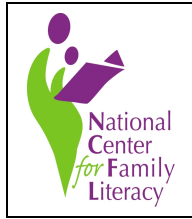


NEWS RELEASE



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The Indigenous Language Institute Wins National Verizon Tech Savvy Award

***Five Nonprofit Programs Recognized for Innovative Efforts to Help Parents
Understand the Technology Used by Their Children***

ORLANDO, Fla. – The Indigenous Language Institute’s Intergenerational workshop series is the national winner of the Third Annual Verizon Tech Savvy Awards.

Through the workshop, entitled Ancient Voices, Modern Tools: Native Languages and Technology, the institute instructs families, students and teachers on how to use technology to develop print and audio books to teach Native American languages at school and home. The institute, which is based in Santa Fe., N.M., and serves 2,000 Native Americans annually, will receive a \$25,000 grant to continue and expand its program.

“Indian Country has never shied away from using new tools, and the Indigenous Languages Institute regards the incorporation of modern technology and related training as essential and natural in our work to help bring our heritage languages from the brink of

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extinction,” said the institute’s president, Gerald Hill, a member of the Oneida tribe of

Wisconsin. “We have found that joining intergenerational experiences and using the symbiosis of old knowledge and new tools are working.”

The Indigenous Language Institute will receive its award Monday evening (March 2) at a banquet at the 18th annual National Conference on Family Literacy here, hosted by the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL).

The Verizon Tech Savvy Awards are a joint creation of NCFL, former First Lady of Iowa Christie Vilsack and the Verizon Foundation. The awards, the first of their kind, are designed to provide an incentive for grassroots, community-based nonprofit organizations and schools to create programs that demystify technology for parents, enabling them to better guide their children in the use of new media.

“In the past, technology has caused a digital divide, but with programs such as the Indigenous Language Institute, technology is becoming a powerful key for learning across all socioeconomic groups and asserting its potential as a great equalizer in education,” said Vilsack.

In addition to the national winner, four other programs have been selected as regional winners, and each will receive a \$5,000 grant. The regional winners are:

- Neighborhood House, Saint Paul, Minn., for its English Language Learner program, which empowers parents to become more involved with their children’s education by developing computer and technology skills. www.neighb.org
- Mary’s Center for Maternal & Child Care, Washington, D.C., for its Even Start program, which aims to increase English literacy of children and parents through English-as-a-second-language classes, early childhood development activities, computer classes and parenting workshops. www.maryscenter.org
- Project Accessible Hollywood, Hollywood, Calif., for its Digital Film Festival, which teaches parents and children to tell a story using cell phones, digital cameras and computers. www.pahnation.org
- Fisher Middle-High School, Lafitte, La., for its TechGen at Fisher – Using Technology to Cross Generational Lines program, in which parents learn to use e-mail, text messaging and other tools to keep in touch with students and administrators.
<http://fisher.ippss.k12.la.us>

“Technology is a tremendous tool in efforts to expand educational opportunities for all children and improve literacy,” said Verizon Foundation President Patrick Gaston. “To truly improve educational achievement in the 21st century, learning must stretch well beyond the school day and into community programs and homes.

Details of the programs honored at the Verizon Tech Savvy Awards will be added to the Verizon Foundation’s Thinkfinity.org Web site to serve as an educational resource, highlighting best practices and approaches for technology literacy for people of all ages. The free, comprehensive site contains thousands of educational resources including K-12 lesson plans, online educational activities, videos and other materials to enhance teacher effectiveness and improve student achievement.

“Education and literacy are more important today than ever, especially in light of our current economic challenges,” said Sharon Darling, president and founder of the NCFL. “The Tech Savvy Awards recognize exemplary efforts and best practices that expand parents’ and children’s learning with 21st century technology.”

The Verizon Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Verizon Communications, supports the advancement of literacy and K-12 education through its free educational Web site, Thinkfinity.org, and fosters awareness and prevention of domestic violence. In 2008, the Verizon Foundation awarded more than \$68 million in grants to nonprofit agencies in the U.S. and abroad. It also matched the charitable donations of Verizon employees and retirees, resulting in an additional \$26 million in combined contributions to nonprofits. Through Verizon Volunteers, one of the nation’s largest employee volunteer programs, Verizon employees and retirees have volunteered more than 3 million hours of community service since 2000. For more information on the foundation, visit www.verizonfoundation.org.

The National Center for Family Literacy is the worldwide leader in family literacy. More than 1 million families have made positive educational and economic gains as a result of NCFL’s work, which includes training more than 150,000 teachers and thousands of volunteers. For more information, contact 1-877-FAMLIT-1 or visit www.famlit.org.

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