

## **2020 in Review:**

### ***PCs für Alle* against educational losses due to COVID-19**

2020 not only brought COVID-19 – but, as a reaction to the pandemic, the non-profit association *PCs für Alle* was founded in Vienna. Since the virus emptied Austria's schools in the spring, home schooling and distance learning was intended to enable classes via the Internet.

For many children from families with low incomes, however, this form of teaching is a major challenge. Where do you get the necessary computer when you only have enough money for what is absolutely necessary?

#### **How it all began: a one-man project surpasses itself**

The Viennese Peter Bernscherer had been collecting used computers since 2018, refurbishing them and giving them free of charge to those who urgently needed them for school, study or work, but could not afford them. His cellar compartment was his warehouse, his living room his workshop. In order to meet the enormous demand from COVID-19, Peter had to make his work more efficient and, above all, needed helpers. So in May he founded the non-profit organization *PCs für Alle* together with the first fellow campaigners.

Within a short time, a crowd of volunteers gathered who shared Peter's vision: donating instead of throwing away to pave the way to the digital future for people, especially children and young people.

At the end of the year there were already 14 persons who regularly volunteer - and many more help out on a case-by-case basis. Some clean the devices, install spare parts, delete data and install fresh software. Others transport them from A to B, across the country if need be. Dozens of computers go to various schools in Linz so that their pupils can take part in lessons at home.

Other volunteers make their know-how or their network available to the association: Georg Effenberger and Walter Starek from the Juvivo association, for example, arranged a cheap clubhouse, Ernst Michalek created a website.

The association is also represented on social media channels: on Twitter, or Peter Bernscherer on Twitter and on Facebook, *PCs für Alle* advertise device donations and report almost daily about the joy, relief and gratitude of those who ultimately receive them.

Computer donations now come from private individuals as well as companies and organizations who pass on their old devices.

And that's a good thing because inquiries are coming from all federal states and in some cases even from Germany. They come from individuals, but above all from schools or charitable organizations who are desperately looking for devices for their protégés: Caritas, Hilfswerk, Volkshilfe, Homeless Aid, Kinderfreunde and SOS Kinderdörfer have thus become partners in the efficient provision of computers.

More than 1,000 laptops or PC systems have already found their way quickly and unbureaucratically to people who urgently need them via this network.

### **The demand for free PCs will remain high in 2021**

We expect the demand for free devices to remain high in 2021. COVID-19 has given digitization a boost, home schooling and the home office will not go away even after the pandemic has subsided. *PCs für Alle* wants to equip itself to be able to help as many people as possible.

We are grateful for new collaborations even from outside Vienna. That is why we continue to work on our professionalization. We are currently looking for a ground floor location for a larger workshop. We may even be able to employ one or two fairly paid employees to increase our efficiency.

A special concern is also the start of our Digital Empowerment program, with which we want to train migrant women in particular to become experts in everyday computer problems.

Please support us in 2021 with your used computers, laptops, monitors or other accessories.

Of course, we are also happy to receive monetary donations for workshop and office rental, spare parts and transport costs!

The *PCs für Alle* team wishes you a wonderful and healthy 2021!