

Laptops for everyone!

By Meg Sullivan

Queen of Peace High School in Burbank is more than halfway to its goal of raising \$400,000 and providing wireless laptop computers for every student by next school year.

The Tech 4 Learning Initiative would make Queen of Peace the first girls' high school in the Chicago area to go completely wireless.

The initiative was launched in November and has raised \$202,410, thanks in part to an anonymous alumn that pledged to contribute up to \$100,000 by matching the funds Queen of Peace raised by Dec. 31 said the school's development director Cindy Kmetty. Peace raised more than \$100,000 in just four weeks, meeting the matching grant challenge on Nov. 27. The \$100,000 gift is the largest single donation in the school's history.

Kathleen Hanlon, chief administrator at Queen of Peace, claims the Tech 4 Learning Initiative will help empower Peace students to learn in many different ways: critical thinking, problem solving, mastering information and communications illiteracies, and promoting global awareness and interaction.

Queen of Peace aims to outfit all girls with wireless computers

"We want all of our students to have 24/7 access to skill sets and resources for future growth and education," Hanlon said. "It's an obligation that schools provide those resources, it's an equity issue."

Hanlon noted the state of Michigan recently passed legislation requiring all schools to provide students with laptops. In order for students to remain competitive, they need to be on a level playing field, she added.

"Universities expect kids to come in prepared and knowing what's going on, we have to close the digital divide," she said. "With access to laptops anytime, kids can learn at their own pace. There's so much out there to help them, and this is very powerful."

Hanlon said providing the laptops would be a huge step for women.

"We are delighted that as women we're given this technological know-how," she said. "We're very excited this is a

wonderful opportunity."

Queen of Peace features school-wide internet access, nine wireless rooms, several computer centers, and a video broadcasting/graphic design lab. Now that the school has secured \$200,000, it can begin wireless installation. Once the Tech 4 program is in place, the school intends to open a computer lab and institute a "self-maintainer" program to provide students with a course option that teaches laptop repair. The program will also teach students to manage the lab facility, order parts and repair technology equipment.

According to Hanlon and Kmetty, donations have come from parents, faculty, staff, alumna and school board members.

"We have been making personal calls to everyone and applying through foundations," Hanlon said. "The Peace Parent Association is hosting a raffle through Dec. 18 and that is very good. Students are selling tickets. We are trying every constituent to build more support."

"Now we are trying to get external corporate support," she continued. "We are looking into grants and focusing on technology for women might help us cover those."