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MIKE WENDLAND

Computer whiz dentist's hobby is helping others

I want to tell you today about a guy in Northville who's doing some terrific things for people.

First, though, you have to get past the irony of his name and his profession. He's a dentist, and his name is Dr. Payne.

Now, by all accounts I've heard, Jim Payne is a terrific dentist. But what I want to share about him has nothing to do with his dental practice.

As a hobby, Payne fixes and restores old discarded computers — more than 1,000 of them during the past several years — and sends them to needy people, churches, schools, ministries and charities.

He and a group of buddies do the same thing with old printers, scanners and other hardware.

Lately, he's been sending them to Iraq. Last week, he sent his ninth laptop to members of F Company, from the 425th Infantry based out of Selfridge Air National Guard Base.

"They tell me they're setting up a lab there for soldiers to use to send e-mail home," Payne says. "It makes me really happy to help these soldiers keep in touch with their loved ones."

Payne gets computers from corporations, community groups and others who have updated their technology and would otherwise toss them out.

He's a self-taught computer whiz.

After a PC he owned kept breaking down, he realized it was cheaper to repair it himself than to call in a technician. Then, he started fixing



One thing led to another, and the number of restored machines started to grow. He ended up forming a nonprofit corporation to handle the donations.

He'll take any machine, as long as it has a 400 MHz Pentium II or better. The computer does not have to work, but the monitor does.

All donations are tax deductible.

If you have some old computers and want to help, you can get details from his Web site, www.jdscomputers.netfirms.com.

Free video e-mail

Comcast users who have a webcam attached to their computers can now send video e-mail — but only if they use Microsoft Windows.

Those who use Macintosh or another platform are out of luck.

PC users download a small



BOB MOREILLON/Special to the Free Press

Northville dentist Dr. Jim Payne fixes computers and gives them to needy people, charities and soldiers in Iraq.

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