RURAL
technology fund

Bringing Imagination to Life

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Turning 16 is a significant milestone—a time when young people start to explore independence, make important decisions, and envision their future paths. It's a period filled with excitement, questions, and the realization that choices made now can shape the rest of their lives.

At the Rural Technology Fund (RTF), we've reached our own "sweet sixteen," and it's a moment for reflection and anticipation. Over the past 16 years, we've empowered over 200,000 students across rural America, providing them with the tools, experiences, and support to navigate their futures with confidence.

This year, our initiatives have continued to open doors and ignite passions. One of my favorite projects combines my passion for space exploration with hands-on engineering and design through our Infinite Sky Project. To make this happen, we collaborated with Teachers in Space to select students from four rural classrooms to design and build CubeSat Emulators. These student-crafted experiments will be sent into the stratosphere on a high-altitude balloon mission, offering hands-on experience in aerospace engineering and data analysis. Educators like Sarah Enyeart in Shade Gap, Pennsylvania integrated this project into her curriculum, inspiring students to envision careers in the space industry.

A few other project highlights from our year include:

- In Clarkson, NE, Librarian Sofia Kratochvil introduced Wonder Dash robots to her K-12 students, culminating in a school-wide Thanksgiving parade where students showcased their creativity by designing robot-powered floats. This initiative not only taught coding and engineering principles but also fostered collaboration and school spirit.

-In Lexington, AL, Kellie Glover transformed her library into a dynamic makerspace, providing students with access to STEM resources and hands-on learning opportunities that were previously unavailable in their community.

-In Haysi, VA, Librarian Kim Ratliff introduced a mobile tech cart filled with coding kits, Makey Makeys, and Chromebooks to reach students across a rural school district. With limited access to reliable internet at home, this cart became a lifeline for digital learning, helping students build essential tech skills and bridging the digital divide right in their own library.

As we look ahead, we recognize the challenges that lie before us. The landscape of nonprofit funding is shifting, and securing resources to sustain and expand our programs requires resilience and adaptability. Yet, our commitment remains unwavering. We are dedicated to ensuring that every student, regardless of their zip code, has access to quality STEM education and the opportunities it affords.

Our achievements are a testament to the collective effort of educators, volunteers, partners, and donors like you. As we celebrate our 16th year, we invite you to continue this journey with us. Your support is crucial in helping us reach more students, introduce innovative programs, and adapt to the evolving needs of our communities.

Chris Sanders
*Founder & Executive Director*

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The mission of the RTF is to help rural students recognize opportunities in technology careers, facilitate pathways to work in the computer industry, and provide equitable access to technology for students with disabilities.

BUILT BY BORO

A group of young innovators in Edinboro, PA, competed in the FIRST LEGO League (FLL) competition this January. Thanks to RTF support, the team dove into this year's challenge—Submerged—which focuses on ocean-related problems.
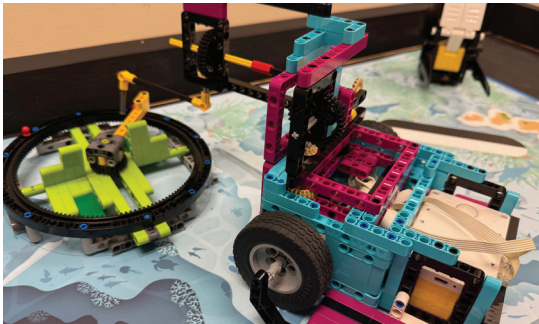
Mr. Hutchison's students built a new robot for better traction and quick attachment swaps, but FLL isn't just about robotics. The competition challenges students to think critically, solve problems, and innovate through their Innovation Project, which this year tackles coastal erosion and submarine landslides—a topic close to home with Lake Erie just 20 minutes away.

To deepen their research, the students met with local experts to see how the Army Corps of Engineers combats erosion at the lake. They explored the break wall project and analyzed drone footage showing shoreline changes over time. The visit provided firsthand insights into erosion challenges and sparked discussions about potential solutions.

These young problem-solvers are not just learning technical skills—they're developing the ability to innovate and apply STEM concepts to real-world challenges. Their journey highlights the power of hands-on learning and community support. The team won a second place trophy in the robot game and were invited to compete in regionals! We cannot wait to see what they do next.

INFINITE SKY CLASS OF 2025

The Rural Technology Fund and Teachers in Space offered the Infinite Sky STEM project to help rural students receive a hands-on opportunity to explore careers in the commercial space industry! Classrooms were chosen to build functional CubeSat Emulators and send them on a High Altitude Balloon Mission to conduct experiments.


