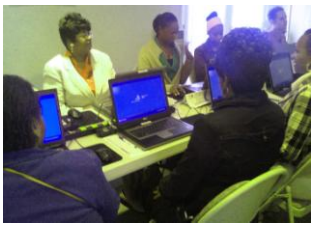
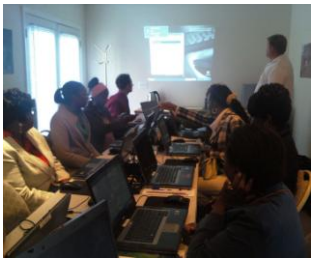
Bethany's COMPUTER CLASSES Begin!

On October 12, 2009, a milestone event occurred at Bethany South: eight women from Bethany's residences gathered in our new Computer Lab to begin an intensive learning process to help them to attain the skills needed to effectively compete in today's job market. Although concerned that they might not be able to understand everything, all agreed that they felt "privileged, thankful, honored and excited" to be there.



One could sense the women quickly developed a *group spirit* based on their mutual enthusiasm and willingness to help one another. Although *Juanita* felt uneasy at first, she said, "I have great classmates and we help each other. I know I can do this because I have gained confidence and positive energy from them. We validate each other." *Veronica* noted, "I'm going to learn all that I can and use it to get much farther in life." Many mentioned long-term professional goals: *Jocelin* plans to find employment in a field "where I can help many people and can care and provide for my children in a really good way." *Chevelle* wants to finish her Associates Degree in Office Technology, and said that these classes "will put me ahead of the game!" *Eugenia* hopes to eventually have her own home-based computer business. *Florence* expressed her feelings: "I enjoy learning and the computer is what is needed in this time that we live - if you don't keep up with the changing times, you can't even speak with your grandchildren." *Dayna* agrees that this will "help me be a better person for myself and for my kids." Perhaps *Patricia* expressed it best for everyone: "Wow - what an opportunity!"



Bethany's Computer Program became a reality when José Aponte, Director of Development, submitted the final version of an earlier grant entitled *Imparting a Working Knowledge of Computer Technology* to Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy's Office and her staff, in turn, they recommended Bethany for funding through the Small Business Administration. Brian Koonmen, our IT expert, was very successful in securing the purchase of twelve new laptop computers at bargain prices.

Executrain, a nationwide business training organization, was then selected to provide the training to our students under the vigilant supervision of José and Brian. Whenever we have six or more students, we have our *own class* with *our own teacher, and these classes are conducted on-site at Bethany!* In addition to the on-site classes, each student can choose additional classes from the extensive curriculum offered by Executrain at their Center in Melville.

Our first Class has graduated with excellent skills in basic computer and business readiness. Our second session has already begun with twelve new, enthusiastic women. We are all so proud of their accomplishments and impressed by their motivation and commitment! We are confident that this program will continue to succeed so that our young women will be able to build a better life for themselves and their children here at Bethany.

Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy presents a check for **$127,700** to Bethany House for our innovative Computer Program which began October 2009.

Patrick Maloney & Phil Guerra from ***Executrain***, S. Aimee Koonmen, Jose Aponte, Jessie Fentnor, and Connie Kerwick-Kearns gather to receive the check from Congresswoman McCarthy.