

Amazon strikes relationship with SIUE East St. Louis Center

by Doug McIlhagga
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EAST ST. LOUIS - It wasn't Christmas or a birthday, but another special event on Wednesday, Feb. 22 made [Southern Illinois University Edwardsville East St. Louis Center \(ESLC\) Project Success](#) students rummage through boxes and orange crepe paper for an unexpected gift – 50 Fire Kids Edition tablets from Amazon.

Amazon's Edwardsville fulfillment centers donated 50 Fire tablets and a \$500 Amazon gift card.. The gift marked the budding relationship between Amazon and the University, which drew SIUE officials Chancellor Dr. Randy Pembroke, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Dr. Denise Cobb, Vice Chancellor for University Advancement and SIUE Foundation CEO Rachel Stack, Vice Chancellor for Administration Rich Walker and East St. Louis Center Executive Director Jesse Dixon. Also in attendance was Staff Assistant Dominique Manley, representing the office of U.S. Rep. Mike Bost (R-Murphysboro).

“It is great to be able to work with a company such as Amazon that has international stature,” said Pembroke. “At SIUE, part of our mission involves shaping a changing world, and I can't think of a better way than to have the equipment that prepare future

leaders, who in 10-15 years, will be the individuals who are standing in front of the room taking charge.”



“I’m incredibly grateful that Amazon is working with us, and they understand the importance of what we’re doing here,” said Dixon. “Project Success, directed by Janina Turley for the last 20 years, prepares young people to advance in education and builds resiliency in their lives. Project Success has approximately 100 students who will benefit from this gift.”

“Amazon has two fulfillment centers in Edwardsville and hundreds of full-time associates from East St. Louis,” said Jason Speedy, General Manager of one of Amazon’s Edwardsville fulfillment centers.. “We are always looking for ways to give back locally and support children’s education by bringing technology into the classroom. We’re excited that we can help make a difference to the Project Success program.”

Amazon’s interest in the ESLC and willingness to partner with SIUE is further proof of the Center’s value and the University’s success, said Stack. Amazon representatives first contacted Stack about the work at the ESLC.

“Out of all the options that Amazon had,” Stack told the students, “they found out about you and wanted to invest in your future.”



“The Amazon Fire Kids Edition tablets will certainly enhance the program,” said Turley. “It will help our teachers in assisting the children with their homework and make learning exciting and engaging.”

“I will have a good time with it,” said 13-year-old Larry Shaw, with excitement. “I think it will help me with my grades.”

Fire Kids Edition tablets come with a year of Amazon FreeTime Unlimited with access to over 13,000 age-appropriate books, videos, educational apps and games plus access to over 40,000 hand-curated YouTube videos and websites. Fire Kids Edition includes a 2-year, worry-free guarantee—if anything happens, simply return the tablet and Amazon will replace it for free.