



Hana Alawy, 18, with Comcast executive David L. Cohen, says the tech skills will be useful in the workforce. (Clarence Tabb Jr. / The Detroit News)

## Program helps Dearborn teens bridge digital divide

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*The Detroit News*

*Dearborn* -- Young people from 15 schools graduated Monday from a digital literacy and service program about how to use broadband technologies.

The graduates, ages 14-21, are from diverse, low-income backgrounds. They attended classes twice a week throughout the 2009-10 school year at the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services and dedicated 50 hours of community service to teach others what they learned through the Comcast Digital Connectors program.

"I knew very little about computers, just e-mail. I can't believe what I learned and I'm only 15," said Amat Ashaish of Dearborn.

Some of the skills they learned include how to network computer labs, connect wireless access points and create video documentaries, one of the most popular class assignments, students said.

Hana Alawy, 18, a sophomore at Wayne State University, said the technology will help prepare

her for the work force. She is studying pharmacology.

Comcast and One Economy, a technology-focused nonprofit, partnered to develop the program.

Dearborn is the ninth city in the nation to offer the Comcast Digital Connectors program and the first in Michigan.

"We have launched 16 programs nationwide and hope to have 30 nationwide by the end of this year," said David L. Cohen, executive vice president of Comcast Corp.

A second Digital Connectors program is planned at the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services.

Hassan Jaber, the center's executive director, said the program was timely because of the youth center facility opening at Dix near Vernor.

Jaber also cited a recent study claiming that Arab-Americans are the fastest growing demographic group in Wayne County.

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