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CENTRAL CALIFORNIA MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS EARN TECHNOLOGY CERTIFICATION THROUGH TechYES

Technology Literacy Project Provided by Generation Y and Verizon Receives Rave Reviews

Olympia, Wash. (June 15, 2006) – This school year, more than 10,000 students were given the chance to discover the necessary skills to take on the 21st century with the Verizon California Technology Literacy Project. The program, implemented in February 2006 throughout the Central Valley, worked to ensure that participating students could understand and use technology in powerful and meaningful ways. Through grants supplied by Verizon, Generation Y was able to provide the technology literacy program, TechYES, to 45 schools, including Foothill Farms Junior High School and Jonas Salk Middle School, and certify each student who completed the requirements.

TechYES is a student tech literacy program incorporating flexible materials and resources that can be used in existing classrooms or as an extracurricular activity. Through TechYES, students learn about Internet safety, Net ethics and how to critique web resources, in addition to creating two or more projects. The California program, which aims to improve skills through student-to-student peer training, mentoring and research-based practices, has received positive reviews from both students and educators.

“Students learned how to design web pages, create presentations using PowerPoint, and show programs using Moviemaker. Subjects included things like NASCAR, women’s fashions and studies of birds and reptiles,” said Tom Fincher, a technology teacher at Creekside Middle School in Patterson. “I was impressed with the students’ projects and they all seemed to enjoy having the ability to pick their own activities.”

After participating in the program, TechYES advisors in the Central Valley reported in a preliminary study:

- Significant increase in student knowledge and skills in software applications, hardware, network use, Internet safety, Net etiquette and in evaluating web resources
- Significant increase in the student peer mentors’ academic skills, interpersonal skills and self-esteem
- 97% agreed that TechYES is an effective strategy for “bridging the digital divide”
- Universal agreement that TechYES is a good way to ensure middle school students are technology literate

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Relying on peer mentors to teach certain portions of the program, encourage their classmates, and guide projects along is a key ingredient of the TechYES program.

“It was great to see the peer mentors look at their classmate’s projects, make suggestions and provide compliments,” explains Scott Rundblade, a technology teacher at Boron Jr. High School in Boron. “We had 45 students participate in the program and 100% of them completed their projects – the peer mentors were a lot of help.”

Students at Boron Jr. High School created projects using PowerPoint, digital pictures, and clip art about subjects like Barry Bonds and school bullies. Through TechYES students have the chance to create their own projects with the subject matter of their choice. This process encourages students to take a more active role in each project, while still learning the fundamentals of presentation software, word processors, spreadsheets, web tools, graphic organizers and more.

Generation Y, in partnership with Verizon, is working to close the digital divide by guaranteeing students can use technology effectively, by providing a vehicle for which students can take responsibility for their own learning. TechYES offers students the chance to take on a leadership role, and schools some assistance in meeting the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) goal of ensuring every 8th grader is technology literate. Earning a TechYES certification offers each student the chance to show their peers, educators, parents and community that they have the skills necessary to take on the 21st century.

For further details about the Verizon California Technology Literacy Project and a list of Central Valley schools receiving grants, please see <http://geny.org/mci>.

About Generation Y

Generation Y, a non-profit 501-3c corporation, promotes constructive technology use by youth. They accomplish this mission by providing resources, materials, models, and collaborative opportunities for youth-created, coordinated, and constructed by their peers. For more information, go to www.geny.org.

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