is the most extensive home school computer network program in the country.

A collaborative effort with the city's Board of Education, the program seeks to improve student

performance through a cyber community of enhanced learning experiences.

The program creates an in-school network that integrates emergent technologies into the classroom.

This week begins the future of a virtual community at this diverse school.

Chase employees met at Ditmas and were soon dispatched to install the computers into students' homes. For the students, the deal just gets sweeter: In addition to free installation, Chase staffers installed will provide multilingual advice and tech-support, available 24 hours a day.

If a problem can't be solved from the telephone support, techie troubleshooters will arrive in person to fix a problem.

Computers will all be Internet accessible.

The school's new website was unveiled a week prior to the computer giveaways.

The October 28 Ditmas computer giveaway was the largest part of the company's sixth annual Chase Global Days of Service.

"Chase understands that technology alone is not a panacea, but that the investment needs to be sustained with a focus on training people to effectively use technology for learning purposes," said Dr. Margaret Honey, Director for the Center for Children and Technology.

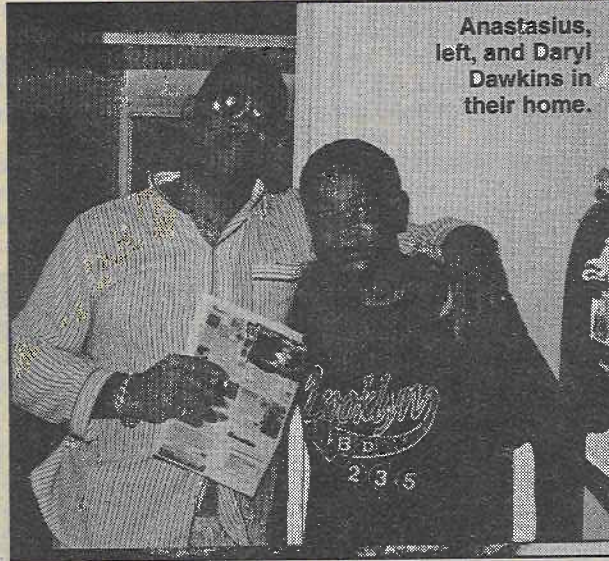
"Chase's initiative really has the potential to allow the Ditmas school to reshape itself to improve the education of urban students," Honey said.

The school, located at 700 Cortelyou Road, has in the

past received funding under three different Chase grant programs.

"Others see a digital divide, we see a digital opportunity," Chase CEO William B. Harrison, Jr.

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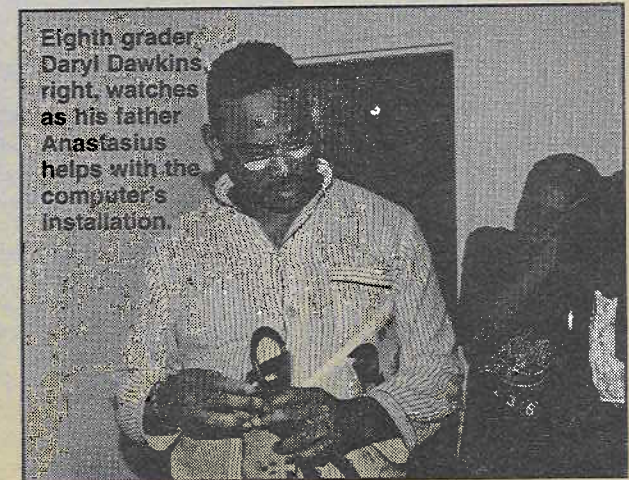
Anastasius, left, and Daryl Dawkins in their home.



Chase employee Kim Albert helps install a new computer.



Ditmas Intermediate School is a part of the most extensive home school computer network in the country.



Eighth grader Daryl Dawkins, right, watches as his father Anastasius helps with the computer's installation.