



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MELANIE STEPHENS WINS CTCNET's 2007 TONI STONE INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE AWARD  
FOR COMPUTER-BASED SPANISH LITERACY PROGRAM**

**Washington, DC – Aug 28, 2007:** The Community Technology Centers' Network (CTCNet) today awarded Melanie Stephens, Executive Director of Centro Latino de Educacion Popular in Los Angeles, CA, the 2007 Toni Stone Innovative Initiative Award for her leadership in the development of a unique computer-based Spanish literacy program called LEAMOS (Let's Read).

Centro Latino focuses on teaching literacy and providing educational opportunities to Latino immigrants with little or no formal education. Under Ms. Stephens' leadership, Centro Latino raised over \$100,000 to develop LEAMOS, and after beta testing, released it for other organizations to use. Currently, thirty organizations including schools, libraries and community organizations are using the program.

Martin Sweeney of the Alliance for Technology Access, who nominated Ms. Stephens for the award, wrote in his nomination that "Without access to technology, most non-literate Spanish speakers will never have the opportunity to learn to read and write. Without literacy, they cannot readily take advantage of the capability and resources offered through technology. By working at this intersection of literacy and technology, Centro Latino provides a meaningful way for a very marginalized population to cross the digital and literacy divides simultaneously."

CTCNet Board President Shireen Mitchell said "CTCNet is pleased to present this award to Melanie Stephens. CTCNet founder Toni Stone knew well the power of utilizing technology for literacy: she published the manual *Keystrokes to Literacy: Using the Computer as a Learning Tool for Beginning Adult Readers* in 1991. It is fitting that 16 years later, this award recognizes Melanie for a new resource for integrating literacy and technology education."

Ms. Stephens is the twelfth community technology leader to be recognized by CTCNet with the annual award, which honors an individual from a CTCNet Member organization whose innovative efforts have made exceptional contributions to their communities and to the community technology field. Established in 1996 as the Innovative Initiative Award, the award was renamed in honor of CTCNet founder Antonia "Toni" Stone when she passed away in 2002. CTCNet accepted nominations for the award, and the winner was selected by a panel consisting of CTCNet staff, CTCNet Board Members and a former Toni Stone Award winner.

Profiles of all of the 2007 nominees are online at

[http://www.ctcnet.org/what/initiatives/ts\\_award/2007tsa\\_nominees.htm](http://www.ctcnet.org/what/initiatives/ts_award/2007tsa_nominees.htm).

Find More Information Online:

CTCNet: [www.ctcnet.org](http://www.ctcnet.org)

Centro Latino de Educacion Popular: [www.centrolatinoliteracy.org](http://www.centrolatinoliteracy.org)

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### **About Community Technology Centers' Network (CTCNet)**

The Community Technology Centers' Network (CTCNet) is a national membership network of community technology centers (CTCs) and other non-profits, united in their commitment to provide technology access and education to underserved communities. CTCNet works through the CTC Network to provide resources and advocacy to improve the quality and sustainability of CTCs.