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## Oakland Digital Honors MC Hammer, North Social, Goapele for Technology Leadership at Inspiration Awards 2011

*Oakland Digital commemorates 2011 with its second annual Inspiration Awards on Dec. 1 at Preservation Park.*

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OAKLAND, Calif. – October 21st, 2011 – Oakland Digital (ODALC) ([odalc.org](http://odalc.org)), a nonprofit organization that promotes digital prosperity and Internet literacy to low-income communities in Oakland, announced honorees MC Hammer, North Social ([northsocial.com](http://northsocial.com)) co-founder Alex Bernstein and Goapele for its second annual Inspiration Awards at Oakland's historic Preservation Park. The event will be held at Nile Hall on Thursday, December 1st at 6:00 PM. The event is open to the public with a ticket purchase at [www.oaklandinspiration.com](http://www.oaklandinspiration.com).

As a neutral educational platform, Oakland Digital combines commercial activity and technological advancements with civic responsibilities by developing the skills of the underserved in the growing Internet & mobile marketplace. Oakland Digital has earned the respect and admiration of many leaders in educational and civic affairs for its high degree of community involvement. Through the Inspiration Awards, Oakland Digital recognizes and honors prominent local Bay Area individuals who have made substantial contributions to the community at large through their innovation and dedication in their chosen fields of 1) artistic creativity, 2) business, and 3) technology.

Hosted by seven time Emmy award winner Barbara Rodgers, the ceremony will highlight the honorees' outstanding achievements in a ceremonial manner and thank them for their positive impact on the community.

Oakland native singer/songwriter **Goapele** broke out of the Bay Area at the beginning of the last decade determined to make a difference in the world of music. Seamlessly blending genres while refusing to be limited by the "neo-soul" tag, the eloquent singer/songwriter completed her first release *Closer* in 2001 and never looked back. Embraced from the beginning by critics and fans alike, Goapele craved the perfect niche for herself as she created music that fused jazz, soul and hip-hop with her own beautiful poetry. Goapele has performed at rallies, demonstrations and various political events around the world from Cuba to South Africa.

Whether wearing a jersey for a billion dollar mega-corporation, a garage-sized startup venture, or an NFL team, co-founder and Managing Partner **Alex Bernstein** has relentlessly focused on business strategy, data-driven decision making, business planning, and operational execution. Prior to the conception of Oakland-based North Social, Alex retired from the NFL and started using his head for more than just a battering ram as an executive and investor in various technology and media ventures. His past academic success and passion for learning led to senior management roles at a handful of high-profile entertainment and technology ventures.

**MC Hammer** had his greatest commercial success and popularity from the late 1980's until the mid-1990's. He is known for his hit records, including *U Can't Touch This* and flamboyant dance movements. Hammer's superstar-status made him a household name and pop icon. He has sold more than 50 million records worldwide, demonstrating hip hop's potential for mass market success. Hammer has now become a popular web mogul and activist, currently involved in several Internet projects including DanceJam.com a community site that is dedicated to dancing video competitions, techniques and styles which Hammer, and others, judge or rate.

Inspiration Awards 2011 will generate awareness of the digital divide and raise funds to support Oakland Digital's programming for 2012, which will focus on "Digital Equity for Small Businesses," an annual program teaching struggling small businesses how to adapt their business models to succeed in a digital economy. Tickets are on sale at [www.oaklandinspiration.com](http://www.oaklandinspiration.com).

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