



**2012 Don and Rosemary Vial Awards
for Digital Inclusion:
Outstanding Performance
by an Organization Nominee**



Chicana/Latina Foundation

~Since 1977 ~

*Empowering Chicanas/Latinas through
Personal, Educational and Professional
Advancement*

www.chicanalatina.org

The Chicana/Latina Foundation (CLF) is a community based, non-profit organization whose mission is to empower Chicanas/Latinas through personal, educational, and professional advancement. CLF has a 35 year history of accomplishment, becoming a beacon of hope to hundreds of Latina college students who otherwise would not have been able to continue their college education. In the policy areas of Digital Divide and Digital Inclusion, CLF has leveraged its existing programs and engaged innovative methods to reach low income rural households in some of the most marginalized areas of Northern California. Utilizing its 35 year history as a community based organization committed to the empowerment of Latino families, CLF was able to partner with other grassroots organizations, labor unions, schools, and churches to connect close to 1000 low income first time Internet users. By working with refurbishing agencies, CLF was able to purchase and provide 1076 free computers to low income households and community based organizations. With a multifaceted media outreach campaign, including Spanish radio, TV and print media, CLF reached over 100,000 people with information about the benefits of the Internet and information about resources available. Surveys confirm that CLF was able to reach deep into the areas with most need: about 62% of those served have an income of \$20,000 or less; 61% have 4 or more people in the household, and only 36% had completed high school. A computer and Internet connection has become a transforming experience for these households.

CLF has also excelled with its activity within the CETF *Get Connected!* campaign, initiating an innovative application of its mentoring program. In addition to their regular responsibilities within the CLF mentoring program, scholarship awardees were also enlisted to become *Get Connected!* ambassadors. These ambassadors made their communities aware of the *Get Connected!* campaign, offered training and worked in the distribution of computers and connecting new Internet users. This activity enjoyed such immense success that "*Get Connected!* ambassadors" became respected sources for closing the Digital Divide and spurred hotbeds of connectivity in communities such as those in Pescadero, Half Moon Bay, Salinas, Greenfield, Watsonville, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, and San Jose. Of note in Santa Cruz, parents have requested the school district to continue classes which CLF-trained high school student/trainers started independently.

Don and Rosemary Vial clearly were deeply committed to providing services for the most underserved and marginalized in our communities. They would have been so happy to see the faces of those who learned how to use their email and Skype to communicate with their relatives far away, the faces of the parents who could now communicate with their children's teachers and find out what homework and assignments their children had, the face of a young girl who improved her grades from C's to A's because she now had a computer at home and did not have to make the daily trip to the library for a 15 minute computer session. We are proud to follow Don and Rosemary's example and legacy of serving those who need it the most and who work the hardest to learn the benefits of broadband in order to improve the lives of their children and families.