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Oakland Digital Arts & Literacy Center Commemorates a Year of Inspiration

Summary: Oakland Digital Arts & Literacy Center commemorates 2010 with its first annual Inspiration Awards, which recognizes the contributions of inspirational community leaders.

OAKLAND, Calif. – October 28th, 2010 – Oakland Digital Arts & Literacy Center (ODALC), a nonprofit organization teaching computer and Internet literacy to low-income communities, will be holding its first annual Inspiration Awards at Oakland’s historic Preservation Park. The event will be held at Nile Hall on the evening of Wednesday, November 30th, between 6:00 and 9:00 PM.

As the name implies, Inspiration Awards 2010 honors those who have inspired and worked with ODALC to benefit the Oakland community. This year’s honorees are Dr. Andreas Weigend, Donald Tamaki, and Joe Kennedy.

Dr. Andreas Weigend, former-chief scientist of Amazon.com, is one of the foremost authorities on the science of electronic data. He has worked as a consultant to both multinationals and startups, taught at Universities from Stanford to Tsinghua University in Beijing, and spoken at conferences around the world. ODALC founder Shaun Tai credits much of the organizations existence to Dr. Weigend, whose lectures inspired him to provide the same quality of education for Oakland’s underserved.

Joe Kennedy is the CEO of Pandora Media Inc., best known for providing the Internet’s most popular radio service. What many people don’t know is that Pandora is based in Oakland, making it the most foremost tech company in the city. In March 2010, ODALC hosted an educational workshop for inner-city musicians. Pandora Music Operations Manager Stephen Hogan appeared as a keynote speaker at the event, illustrating how a passion for music can be used to promote viable digital media careers and vice-versa.

Donald Tamaki is a Partner with Minami Tamaki LLP with offices in San Francisco and Silicon Valley (Sunnyvale). Mr. Tamaki is a staunch advocate of social justice: in the 1980’s, he served on the legal team that defended Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi and Minoru Yasui, successfully overturning their convictions for refusing to be interned during World War II. He has been instrumental in the creation of several nonprofits, including ODALC, which owes its legal status as a California 501(c)(3) nonprofit to the pro bono services of Tamaki.

As ODALC honors these three individuals for their achievements and impact on the Oakland community, prominent figures from all aspects of life in the Bay Area will converge in support of the shared vision that the Inspiration Awards represent. Guests include individuals from the Oakland City Council, Oakland’s Economic Development Department, executive employees from Cisco Systems Inc, and several other leaders representing technology, non-profit, and business sectors.

The event will generate awareness of the digital divide and raise funds to support ODALC’s programming for 2011, which will focus on “Digital Equity for Local Commerce”, a project teaching struggling small businesses how to adapt their business models to succeed in a digital economy.

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