

News of Education

A Campaign That Helps Cross The Digital Divide

(NAPSA)—Though many people know that the Continental Divide runs along the Rocky Mountains, few know much about the Digital Divide, the gap in technological literacy between Hispanics and the rest of the country.

In its most recent study, the Department of Commerce found that while national computer ownership rates for 2001 were up over the previous year, the number of Hispanic households that owned computers still lagged behind those of white non-Hispanic households and all U.S. households by almost 22 percent and 17 percent, respectively. Similarly, Internet penetration for Hispanic households trailed white non-Hispanic households by more than 23 percent and all U.S. households by more than 18 percent.

Fortunately, this technology gap is expected to narrow thanks to La Familia Technology Week, a public awareness campaign designed to communicate to Hispanic families the value of technology and its importance in the education and career preparation of their children. The campaign, sponsored by IBM and Career Communications Group, is now in its fourth year and is held during Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs September 15 to October 15.

Since its inception four years ago, the initiative has hosted hundreds of computer classes, technology expos, Internet cafes and workshops, providing thousands of Hispanics across the United States with access, training and, in many instances, their first introduction to technology.

This year, IBM will launch the Partnering with IBM in Education (PIE) program, a year-long K-12 initiative in which IBM



A campaign is trying to ensure that people from all backgrounds have access to innovative information technologies.

employee volunteers will partner with school districts to encourage an interest in math and science among elementary school children, increase college preparedness and help reduce the dropout rate among Hispanic students.

As the world's largest information technology provider, IBM has taken a leadership role in ensuring that people from all backgrounds have access to innovative information technologies and resources. By addressing the Digital Divide and launching campaigns such as La Familia Technology Week and the PIE program, IBM is taking steps to make certain it can recruit the best talent for its workforce from every racial, ethnic, social and economic background.

This initiative reflects the company's commitment to the communities in which it does business. At the root of this commitment is the fundamental belief that people from every racial, ethnic, social and economic background must be provided with the best opportunities to learn, succeed and become productive members of society.