"MINI-HACKATHON" IN OAKLAND TO SHINE SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL YOUTH

Youth involved in two award-winning programs in Alameda County will join forces Saturday, January 31, in a special interactive session where they will team to create mobile app concepts and info-graphics designed to bring youth perspectives to issues of public importance.

Youth from Oakland-based Youth Radio and Alameda County's Youth Leadership Academy will collaborate in teams during a "mini-hackathon" lasting about two hours, when they will use technology to mine a wealth of open public data and offer their creative ideas for raising awareness about issues and services in the community.

The event also will mark the graduation for the 13th Alameda County Youth Leadership Academy, a program designed to introduce high school juniors and seniors to Alameda County government, programs and services. Thirty-six students from schools throughout the County learned about the County Budget, Public Protection, and Social Services Agency and Heath Care Services Agency Youth Programs.

The Academy is one of many County initiatives designed to engage youth in the community. Alameda County also partners with business and community organizations on several fronts to provide paid employment, vocational training, internships and mentorship opportunities to at-risk youth, including newly emancipated foster youth and young people with backgrounds in the juvenile justice system.

Youth Radio is the nation's leading syndicate of youth voices, and a national model for media, technology, and arts education for undeserved youth. The organization intensively trains and employs hundreds of youth, ages 14-24, enabling them to produce marketable media for mass audiences while bringing youth perspectives to issues of public concern.

Susan S. Muranishi, Alameda County Administrator, said the Annual Youth Leadership Academy always emphasizes group exercises and interactive sessions to challenge participants to apply what they've learned and "to become adept at advocating for themselves before decision-makers in the community.''

"So it seems fitting to collaborate on our final session with Youth Radio, which is second-to-none in terms of empowering young people by giving them the tools they need to illuminate issues of concern to them and to create change in their communities,'' Muranishi said.

The event will echo a series of hackathons Alameda County has sponsored to challenge residents and employees to develop mobile apps that help the public to easily access and find relevance in a wealth of open data – including records about public health, transportation and crime – that the County continually makes public.

The participation of Youth Radio promises to bring a new dimension to the proceedings. One of the organization's centerpiece programs, Youth Radio Interactive, is a national model in teaching youth the technology skills they need to combine storytelling, design, data and code to create powerful news content focusing on issues of concern to youth.

Saturday's event will take place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Youth Radio, 1701 Broadway, Oakland. The "mini-hackathon" involving Youth Radio and Youth Leadership Academy members will take place between 9:45 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.