**UPSTART and CenturyLink Work Together to Cut Costs, Create More Preschool Slots**

*The UPSTART home-based preschool program provides Internet services for qualifying* *homes without access, and will use cost savings from participating in CenturyLink’s Internet Basics program to enroll more children.*

**Salt Lake City, October 15, 2014**—Thanks to a partnership with [CenturyLink](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.centurylink.com%2F&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNGB2slHACeWH7Maj35ds6zb9cmrig) (NYSE:

CTL), [UPSTART](http://www.utahupstart.org), Utah’s state-funded, in-home preschool program, will be saving money on Internet costs for about 230 UPSTART homes currently using CenturyLink and receiving Internet assistance. Through UPSTART, those families will be enrolled in CenturyLink’s [Internet Basics](http://www.centurylink.com/help/index.php?assetid=11) program, which provides discounted service to qualifying, low-income consumers. UPSTART, now entering its sixth year, will be using the cost savings to open up slots for more children.

The UPSTART program, developed by the [Waterford Institute](http://www.waterford.org), a nonprofit research center in Salt Lake City, uses home-based educational technology to develop the school readiness skills of children the year before they go to kindergarten. UPSTART preschoolers use the computer-based software at home at least 15 minutes a day, five days a week, making dependable Internet connections and computer equipment vital to the program.

Since UPSTART’s launch in 2008, it has provided computer equipment and Internet services to qualifying families lacking these tools. “Last year, two-thirds of the children enrolled in UPSTART were from low-income families, and many of them did not have computer equipment or Internet service when they enrolled,” says Dr. Claudia Miner, Waterford’s UPSTART director. Dr. Miner, who was integral in establishing the partnership with the state to fund UPSTART, remarks that “For many of these families, having Internet services is not only essential for their children’s education, but can make a difference in so many ways by creating a gateway to resources for employment, health, budgeting and other critical life tools.”

The Utah Legislature funds UPSTART, so the program works within a limited budget, which means a limited number of enrollment slots each year. At the request of several Utah legislators, the Waterford Institute was looking for ways to cut Internet and equipment costs to serve more children in UPSTART.

With just one call from the UPSTART team to CenturyLink’s market development manager, Flemming Jensen, the ball was rolling. Jensen understood immediately that cutting costs was one sure-fire way to increase the number of UPSTART slots, and was enthusiastic to help. CenturyLink agreed to put UPSTART participants on Internet Basics and also upgraded all UPSTART-sponsored subscribers to a higher bandwidth at a significant discount.

“CenturyLink is proud to partner with the proactive and innovative Waterford Institute, which had the vision to bring much needed computer equipment and Internet access to children and families throughout the state of Utah,” said Jensen. “We look forward to a long and successful relationship with Waterford and UPSTART.”

Thanks to CenturyLink’s dedication to this partnership coupled with hardware cost savings, UPSTART will save at least $100,000, meaning the program could enroll upwards of 150 additional children this year, taking the total enrollment to nearly 5,100. CenturyLink has also helped simplify the enrollment process so that UPSTART can set up a qualifying family’s Internet services at the time they register, avoiding burdensome duplicate paperwork for the household.

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About Waterford

Waterford Institute is a nonprofit research center that creates personalized cloud-based instruction through award-winning curriculum, content and assessment for children aged pre-K through third grade. As a nonprofit, Waterford is uniquely focused on providing accessibility, equity and excellence for our youngest learners to position them for a lifetime of learning and success.

About UPSTART

UPSTART was established by Waterford as a pilot demonstration project funded by the Utah State Legislature, and is now in its sixth year. In January 2014, Waterford was awarded $11.5 million from the Investing in Innovation (i3) 2013 federal grant competition to expand its successful UPSTART program.

For more information, visit [www.waterford.org](http://www.waterford.org) or call 801-349-2200.

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