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| **News Release**  Contact: Megan Foster  Company: E2D - Eliminate the Digital Divide  Tel: 814-977-3880  Email: megan@e-2-d.org  **For Immediate Release** |

**E2D opens technology lab within EY Charlotte South End**

*The collaboration between E2D and EY US serves to bridge the digital divide in Charlotte*

**June 14, 2022** – [E2D](https://www.e-2-d.org/) – Eliminate the Digital Divide – today announced the opening of the “E2D EY Lab” housed in the EY Charlotte wavespaceTM in South End. To help combat the digital divide in Charlotte, E2D collects used laptops from individual donors and corporations, refurbishes them in student-led technology labs and distributes them to families who don't have access to computers at home. In just under nine years, E2D has distributed 30,000 laptops to students and families in need in Charlotte and greater Mecklenburg County.

The 2,500-square-foot space, offered pro-bono by Ernst & Young LLP (EY US), includes five offices, a conference room as well as a large open workspace and is fully enabled with the technology E2D needs to operate. Many of the students E2D hires come from Title 1 High Schools locally to provide the work of recycling and refurbishing of the donated technology. The product of their efforts creates a continuous cycle of digital opportunity directly tied back to the very neighborhoods in which many of them live.

"E2D is incredibly honored and excited to build out this technology refurbishment lab in the EY wavespace in Charlotte's South End,” said Pat Millen, Co-Founder, E2D. “Not only will this location greatly expand E2D's capacity to rebuild and redistribute computers to North Carolina families, but this amazing setting will provide vital social capital for our student lab techs, who are waiting for the opportunity for their talents to be revealed. We are so grateful for our collaboration with EY and the support in addressing the digital divide."

EY US and E2D connected through the firm’s leadership support of the Mayor’s Racial Equity Initiative and the standup of the newly formed Charlotte Center for Digital Equity, the backbone organization for a collective impact strategy bringing together residents, public, and private sector partners to co-create solutions to bridge the digital divide, allowing every resident the opportunity to thrive in our modern culture.

Brad Wallace, Principal, EY, and one of the founding members of the Charlotte Center for Digital Equity said, “I’ve had the privilege and honor to work with some very talented individuals to make Mecklenburg County the most digitally equitable community in America. Our journey started with using our EY wavespace to help define the Mayor’s Racial Equity Initiative and to launch the Center for Digital Equity. One of the primary goals of the Center for Digital Equity is to put 55,000 laptops in the hands of our underserved community members over the next five years, providing access to the digital economy and opportunities for upward mobility. Co-locating E2D here in the EY wavespace will help us realize that mission.”

“Too often, an individual’s potential is limited by a lack of access to a computer and internet connection,” said Malcomb Coley, EY Charlotte Office Managing Partner. “We’re honored to be able to support E2D, whose mission aligns with EY’s commitment to bridge the digital divide.”

The digital divide describes the gap between those who have access to technology, the internet and digital training and those who do not. It affects all generations, rural and urban communities, and has downstream effect on a wide variety of industries and sectors. Bridging the digital divide provides the opportunity for individuals to fully participate in modern education, economy and society.

“Our EY family in Charlotte has passion for using our time and talents to have positive impact in our community,” said Alex Salguedo, Managing Director, EY, who is tasked with activating the firm’s volunteer network to bridge the Digital Divide in Charlotte. “We will work closely with E2D and the Center for Digital Equity to play our part in making Mecklenburg County the most digitally equitable community in America.”

For more information, please visit www.e-2-d.org.

**About E2D**

E2D, Inc. was founded in 2013 to create digital citizens throughout North Carolina that have the essential computer technology in their homes and digital skilling necessary to ensure academic achievement and job success. E2D’s ultimate goal is to help families find paths of upward mobility through technology access supporting education, workforce development and the provision of critical community connections.

100% of E2D’s laptops are distributed to families with demonstrated need, who reside at or below Federal Poverty levels. E2D accomplishes its work through generous donations from corporations and individual technology donors. The refurbishment work occurs in technology labs that hire, train, and employ local students, many of whom have been recipients of E2D computers themselves.

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