<u>*Why*</u> Create a SW Portland Schools Technology Equity Project

There is a need for equity in tech integration across schools and in closing the digital divide between student families.
In today's high-tech world all schools and all students need good access to technology in education, but this access varies widely from school to school, and student to student.

Families with students, and neighbors without students, have a common desire to be involved, but they have different specific interests.

Families are especially interested in practical ways to improve their student's education, and neighbors are especially interested in learning about what schools are doing now and could do in the future to serve the whole community.

TechConnect is a unique new event, featuring a variety of hands-on, first-hand activities, to begin a process connecting those two groups of people and energizing united community support to build the needed equity.

Such an involving tech and touch event creates relationships, inspires & showcases *what is happening* and *what could happen* so that specific follow-up project work can be done by schools, the SWNI Schools Committee, collaborators and partners in the future.   Families get specific information to help them use technology more effectively with their students. Neighbors learn first-hand the amazing changes in how their neighborhood schools are using technology, and the areas needing more help. The event provides school support, speakers and areas focused on specific interests. Attendees meet each other and talk over interest areas, coming away with energy to continue the connection.

Desired event outcomes:
- People who have limited access to technology learn about resources that could increase access
- Parents learn how their students are using technology in their schools
- People without kids in school learn what's happening in their neighborhood schools.
- Potential for increasing public support of tech in schools
- Increase awareness of "free" technology available outside schools
- Desire that event empowers people

From the SWNI Small Grant Proposal:
a) increase the number and diversity of people involved in their communities and neighborhoods by involving students and non-parent neighbors in the process, and by special outreach to low-income communities and communities of color.
b) strengthen neighborhood and community capacity to build community identity, skills, relationships and partnerships through the dissemination of our findings, and the energy from participants in TechConnect.
c) increase community and neighborhood impact on public decisions at the school-district and city level by publicizing the equity needs of SW schools and adding informed and motivated neighbors to address these needs.