Solving a Digital Crisis

The COVID-19 crisis has put our dependence on technology into an exacerbated light, especially for those who face economic inequality, now exacerbated by the global pandemic, the digital divide is devastating.

Charles, with six felony convictions and 25 years behind bars, came to HOPE determined to gain the skills and support he needed to thrive in the workforce and turn his life around.

Today, these New Yorkers are logging on and connecting with HOPE to:

• Enroll in HOPE’s award-winning job training (now virtual) to prepare for a shifting labor market
• Receive one-on-one support from our wellness team in managing stress, anxiety, and grief
• Secure food, equipment, and other basic needs
• Apply for financial relief and set up remote hotspots to students, graduates, and their families at home.

A Story of HOPE During Troubled Times

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On his first day, Charles was daunted by his past, but the energy and love he felt from the HOPE team motivated him. Charles excelled in the program, earning fifteen industry-recognized certifications and maintaining a perfect attendance record. This helped him to land a position at a leading New York City bakery. He’ll never forget how proud he felt when management looked past his background and entrusted him with locking up each night.

Unfortunately, when the bakery closed in the wake of COVID-19, Charles lost his job. Having remained connected to HOPE since his graduation, including HOPE students and graduates, do not have computers or internet access at home. For those who face economic inequality, now exacerbated by the global pandemic, the digital divide is devastating.

Charles stepped in to bridge this gap. When COVID-19 forced us to close our physical doors, we quickly innovated to deliver our services remotely. And we went into the community to deliver laptops and mobile hotspots to students, graduates, and their families at home.

“I had never used a laptop before in my life,” Charles shared. “HOPE taught me how to use Google, Gmail, and Word. Now, I’m excited to get back to it. With the Chromebook they lent me, class starts kick up again on Monday!”

Robert N.

HOPE serves men and women across the city who are especially vulnerable to the economic effects of coronavirus. They live in the hardest hit areas. Unfortunately, many residents in these communities lack quality health care and continue to work in jobs deemed essential.

We are not only reading this in the news, but seeing the impact firsthand. Here’s a letter from one of our Bronx graduates.

“I’ve seen so many of my neighbors suffer. It is beyond heartbreaking as it’s hitting so close to home. I have also watched my favorite businesses close and life has come to a standstill. Currently, I am working in a job deemed essential but am undergoing a two-week mandatory quarantine. Now more than ever, I realize that saving everything is like you don’t know what tomorrow will bring. I’m grateful that HOPE taught me financial literacy skills and helped me open my own bank account—I feel prepared.

From the bottom of my heart, HOPE has been amazing in giving me and my fellow grads the tools and resources to prepare for this. It’s something that will never be forgotten. Keep transforming lives the same way you have with mine.”

—Isaiah, Age 27

HOPE has a citywide impact. In fact, 73% of our jobseekers live in Brooklyn, 26% in the Bronx, 15% in Manhattan, and 13% in Queens.

Become a HOPE Hero

We need you—our HOPE family—to come together at this critical moment to help us raise $350,000 by May 31st. If you are in a position to give, please make a donation today to support our ongoing work during this crisis. Every dollar counts.

Here is a list of the ways you can support HOPE to bridge the digital divide:

• $5,000 - Supports one-on-one coaching for 15 jobseekers as they navigate layoffs amid the COVID-19 crisis.
• $2,500 - Supports our virtual Job Club hotline where jobseekers receive personalized one-on-one coaching to help land jobs.
• $1,000 - Supports 40 hours of continued online learning for a jobseeker including a custom workshop on safety precautions for those working during COVID-19.
• $600 - Supports delivering a Chromebook and hotspot to a student or graduate so they can stay connected, job search, and bridge the digital divide.
• $250 - Supports one-on-one resources and mental health counseling for a jobseeker during a time of heightened anxiety and fear.
• $120 - Supports one month of meals for a jobseeker as they shelter in place.

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We need heroes more than ever before.

HOPE empowers New Yorkers to build sustainable futures through comprehensive training, jobs, advancement, and lifelong career support.

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