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## **Grant helps keep Talladega youths up-to-date**

By April Jo Love

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TALLADEGA — With daily technological advancements, it's easy to get left behind.

But the Boys and Girls Club of America and the Beaumont Foundation are making sure Talladega's youths stay up-to-date.

Thanks to a \$25,000 grant, the Talladega Boys and Girls Club received new computer equipment to modernize its lab.

"This is the first time this facility has had Internet," said Derrick Morrison, director of the Talladega Boys and Girls Club.

The center received 10 laptop computers with preloaded software, four digital cameras, an LCD projector and a printer.

The computers not only have Internet but also have wireless connections.

The only visible cords will be those used for security purposes, Morrison said.

After a break-in last June in which four Gateway computers were stolen, the center installed an alarm system, Morrison said.

In addition to the building's system, the laptops are protected by cable locks and anti-theft software.

Morrison said he wanted people to be aware of the heightened security measures in hopes no more problems would occur.

Different centers applied for the grant, Morrison said, and those selected received the equipment.

"Someone on (the Boys and Girls Club of America) staff is responsible for getting it ready and sending it out," Morrison said.

The lab "got up and going" in April and has been used as "part of the rotation process" in which the children participate in different activities each day, Morrison said.

The next step for the lab will be opening during school hours for adult use, Morrison said.

"We need to develop a partnership with someone in the community to help cover costs for the staff needed to oversee the lab's use," Morrison said.

Talladega was not the only center to earn the grant.

"We were lucky enough to receive two (grants) in our area," Morrison said.

Another \$25,000 in computer equipment was awarded to the Boys and Girls Club in Jacksonville.

The Boys and Girls Club of America is dedicated to providing supervised activities for children to encourage growth and acceptance.

The Beaumont Foundation of America, located in Beaumont, Texas, was founded in 2001. It continues to work "to fulfill the promise of the Information Age by providing access to technology and the skills to use it," according to its Web site.