



For Immediate Release
April 22, 2010

Contacts:
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ASPIRA and the Verizon Foundation to Launch New Program to Improve Educational Achievement Among Latino Students

PHILADELPHIA –The ASPIRA Association announced Thursday (April 22) that it has received a \$450,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation to develop a national program for charter schools throughout the country to create innovative, educational resources using Verizon Thinkfinity, (www.thinkfinity.org).

Through the program -- Integration of Thinkfinity Learning Resources into the Charter Schools Curriculum: A National Model -- ASPIRA will design culturally sensitive learning modules for charter schools that have a high concentration of Latino students. Verizon Thinkfinity trainers and ASPIRA teachers will then train staff at ASPIRA schools in Philadelphia, Chicago and Florida to incorporate the resources into school curriculum.

“With the rapid growth of the Latino population in the U.S., it is more important than ever to ensure that all students have access to the educational resources needed to excel,” said Ronald Blackburn-Moreno, president and CEO of the ASPIRA Association. “We are honored to be a part of this partnership and committed to help our Latino students succeed.”

Once developed, the resources would be made available nationally through ASPIRA's network of Latino nonprofit, community-based organizations. The resources also will be available to the public on the Verizon Thinkfinity website.

“Tools such as Verizon Thinkfinity provide a tremendous opportunity to enhance educational opportunities for every student, teacher or parent in reach of the Internet,” said Patrick Gaston, Verizon Foundation president.” Verizon is proud to partner with ASPIRA on this unique national program.”

ASPIRA and the Verizon Foundation announced the grant at the ASPIRA Antonia Pantoja Charter School, where a teacher led a group of students through a lesson on Earth Day, using Verizon Thinkfinity resources.

Verizon Thinkfinity is a free educational website that contains tens of thousands of engaging resources that make learning fun. Lesson plans, in-class activities and homework help can be found quickly and searched by grade level, keyword or subject.

Currently, Verizon Thinkfinity partners with the departments of education, or their designees, in 40 states to train teachers to make the most of the free, standards-based materials on Thinkfinity.org. The Verizon Foundation's partnership with ASPIRA is designed to increase professional development opportunities for teachers at charter schools.

“The goal is to expand Verizon Thinkfinity resources to all Latino-student-serving charter schools in the nation,” said Alfredo Calderon, executive director of ASPIRA of Pennsylvania. “Our charter school's state-of-the-art information technology systems and faculty development programs provide the optimal setting for a successful program implementation.”

Gale Given, president of Verizon Pennsylvania, said, “The Antonia Pantoja Charter School is a tremendous asset to the Philadelphia community, and Verizon is proud to partner with ASPIRA to launch this national charter school program that will improve educational opportunities here and around the country. Verizon is committed to providing new and innovative tools to educators and students so they will have the skills needed to compete in today’s global workforce.”

The ASPIRA Association promotes the empowerment of the Puerto Rican and Latino community by developing and nurturing the leadership, intellectual and cultural potential of its youth so that they may contribute their skills and dedication to the fullest development of the Puerto Rican and Latino community everywhere. The ASPIRA Association operates national model programs, provides technical assistance to its state offices, and serves as the national voice for the Association. For more information on ASPIRA, visit www.aspira.org.

The Verizon Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Verizon Communications, supports the advancement of literacy and K-12 education through its free educational Web site, Verizon Thinkfinity (www.thinkfinity.org), and fosters awareness and prevention of domestic violence. In 2009, the Verizon Foundation awarded \$67.9 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 \$26.1 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 5 million hours of community service since 2000. For more information on the foundation, visit www.verizonfoundation.org.

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