

Cox and Former NFL Star Partner on Digital Equity Initiative

Malcolm Mitchell, Super Bowl champion and Share the Magic Foundation founder, and Cox share vision to connect diverse, low-income, school-aged kids online

ATLANTA, Sept. 8, 2021 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Cox has announced a new collaboration to narrow the learning gap in diverse, low-income neighborhoods through its Connect2Compete program, which provides internet access to eligible K-12 students and families at low cost.

Malcolm Mitchell, an author, Super Bowl-champion and founder of the [Share the Magic Foundation](#), will partner with Cox to amplify the need for internet access among students, particularly in multicultural areas, as the critical foundation for education, training, and the jobs of tomorrow. Malcolm will help drive awareness and adoption of the Connect2Compete program among eligible customers, all while promoting a cause that carries immense personal meaning to the author and athlete himself, as he once worked off the field to achieve his literacy goals.

"I grew up as a low-income student, so I understand the challenges that exist within the community. Initially, reading was a challenge for me. However, through perseverance, books became an avenue for expanding my curiosity, creativity and learning," said Mitchell, a native of Valdosta, Georgia who was drafted to the New England Patriots after graduating from the University of Georgia in 2015. "For today's kids, having an internet connection is vital. Connect2Compete offers an affordable option for families, and my hope is that more kids find joy and passion in reading and writing like I have through access to technology and tools that Cox provides."

As many activities have been shifted online, the virus has sparked debates about digital equity. The pressures of the pandemic and social injustice have laid bare the effects of the lack of internet access to kids in lower income families which in turn can lock them out of the economic system. The "homework gap" is even more pronounced in minority children according to research. Communities across the country are facing challenges with remote learning, as many students lack internet access to complete school assignments and learn at their grade level with proficiency.

"Malcolm's focus on literacy and Cox's focus on technology go hand-in-hand to ensure young students are positioned for achievement," said Pat Esser, president and chief executive officer of Cox Communications. "We are proud to join forces with Malcolm Mitchell and the Share the Magic Foundation to ensure children have the opportunity to succeed in the classroom and in life."

According to a recent Pew Research Center study:

- The "homework gap" – which refers to school-age children lacking the connectivity they need to complete schoolwork at home – is more pronounced for Black, Hispanic and lower-income households.
- One-quarter of Black teens said they often or sometimes cannot do homework assignments due to lack of reliable access to a computer or internet connectivity, compared with 13% of white teens and 17% of Hispanic teens.
- Hispanic teens were especially likely to say they do not have access to a home computer: 18% said this, compared with 9% of white teens and 11% of Black teens.

The new partnership builds upon Cox Communications' continued commitment to ensuring low-income, K-12 students are positioned for the future through technology. Cox also partners with the Boys & Girls Club of America, where the company has provided Innovation Labs as a place for kids and teens to access the internet and grow digital literacy skills after school.

Cox continues to connect families in need throughout the pandemic. Several digital equity efforts by Cox have recently been put into place:

- Cox [announced its participation in the FCC's Emergency Connectivity Fund](#) to deliver internet services to students, educational staff and library patrons who would otherwise lack a sufficient connection to the internet for remote learning and remote library services. For more information on the FCC's ECF program, visit cox.com/ecf.
- Cox is a participant in the FCC's [Emergency Broadband Benefit](#) program which provides temporary financial assistance for internet service. Eligible families may qualify to receive up to \$50 off their monthly bill based on their current internet service and equipment rental, or up to \$75 if they live in a tribal area. Cox Connect2Compete customers are eligible for this benefit. For more information on the FCC's EBB program, visit cox.com/ebb.
- [Cox announced that the temporary connection speed increase for Connect2Compete](#), prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, would become the new standard speed for Connect2Compete internet service. The connection speed was bolstered from 25 Mbps to 50 Mbps.
- Last year, Cox suspended late fees and extended payment relief offerings for customers in the Connect2Compete program who expressed an inability to pay due to pandemic hardships.
- [The Digital Academy](#) is the digital literacy arm of Cox's Connect2Compete program designed to connect families, educators, community leaders and students with free access to tips, educational videos and tutorials to ensure safe and effective online behavior. This platform is continuously updated with fresh and relevant information.
- Cox [added the MyFuture platform](#) from the Boys and Girls Club of America recently to the Digital Academy. My Future empowers kids and teens to learn new skills, share accomplishments and earn recognition via gamification in a safe and fun online environment.

For more information on Cox's Connect2Compete program, visit: www.cox.com/c2c

About Cox Communications

Cox Communications is committed to creating meaningful moments of human connection through broadband applications and services. The largest private telecom company in America, we proudly serve 6.7 million homes and businesses across 18 states. We're dedicated to empowering others to build a better future and celebrate diverse products, people, suppliers, communities, and the characteristics that makes each one unique. Cox Communications is the largest division of Cox Enterprises, a family-owned business founded in 1898 by Governor James M. Cox.

About Share the Magic Foundation

Share the Magic Foundation's mission is to unlock the potential of young lives through literacy. By introducing book ownership to students in households where reading is not a priority and inspiring below grade-level readings through innovative and inclusive literacy programming, students at risk of academic failure are empowered to read to a better future. Founded in 2016 by author and former football star Malcolm Mitchell,

Share the Magic Foundation has been devoted to transforming the lives of children through literacy.

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