



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



www.youthradio.org

For nearly 20 years, Youth Radio has been committed to closing the Digital Divide by equipping underserved youth with the resources and skills to become leaders in the 21st century. For these youth, the lack of available resources includes access to broadband technology both at home and at school. Consequently, broadband literacy decreases among youth who sometimes or rarely access and utilize the Internet, which also diminishes their competitiveness for both education and employment opportunities. Many of the teens and young adults who Youth Radio serves do not have viable connection to the Internet at home and find it only while using the organization's facilities.

Youth Radio's innovative model connects these youth with technology and media to help close the Digital Divide. Youth Radio provides critical technology training, digital media production and civic engagement for the most disadvantaged citizens -low income youth and youth of color- creating a new generation of innovators; building an educated, skilled workforce; and spurring increased access and adoption of broadband technology. The organization's work supports sustained, lifelong engagement with digital media, and is tied to career pathways and education opportunities. In particular, Youth Radio provides digital media training and wraparound services to 300 youth each year at its Oakland headquarters. Last year alone, 97 percent of Youth Radio students graduated high school, far surpassing the graduation rate nationwide, and 73 percent matriculated into post-secondary educational institutions.

Youth Radio's work is distinguished from other organizations by its focus on direct services and workforce development for youth. Youth Radio provides scores of youth with intensive training in media literacy and technology each year, many of whom don't have access to computers and/or broadband at home or school. In the Greater Bay Area, with its predominance of media and technology industries, Youth Radio understands that digital media literacy is essential to creating an energetic, competitive workforce for today's evolving hi-tech workplace. Youth Radio believes also that teens and young adults represent a potentially large and energetic workforce that is both eager and accessible to learning viable skills that will make them competitive for the 21st century marketplace. The technical skills and knowledge Youth Radio's participants develop are broadly applicable to school and the workplace and are essential for future careers in all media and tech-related industries. Youth Radio's contributions toward Digital Inclusion ultimately help pave practical pathways toward brighter futures for California's youth.

Youth Radio is widely regarded as the nation's premier youth development and youth media organization. Youth Radio collaborates and partners with a range of organizations, corporations, government agencies and private foundations. In 2007, Youth Radio moved from its storefront location in Berkeley to a state-of-the-art Media and Technology Center in downtown Oakland. The move positioned Youth Radio as an integral player in Oakland's technology and workforce landscapes. The organization has received dozens of awards at the community, national and international level for its body of work, including two George Foster Peabody Awards, a Red Cross Heroes Award, and the MacArthur Digital Media and Learning Competition. This year, alongside

Pandora Internet Radio, Youth Radio was awarded an InOak Innovator Award for its work in media workforce development. In addition, through its work with CETF, Youth Radio regularly receives requests for community partnership, event sponsorship, and youth participants to assist with various media production projects.

Digital Inclusion is at the core of all of Youth Radio's work with youth. The organization recruits students from under-resourced and heavily tracked public schools, community-based organizations, and the juvenile justice system. To facilitate the participation of low-income youth, all Youth Radio's programs are offered free of charge. In addition, Youth Radio has expanded its reach beyond its typical constituency, providing education and resources for low-cost broadband throughout the community. In doing this work, Youth Radio partners with the Oakland Technology Exchange, the Southeast Community Development Corporation, ReliaTech and others. Youth Radio also works to harness market forces in the service of its youth and their communities. Youth Radio works with community based organizations, private funders, local and federal government foundations and corporations to build and sustain innovative programming that promotes Digital Inclusion and puts youth on pathways to education and meaningful careers in the 21st Century. In another example, the organization runs a Mobile App Lab, an in-house unit which pairs youth with professional app developers to design and launch mobile apps that serve community needs. One of the apps created in the lab was just released in Android's global marketplace.

Youth Radio's work captures the spirit and legacy of Don and Rosemary Vial for its exemplary efforts to use digital technology as a source of empowerment for underserved youth and to engage a broad cross-section of stakeholders with this important work. Youth Radio goes beyond bridging the Digital Divide through access; the organization trains and empowers low-income youth to use technology in meaningful ways. By equipping youth with the tools and the training to become active producers rather than simply consumers of media, Youth Radio nurtures lifelong users of information technology and advocates of Digital Inclusion.