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## ***For Immediate Release***

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### **Free training connects community members to the Internet**

MODESTO, CA (May 8, 2012) – Many California residents have been “surfing the Internet” for a decade now. However, many Central Valley residents do not know how to access the Internet or even turn on a computer, even where public access is available.

California Connects seeks to address the “digital divide” by conducting training throughout the state. The program has several components. The Great Valley Center manages the portion of the program that provides full-time trainers who provide instructions specifically in small group sessions throughout the valley, including Stanislaus and San Joaquin County.

The program seeks to provide training to Spanish-speaking and low-income residents, who are currently the most likely not to have a computer, computer skills or Internet access. Residents with little or no Internet experience are invited to enroll in a free California Connects class, and many of the trainings are conducted in Spanish.

During the brief training course, class members will learn how to set up an email account so they can contact relatives and friends; search online for information about jobs, education or health services, and explore what the Internet has to offer to enrich their lives. Training participants are also provided information on public access computers and how to find low cost computers and home Internet service. Each person will receive a certificate of completion at the end of their final class.

Rosa Padilla, one of the trainers for Stanislaus County, notes that some training participants are very appreciative about learning how to look up the search history on a computer, so that they can check the websites their children have been visiting on the computer. She reports that other class members are excited to be able to email their children’s teachers or their family members.

“I have always enjoyed helping people and this job provides me the opportunity to build people’s computer knowledge,” said Padilla. “It is really rewarding to watch people who could not even turn on a computer, develop the skills to send an email and look up things using the computer.”

The class schedules, locations and trainers for the two counties are:

### **Stanislaus County:**

Mondays, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., Hughson Family Resource Center  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., Ceres Unified School District  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6 – 8 p.m., Ceres Unified School District  
Wednesdays, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., El Concilio, Modesto

**Trainer: Rosa Padilla**

For the starting dates of next classes: [1-866-325-3222 ext 238](tel:1-866-325-3222) Email: [rpadilla@foundationccc.org](mailto:rpadilla@foundationccc.org)

Mondays and Wednesdays, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m., Riverbank High School  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30 – 11:30 a.m., Cardozo Middle School, Riverbank

**Trainer: Jose Urzua**

To register for a class: Call CASA del Rio at [209-869-0468](tel:209-869-0468)

For more information: [1-866-325-3222 ext 241](tel:1-866-325-3222) Email: [jurzua@foundationccc.org](mailto:jurzua@foundationccc.org)

### **San Joaquin County:**

Next class TBA, Cesar Chavez Central Library Computer Center, Stockton

**Trainer: Matt Jones**

For the starting date of the next class: [1-866-325-3222 ext 240](tel:1-866-325-3222) Email: [mjones@foundationccc.org](mailto:mjones@foundationccc.org)

California Connects has partnered with Ceres School District, Hughson Family Resource Center, CASA del Rio Family Resource Center, Riverbank School District and El Concilio in Stanislaus County, and with the Cesar Chavez Central Library in San Joaquin County to provide space and computers for training, and assistance in promoting the training through community outreach and connections.

The partnerships are designed to be mutually beneficial to both California Connects and the partnering agency. Both organizations are able to provide additional services to the community while utilizing existing resources to their maximum benefit. Community agencies, educational institutions and governmental organizations interested in partnering on the California Connects initiative should contact Desiree Cervantes Holden at the Great Valley Center, [\(209\) 522-5103](tel:209-522-5103), ext. 136 or [desiree@greatvalley.org](mailto:desiree@greatvalley.org).

California Connects is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration for Broadband Technology Opportunities Program and is administered by the Foundation for California Community Colleges. The three-year initiative began in 2011 and aims to train 61,120 Californians in broadband use, with 9,168 becoming new broadband users.

Another segment of California Connects program trains community college students who are part of Mathematics, Engineering, Science, and Achievement (MESA) and equips them with a laptop computer, Microsoft certification, and digital literacy training to serve as trainers for their families and other community members. The MESA operates through community colleges throughout the State. California Connects is also working with American River College to develop open-access, online digital literacy tools that can be used anytime and anywhere – in libraries, public computing centers, homes, schools and places of business.

More information on the California Connects program is available at <http://www.greatvalley.org/work/caconnects> or [www.caconnects.org](http://www.caconnects.org).

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**Note: Attached are photos of CA Connects training graduates from classes held in Ceres who completed their training on April 5, 2012.**