



350

Number of bones in a baby's body, as opposed to the 206 found in adults

twenty four

The age at which legendary actor James Dean died in a car crash



IT belongs to everyone

GiveITBack, Airlink's partner for this venture, was established in 2009.

The founder, Jonathan Michael, has international IT qualifications and worked in the IT industry both abroad and locally for more than seven years before starting GiveITBack. The company was formed with the intention of sourcing and providing technology for the purpose of IT education in South African Schools.

If you would like to know more about GiveITBack, visit giveITback.co.za.

GiveITback

Airlink is making a difference in underprivileged schools

Where would you be without access to a computer (laptop, netbook, tablet, smartphone – take your pick) and the knowledge to make it work? Probably not enjoying your current lifestyle.

Computers form a large part of our lives and without experience in operating these machines, we wouldn't be able to compete in the job market, where it is expected that you have at the very least a basic understanding of the equipment that powers business.

Now imagine you live in an underprivileged community. Then add a mental and/or physical disability to the mix. Chances are people with these kinds of odds stacked against them are going to find it difficult to find employment, support a family or find the satisfaction that comes with putting in a day's work. It might be too

late for some, but there are children for whom steady employment in this age of computers may be possible. And that's thanks to Airlink.

Reaching out

As part of its socio-economic programme, Airlink is collaborating with GiveITBack to provide needy schools in South Africa with information technology laboratories (IT labs) in an effort to provide the children with better access to learning. Ekukhanyeni Special Needs School in Pietermaritzburg was the first recipient of Airlink's generosity.

"We are investing in our own future," says Peter-Paul Ngwenya, Chairman of Airlink. "Education is too important to be left to government alone. The future belongs to those who are IT competent, which is why we



7234.15km

The distance between Cape Town and Cairo

132cm

Length of the world's longest female legs, a record held by Russia's Svetlana Pankratova



decided to donate computers and ensure that these kids have internet access.”

The school now boasts 21 desktops (comprising 19” flat screen monitors, optical mice, headphones and DVD writers), two laptops for the staff and principal, wireless networking, a high level laser printer, a file and print server, 3G internet access and educational and office suite software. The IT lab is protected by burglar bars on the windows as well as a security gate. Other additions include electrical surge protection, an additional electrical plug, a folding door (to hide a sink), a desk for the educator, repairs to damaged walls, painting of the entire classroom, a prepaid maintenance contract and branded



signage at the school's entrance.

Maude Mthembu, principal at Ekukhanyeni, has promised that the community will make sure no harm comes to the equipment that has found a deserving home; she understands what this gift means to the children's futures.

Airlink isn't stopping at one school. There are other schools, in other parts of the airline's network, who will be receiving similar assistance in the near future.

Airlink and GivelTBack has identified a school in Nelspruit for a similar project and it is anticipated that the roll-out will commence on 4 June 2012.

Text and Photography | **Kate Kennedy**

Opposite: Some of the children at the special opening of the Airlink GivelTBack computer lab

Top: The hardworking, dedicated staff at Ekukhanyeni Special Needs School in Pietermaritzburg

Left: Kids enjoying their new IT lab

Right: Jonathan Michael of GivelTBack, Maude Mthembu, Principal of Ekukhanyeni and Peter-Paul Ngwenga, Chairman of Airlink