



**For Immediate Release**

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## **California Emerging Technology Fund Announces 2014 Broadband Champions**

***Honoring 15 Individuals Who Act to Close the Digital Divide***

**Los Angeles and San Francisco, CA – March 26, 2014** – The California Emerging Technology Fund is pleased to announce the 2014 Broadband Champions. Fifteen individuals are being recognized for their groundbreaking work and strong commitment to close the Digital Divide.

The Champions were selected in consultation with dozens of broadband leaders, community advocates and state and local policymakers. The 15 individuals are featured in the California Emerging Technology Fund 2013-2014 Annual Report and will be recognized at events in San Francisco on March 27 and in Pasadena on May 19.

“We congratulate the Broadband Champions. From El Centro to Humboldt, from Hollywood to San Francisco, they are representatives of trailblazers who work throughout California and beyond to point the way for policymakers to understand the opportunities afforded by information technology and high-speed Internet access,” said CETF President and CEO Sunne Wright McPeak. “The Champions also share the moral imperative not to leave anyone behind or offline. Each of these individuals inspires us to act to close the Digital Divide,” she said.

*Photos of recipients and full stories for each are available on request.*

### **2014 Broadband Champions (in alphabetical order)**

- **Richard Abisla: Making Tech Training His Mission**  
**Technology Manager, Mission Economic Development Agency, San Francisco**  
Richard developed the first broadband adoption program at MEDA, which has blossomed into an ambitious goal to ensure every family in the Mission District has access to a computer and high-speed Internet at home.
  
- **Cecilia Aguiar-Curry: Leaving No Winters Child Behind**  
**Mayor of Winters, Yolo County**  
Schoolchildren in the Sacramento Valley town of Winters are getting the latest technology at school from a generous grant, but many still have no Internet access when they go home. Cecilia is making parent engagement a top priority and is now working to get families connected to broadband at home.

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- **Gerardo Alvarez, Israel Lara: Putting Parlier Students at the Head of the Class**  
**Gerardo Alvarez, Superintendent of Parlier Unified School District; Israel Lara, President, Youth Centers of America, Parlier**  
Gerardo and Israel arranged to distribute 900 new iPad tablets – one to every Parlier High School student – just days before Christmas 2013. Each tablet has a hotspot so families now can get online at home.
  
- **Connie Barrington: Building Broadband Oases in the Desert**  
**Imperial County Librarian, El Centro**  
Connie is the spark for connecting hundreds of residents in rural desert farming communities to the online world, and she helped land a reading and literacy grant designed to get 1,300 young students reading proficiently by the 3rd grade.
  
- **Damary Bustos: Finding Her Voice Through Technology**  
**Youth Disability Rights Activist, Disability Action Network for Youth and Yo! Disabled & Proud, Alameda County**  
Born with cerebral palsy, Damary uses technology that enables her to attend college and follow her passion to advocate for disability rights. Her story underscores how access to broadband communication can open up new worlds and enable a remarkable young woman to be heard.
  
- **Linda Crowe: Moving California Libraries into the Digital Age**  
**Executive Director, Califa and the Peninsula Library System, San Mateo County**  
Linda has worked for more than a decade on the local, state and national level to develop technology resources of libraries. Her recent advocacy is focused on securing state funds for upgrading connections and allowing California libraries to network more easily.
  
- **Eric Cutright and Paul Romero: Bringing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Technology to Tribes**  
**Eric Cutright, Karuk Tribe Informational Technology Director; Paul Romero, Yurok Tribe Information Service Director, Humboldt County**  
After years of living with unmet promises for reliable telecommunications systems, the Karuk and Yurok tribes joined efforts to launch the Klamath River Rural Broadband Initiative Project. When completed, more than 600 unserved and underserved households will be connected.
  
- **Marilyn Friedman: Drawing Inspiration from Young Animators.**  
**Volunteer, The ACME Network, Los Angeles**  
As former head of outreach for DreamWorks Animation, Marilyn matched budding animators, many of whom attended low-performing Los Angeles schools, with Hollywood professionals. She also spearheaded the donation of more than 1,400 DreamWorks computers to The ACME Network, which sponsors the career-building program.

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- **Susan Hildreth: Turning Libraries into Innovation Centers**  
**Director, Institute of Museum and Library Services, Washington, D.C.**  
A former California State Librarian, Susan was appointed in 2011 by President Obama to lead the Institute. In this national leadership role, Susan and her team are recognized internationally for using technology to offer engaging experiences for lifelong learners and turn libraries into centers of innovation.
  
- **Arlene Krebs: Using Technology to Transform Lives**  
**Founding Director, Wireless Education and Technology Center, CSU Monterey Bay**  
Arlene understands how technology can transform lives by providing access to new opportunities. Leading a number of broadband adoption programs in Monterey County, Arlene is promoting digital inclusion for the homeless, unemployed, students and veterans.
  
- **Rick Miller and Jay McPhail: Pioneering Computers in the Classroom**  
**Rick Miller, Former Superintendent Riverside Unified School District (now Superintendent, Santa Ana Unified School District); Jay McPhail, Former Director of Innovation, RUSD (now Chief Technology Officer, Fullerton School District)**  
Rick and Jay are pioneers in bringing technology to the classroom. Beyond placing computers in Riverside middle schools, in partnership with the CETF-sponsored School2Home program they focused on implementing critical teacher and parent training to ensure a successful program.
  
- **Dewanna Slaughter: Connecting Her Community to Broadband**  
**Teacher, Frick Middle School, Oakland**  
Dewanna wants her students to succeed academically and to be productive contributors to society. That motivation leads her to involve parents in the learning process through the School2Home program, which supports student and family engagement with technology in the classroom and at home. Once a student at Frick herself, Dewanna has helped 300 Frick families gain Digital Literacy training and home broadband.

### **About the California Emerging Technology Fund**

*The mission of CETF is to close the Digital Divide in California by breaking down barriers to high-speed Internet access at home. The goal is to reach 98% of all residences with broadband infrastructure and to achieve 80% home adoption by 2017. This statewide goal can only be accomplished if the following specific hard-to-reach target communities achieve at least a 70% adoption rate: low-income populations, Latino households, rural communities, and people with disabilities. For more information, please visit [www.cetfund.org](http://www.cetfund.org).*