Sarah Enyeart (Shade Gap, PA), Breanne Williamson (Riley, KS), Robin Bolle (Downieville, CA), and Amanda Bramlett (McLeod, TX) were our first cohort of educators.

Ms. Enyeart's completion update:
"Today 5th grade ceremoniously launched a satellite! Over the last few months, they've been working during their club times to learn how to design, build, and code a mini satellite. Because we are not actually able to physically launch it from the elementary school, the satellite will travel to New Jersey, where it will take a ride in a high altitude, weather balloon. The class will be able to track the data from their satellite as it travels through our atmosphere."
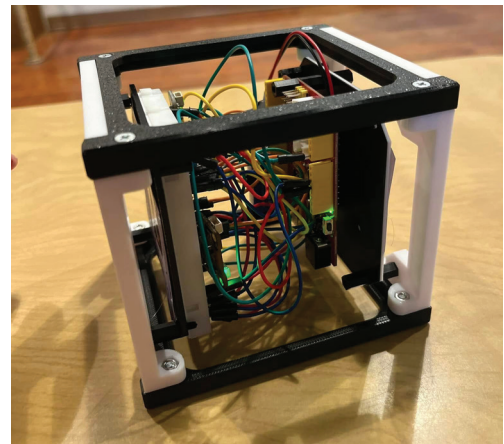
We are so thrilled to be involved in this project!

TECH FOR COMMUNICATION
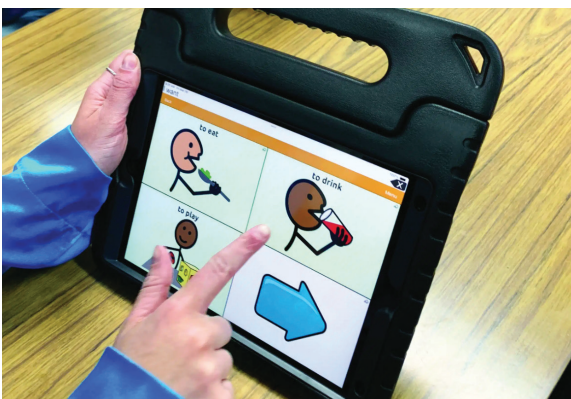
Karen Parnell, the Independent Living Teacher in Mena, AR, received a grant to provide iPads equipped with specialized communication apps to non-verbal students at two elementary schools in her district. This equipment enables students to communicate by touching picture icons that provide speech output. With this technology, students can engage fully in their learning environments and actively participate in curriculum.
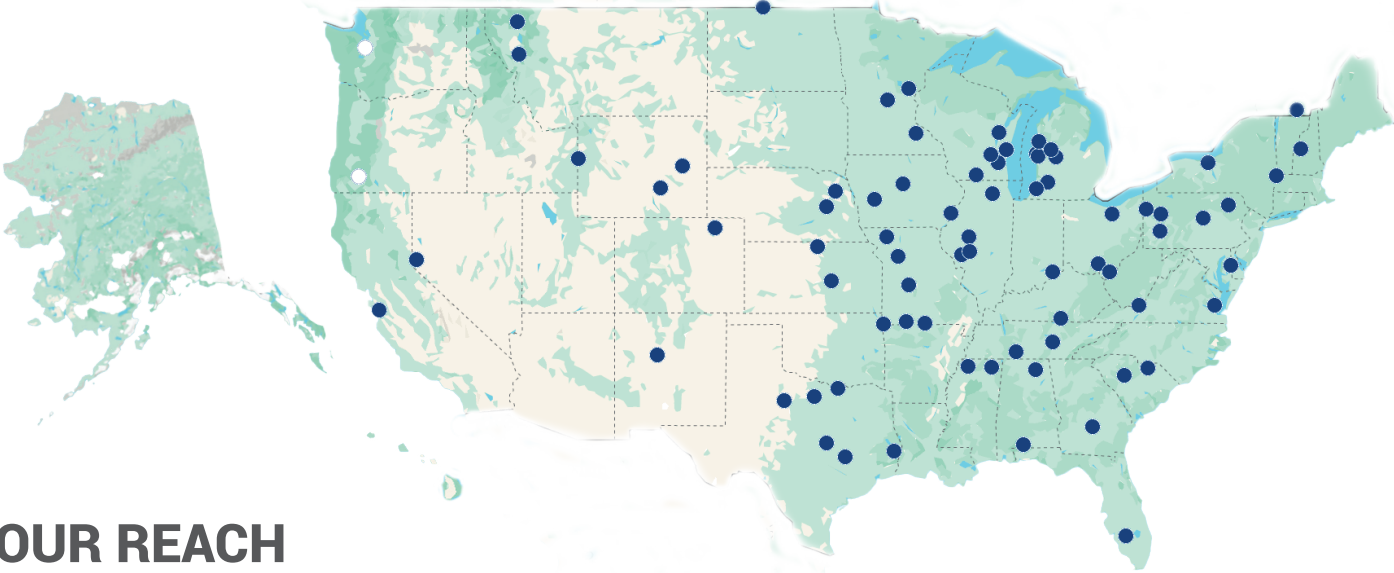
OUR IMPACT

