

Inaugural Don and Rosemary Vial Awards for Digital Inclusion Exemplary Individual Performance Nominee

Les Peters
Youth Institute Director
YMCA of Greater Long Beach



Les Peters has been a true pioneer in the digital inclusion movement for children, youth, and adults over the past ten years. Along with the Youth Institute staff, he has directly trained over 1,000 high school youth, 3,000 middle school youth, and 5,000 elementary youth in technology that connects to their academic success in twelve school sites. He has also trained non-profit organizations, school districts, and low-income families in various languages through the state of California about Internet safety and social networking.

As a true youth developer, not a technologist, he understands that technology is just a tool and a paintbrush for youth to develop content, research information and connect that to their life path, academics, and career opportunities. Les is especially in tune to minority low-income youth. As a full blooded Navajo and Yakama Native American, Les understands youth's cultural lens and their bi-cultural world. He is seen as one of the statewide leaders in high-end digital media arts, technology, youth development, and education. He is frequently asked to participate on panels and conduct national trainings for the YMCA of the USA. Les has been published in technology articles, such as in Technicity Times and is quoted in Apple Computer's website.

Les is a statewide and national trainer of digital media skills and technology knowledge and has also conducted numerous trainings for the CETF statewide Get Connected! Technology Fairs. Some of the youth Les has trained in the past are now part of the YMCA staff as teachers themselves or are working professionally in the technology industry.

Les is a humble, brilliant, wise, and approachable individual. He deeply cares about the people he serves and is dedicated to improving the lives of children, youth, and families.