

Technology To Help Close The Digital Divide

(NAPSA)—Latinos are the nation's largest minority group, yet relatively few have Internet access: Hispanic households trail white, non-Hispanic households by more than 23 percent. In addition, Hispanics make up 11 percent of the workforce but only represent 3 percent of the science and engineering industry. For those Hispanics who pursue degrees in engineering, math, science and computer science, technology can help to level the playing field and close a 26 percent wage gap among college graduates.

One company, IBM, is committed to sustaining America's competitive advantage and economic security through innovation-driven growth, making building the technology talent pipeline one of its main focus areas. That's why there are programs such as La Familia Technology Week to reach Hispanics in kindergarten through the 12th grade with educational initiatives designed to motivate and inspire students to choose science and technology careers.

Since its inception six years ago, La Familia Technology Week 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. The goals of La Familia are to introduce Hispanic families and their children to the power and potential of technology by:

- Reaching out to Latino parents and students to inspire them to choose careers in science, technology or engineering.

"La Familia Technology Week 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."



- Providing students and their parents access to Latino role models who have succeeded in achieving their dreams.

- Generating a discussion about the importance of nurturing innovation in the youths and promoting careers in science and technology.

This year, IBM is featuring an innovative translation technology, ¡TradúceloAhora!, to help improve communications between Spanish-speaking parents and English-speaking teachers in schools throughout the U.S. Through an enhanced version of IBM WebSphere Technology, the tool translates e-mails bidirectionally—English to Spanish and Spanish to English—and translates Web sites automatically from English to Spanish. The easy-to-use technology is helping meet IBM's goal in increasing technological literacy among underserved populations.

"¡TradúceloAhora! eliminates language barriers between Spanish-speaking parents with limited English skills and educators," said Pamela Dennis, a math teacher in New York. "It's like a veil has been lifted. Now I can directly communicate with these families about the progress their sons and daughters are making in my class."

Visit www.traduceloahora.org to learn more about the program.