In 2024, the RTF placed

tech education resources into the hands of **28,160** students	assistive technology resources into the hands of **292** students	in a total of **79** schools and libraries

Bringing our total number of impacted students to

213,040

OUR REACH
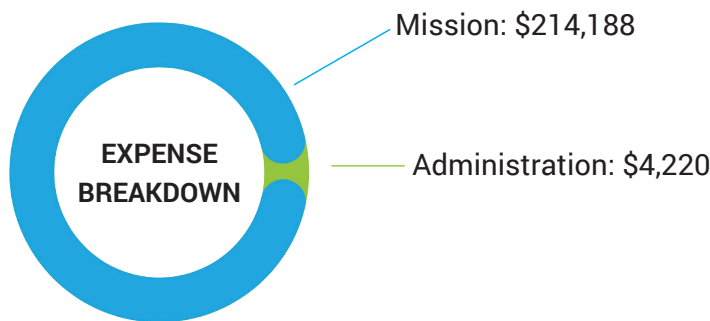
The locations below are where we provided technology education resources and assistive technology to rural classrooms and libraries this year.

Douglas	AL	Biggsville	IL	Braham	MN	Jeromesville	OH	Graford	TX
Lexington	AL	Carlinville	IL	Kasson	MN	New Boston	OH	Jarrell	TX
Alpena	AR	Newton	KS	Higginsville	MO	Medford	OR	Smithfield	VA
Norfork	AR	Beloit	KS	Maysville	MO	New Castle	PA	Hiwassee	VA
Siloam Springs	AR	La Grange	KY	Urbana	MO	McAlisterville	PA	Newport	VT
Castroville	CA	Lenox	MA	Tupelo	MS	Scottdale	PA	Benge	WA
Brush	CO	Federalsburg	MD	Batesville	MS	Kittanning	PA	Tacoma	WA
Santa Rosa Co	FL	Belding	MI	Frenchtown	MT	Mountain Top	PA	Stockbridge	WI
Immokalee	FL	Fremont	MI	Kalispell	MT	Batesburg	SC	Port Washington	WI
Ocilla	GA	Muskegon	MI	Westhope	ND	Bishopville	SC	Mukwonago	WI
Nevada	IA	Fruitport	MI	Clarkson	NE	Dunlap	TN	Watertown	WI
Atlantic	IA	Schoolcraft	MI	Stromsburg	NE	Jamestown	TN	Barboursville	WV
Jerseyville	IL	Niles	MI	New London	NH	Anson	TX	Douglas	WY
Sandwich	IL	Walkerville	MI	Los Lunas	NM	Aubrey	TX	Etna	WY
Pleasant Plains	IL	Howard City	MI	Gardnerville	NV	Buna	TX		
Dakota	IL	Kimball	MN	Geneva	NY	Burton	TX		

RTF FINANCIALS AT A GLANCE

TOTAL INCOME AND CONTRIBUTIONS:
$141.532

TOTAL EXPENSES:
$218,408

Mission: $214,188

EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

Administration: $4,220

GuideStar

Gold Transparency 2024

Candid.

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Revolution Tier ($20,000+)

Google Cloud Security Community

AND
APPLIED NETWORK DEFENSE

Blackthorne

Innovation Tier ($10,000+)

Security Onion SOLUTIONS

Square

Opportunity Tier ($5,000+)

BLACK HILLS Information Security

DRAGOS

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

RURAL SCHOOLS COLLABORATIVE

Makey Makey™

sphero

CODE

girls who code

VEX ROBOTICS

SANS
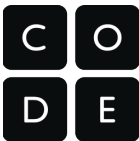
How to Help

Your donation will go directly to supporting rural and economically disadvantaged students by providing computer science and engineering equipment, curriculum, scholarships, and assistive technology in classrooms and libraries across the country.

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Recurring Donations With Patreon

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Support Our Cause at **www.ruraltechfund.org/donate**