Program helps put computers in homes

PHILADELPHIA Stan Pokras has dedicated his life to providing low-income children, teens and adults with refurbished computers. As executive director of Nonprofit Technology Resources, he has given thousands of Philadelphia residents a chance to own their own computer.

NTR, located on Brandywine St. in the Spring Garden section of the city, is overwhelming at first sight. An old warehouse is filled to the max with thousands of computers and monitors.

"We have as many as 2,000 computers in one room," says Pokras.

NTR collects used computers from schools, law firms and individuals. The computers are refurbished in the organization's warehouse and are either donated to low-income individuals or sold for at low cost.

Computer monitors range from $10-40 and keyboards range from $2-15. The store also sells laptops from $75 to $400.

"We have a computer thrift store here in the warehouse. People who can't afford a new computer can come to the store and purchase one of our used computers," says Pokras.

Don't know how to use a computer? The organization

Computer drop off

• **Used computers can be dropped off Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. until 3p.m. Stan Pokras encourages individuals to donate computers or make a cash donation. "Cash donations are what will keep this organization alive. It will allow us to donate more and more computers to people who need them," says Pokras.** METRO

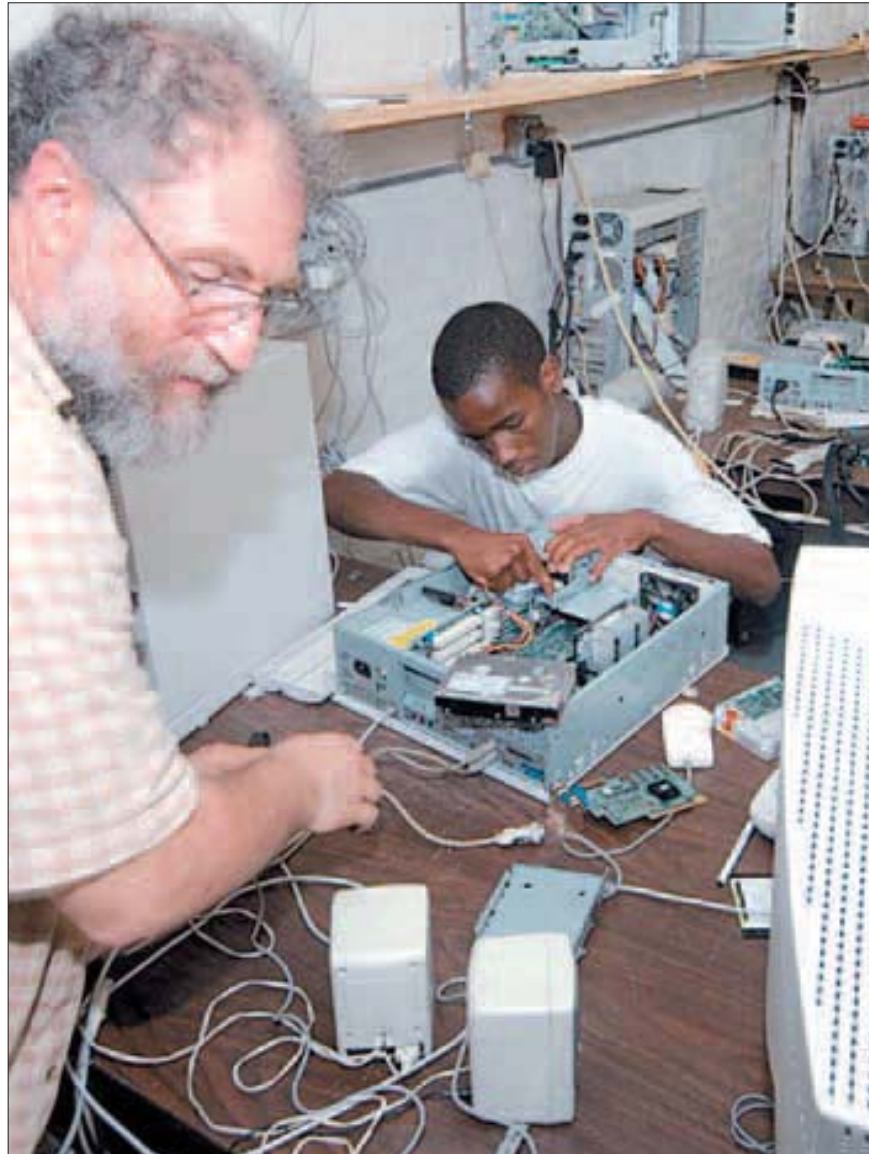holds a $5 monthly workshop led by volunteers who offer technical support for computer owners.

"People will bring in a bag of parts and we will teach them how to put it back together," says Pokras.

The Philadelphia School District sends students through the program "Youth Works Project" to NTR.

"Students get to see how computers work, inside and out," Pokras says.

Students start with learning how to write an e-mail and then get a chance to create their own Web page. Volunteers donate their time to teach students. At the end, students build their own computer and get to take it home. **ANNIE JARROW**

BRIAN COBB, a 15-year-old student at Olney High School, works with Stan Pokras, whose Nonprofit Technology Resources helps teach about computers.

RIKARD LARMA/METRO