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**OAKLAND DIGITAL AND VOLUNTEERS IN ASIA TO FACILITATE A
VOLUNTEER PROJECT IN OAKLAND CHINATOWN**

August 3, 2011 – Oakland, CA – Oakland Digital Arts & Literacy Center (ODALC), a technology not-for-profit organization in downtown Oakland, is working with Stanford University's Volunteers in Asia (VIA) Program to facilitate a volunteer project conducted by university students from Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan.

This student group will be conducting surveys of small businesses and restaurant owners in the Oakland Chinatown area as well as the neighboring areas August 12th through August 17th. The purpose of these surveys is to gauge the owners' technological proficiency and comfort level with utilizing the Internet for business purposes, as well as formulating a consensus on the needs and technological deficiencies that the local commercial community has. The surveys will also see which businesses are interested in utilizing a system of security cameras, and what are the reasons prevent these businesses from already installing one.

ODALC's goal is to empower economically disadvantaged communities with Internet education and digital literacy classes. Located at the edge of Chinatown in downtown Oakland, ODALC is working to help the community flourish through technology, innovation and cross-cultural collaboration. In addition to their Inspire Oakland program, ODALC hosts technology classes for low-income small business owners, presents digital media symposiums, and conducts its annual Inspiration Awards, honoring leaders in technology and community building.

Stanford University's VIA program provides innovative experiential learning programs in Asia and the United States that promote cross-cultural understanding, build partnerships, and offer transformative experiences for their participants and the communities they serve. Specifically, the student group is part of VIA Asia-US Service Learning (AUSL) Program. The AUSL Program is a four-week intensive program that brings together Stanford student coordinators with their peers from Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan to engage in social issues and share approaches for creating social change.

ODALC's volunteer project will allow the student group to help develop the surveys, including allowing the students to translate these surveys from English to Mandarin and Cantonese. At the conclusion of this project the students will be able to present their findings and conclusions from surveying the local businesses to members of the ODALC staff and board.

Students will be able to draw from this project as a cross-cultural experience, in surveying a largely Asian-American business community and seeing what technological and language barriers are needed to be overcome. With this partnership, ODALC and VIA AUSL Program aspire to bring technological innovation to an underserved community with their public service project.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.odalc.org> and <http://www.viaprograms.org/>.



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