

Oakland Digital Shines Positive Spotlight On Oakland With Wrap Of Successful Year And Inspiration Awards 2011 Featuring MC Hammer, Goapele, North Social

Non-Profit Dedicated To Improving Economic Conditions for Low-Income Communities in Oakland Achieves Milestones

December 31, 2011 – Oakland, Calif. – Oakland Digital (www.odalc.org), a 501(c)(3) non-profit that educates and inspires low-income communities through technology, brought the Hammer down on Oakland, wrapping a successful year with educational classes and capping it off with its second annual Inspiration Awards, honoring MC Hammer, singer/artist Goapele and technology leader Alex Bernstein of North Social.

With the City of Oakland often in the news this year, Oakland Digital worked quietly in the background to achieve progress for many of the city's economically disadvantaged communities. Operating several classes teaching community members the tools needed to survive in the digital age, Oakland Digital's efforts to educate and inspire community members using technology has been recognized by the City, the Mayor's office and through sponsorships from local technology giants including Yahoo! Small Business and Pandora.

"Oakland is a city that inspires passion and commitment from its dedicated community members who know that there is a better Oakland for its people, and who are willing to devote their energies to this cause," said Shaun Tai, Executive Director at Oakland Digital. "This year showed how much we can achieve together to improve the lives of people in Oakland and level the economic playing field. Oakland Digital is committed to continuing the momentum from this year and we are especially grateful to our sponsors, supporters and volunteers."

Oakland Digital's 2012 programs will include "Inspire Oakland" for students and "Digital Equity" for small businesses assisting underserved individuals with training and educational opportunities to become effective members of the digital economy.

In December, Oakland Digital held its second annual Inspiration Awards ceremony. Attended by nearly 200 influential community leaders and with sponsorship from Yahoo! Small Business, North Social, Comcast, Pandora and Social Data Lab, the event achieved fundraising goals for the non-profit that will be used for 2012 programming. Local Bay Area broadcasting legend Barbara Rodgers emceed the event and hip-hop artist Malki Means King closed the evening with a rousing, inspirational rap celebrating Oakland Digital and the beauty of Oakland that had the audience on their feet.

In his acceptance speech, Oakland-raised MC Hammer stated, "There has been a certain level of frustration watching technology evolve and watching new economies being made and not seeing enough participation from the underserved...The entire Oakland Digital team should be very proud of what they've created... it's not only successful, but it's encouraging hope. Hope is the missing element."

The scene at the Inspiration Awards visibly moved its many attendees. As observed by Oakland Digital board member Norman Weekes, "This is the Oakland, where hope never dies and this is the Oakland that inspires us all."

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