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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mobile Beacon Awards Digital Inclusion Grants to Chelsea District Library and Bartram High School

(Johnston, Rhode Island) November 21, 2016 – Mobile Beacon announced today that it has chosen Chelsea District Library in Chelsea, MI and Bartram High School in Philadelphia, PA as the recipients of its Wi-Fly Lending Launch Kit grant for educators. The grants provide 25 laptops, 25 4G LTE mobile hotspots, and free, mobile, unlimited 4G LTE internet access for one year to each organization to reach students and families in their communities who presently have limited or no access to technology in their homes.

“Proving internet access to support education is at the heart of Mobile Beacon’s mission,” said Katherine Messier, Executive Director of Mobile Beacon. “When students don’t have access to technology in their homes, they are often unable to keep up with homework, they interact less with classmates and teachers, and, ultimately, graduate with less digital skills than their peers. We are proud to grant Chelsea District Library and Bartram High School the tools necessary to help close the homework gap in their communities.”

Across the country, 5 million families with students lack internet access at home, including many from low-income or underserved communities. This divide is commonly referred to as the homework gap. Seven out of 10 teachers now assign homework that requires access to complete, which causes many low-income students to struggle to keep up with their peers.

“Lack of broadband access has been an ongoing issue in the Chelsea District Library service area, which puts our community at a digital disadvantage in regards to information access, communication, and education,” said Melanie Bell, Network Administrator for Chelsea District Library. “Providing equal access to information is fundamental to the mission of the library. As a direct response we started a hot spot loaning program with 15 devices in June of 2015. However, we very quickly realized that we could not meet the demand. The Wi-Fly Lending Launch Kit will nearly triple our hot spot loaning capacity and allow us to target specific populations in need. It also enhances our mobile lab by allowing us to almost double our class size. We thank Mobile Beacon for their support because with this grant we have the opportunity to provide free, easy-to-take home internet access, and digital training that will help our community bridge the digital divide. ”

In Chelsea, MI the school district provides iPads to all their students, but nearly 40% do not have access to the internet at home. The library plans to use Mobile Beacon’s grant to enhance their hotspot lending program and grow their mobile lab, which provides computer classes for students of all ages, levels, and skills.



Bartram High School is a neighborhood school located in a high poverty, high crime area of Philadelphia. They will be using Mobile Beacon's Wi-Fly lending kit to develop a technology nerve center for their school, which will provide a safe and inviting space for students to complete their assignments. A roaming unit called the Listening School will also be created to allow as many students as possible to use the technology.

Mr. Thomas, ninth grade teacher, tells us that the new resources will be an investment in education for Bartram High School. "The investment will pay dividends in the form of students engaged in creative activities, becoming better citizens in the community, nurturing college bound students and being able to share our resources with the community to elevate everyone with new technology." As Bartram High School Principal Warren states often, "Education Is Liberation" and here at Bartram, we will continue to thrive and flourish with additional resources and support from generous sponsors and partnerships.

Awarded once a year, Mobile Beacon's Wi-Fly Lending Launch Kit grant for educators provides the tools needed to help a school, library, or education-focused nonprofit set up a digital inclusion program in their community. Results from the digital inclusion programs will be posted online at the conclusion of the one-year pilot period.

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Mobile Beacon is dedicated to connecting nonprofits, schools, and libraries to the affordable, high-speed internet access they need to better serve their communities. Mobile Beacon's \$10/month 4G LTE internet service helps organizations deliver more services and provide connectivity to those in their communities without internet access. Mobile Beacon was created in 2010 by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and the second largest Educational Broadband Service (EBS) provider in the United States. Learn more at <http://www.mobilebeacon.org>.

Chelsea District Library is not-for-profit organization whose mission is to provide equal access to quality resources that serve the lifelong cultural, educational and informational needs and interests of all people. The Library currently serves 15,100 residents in the Chelsea district, which includes the City of Chelsea and the Dexter, Lima, Lyndon, and Sylvan townships. Approximately 16,000 individuals visit the library each month. For more information, visit chelseadistrictlibrary.org