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“Digital Connectors” gear up for April 19th graduation ceremony in San Jose

Participants in Digital Connectors, Eden Housing's youth-focused computer skills resource program, are preparing for their graduation ceremony on April 19th, 6:00 p.m. at the Eden Palms Community Center, 5398 Monterey Rd., San Jose, CA 95111.

Eden's Digital Connectors program engages young people between the ages of 14-20 to support the integration of computers and technology for low-income families in San Jose. The program in San Jose, founded in 2001, is delivered in partnership with One Economy Corporation and provides participants with training in the areas of technology instruction, tech support and solutions, entrepreneurship and youth leadership development. Digital Connectors graduates regularly receive employment opportunities as well.

“We believe Silicon Valley — as the global center of high tech innovation — is ideal to showcase how underprivileged youngsters can truly make a difference through technology, both in their own lives and those of others,” said Linda Mandolini, Eden Housing Executive Director. “We are also



Participants in Eden Housing's "Digital Connectors" technology program at San Jose's Eden Palms affordable housing community enjoy working on a variety of challenging computer issues. The program holds its 2010 Graduation Ceremony on Monday, April 19th at the Eden Palms Community Center in San Jose.

fortunate that our elected representatives have recognized the value of our Digital Connectors program and have provided critical federal funding to augment our own financial efforts.”

Graduates of the Digital Connectors Class of 2010 live at Eden Housing's Eden Palms and Ohlone Chynoweth Commons family apartment communities. Several have

gone on to some of America's top universities, such as UCLA and UC Berkeley.

"We're talking about a very positive return on 'personal' investment," said San Jose District 9 Vice Mayor Judy Chirco. "Digital Connectors is a program that pays dividends in multiple ways, both for graduates and for those who are helped by its participants. For the past five years, I have had the privilege of attending the graduation to see firsthand the pride and enthusiasm of these young people."

Eden Housing also offers the Digital Connectors program at their communities in Antioch, Livermore and East Palo Alto. Later this year, thanks to much-needed federal funding, Eden's Digital Connectors program will be expanded to serve 300+ more youth at an additional 14 properties in 10 new cities.

Digital Connectors participants are able to observe up-close the work of Silicon Valley IT professionals. By adding supervised, hands-on PC repair training to classroom instruction, "DCs" can earn their own tech toolboxes. This enables them to work with Eden Housing residents to solve home computer problems and become on-site technical resources.

Just as importantly, they develop self-confidence and are able to mentor younger children at Eden Housing family properties.

"Rather than just teaching me about technology, Digital Connectors instilled within me a volunteer-oriented mindset that continues to be a driving force behind my future goals," said Quoc-Sy Nguyen, a 2004 graduate and Eden Palms resident who spoke at last year's graduation ceremony. "Most importantly Digital Connectors motivated me to step beyond myself, and realize that in order to help support my community in the future, I must first take the steps to improve myself through the means of education."

About Eden Housing:

In its 42 years of service throughout Northern California, non-profit Eden Housing, Inc. has provided a roof for more than 58,000 people. Hayward-based Eden Housing is the long-term owner-operator of its developments, and is committed to preserving and maintaining its buildings as community assets and supporting residents with a range of services. Since the organization's beginnings in 1968, Eden Housing has developed 5,349 housing units and 60,100 square feet of adjoining commercial/retail space in 75 properties. For more information about affordable housing opportunities through Eden Housing, in San Jose and the Greater Bay Area, visit www.edenhousing.org.