**Squads in the Spotlight**

**Pittsburg MOUSE Squads Flourish**

This summer, youth from two middle schools became new MOUSE Squad members at the East County Boys and Girls Club (ECBGC) in Pittsburg, California. What began as a trial program flourished into an exciting summer for these Pittsburg youth and the expansion of MOUSE Squad to 10 new school sites in Pittsburg for the 2011-2012 school year!

Ebony Odunikan, the ECBGC Education and MOUSE Squad Coordinator, spoke about her experience.

"I like the fact that all activities are geared towards guided discovery. MOUSE Squad allows me as a leader to facilitate students finding information out on their own. I believe the certification process is excellent for students. In any field of expertise or interest, they must have certification to compete.

MOUSE Squad gives our students the opportunity to become student teachers at their schools, learning something they are interested in and sharing that knowledge with others. They take pride in being mentors and becoming the ‘go-to’ person on their campuses. MOUSE Squad allows our members to realize that they are in control of their own success."

**Turlock MOUSE Squads Growing**

As part of a plan to implement a technology career track in its middle and high schools, Turlock Unified School District received an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) competitive grant late last year. The district used part of the grant to fund a MOUSE Squad at Turlock High, with the Turlock T-bots squad becoming a key component of the school’s Engineering Technology program. As part of a Regional Occupation Program, instructor Bob Hoskins guides over 50 students in the squad through the MOUSE Squad certification process, focusing extensively on computer repair and refurbishment at the school.

Turlock High was also recently selected by the MSCA team as a One Economy/Comcast Digital Connectors program site, becoming the first school site in the country to participate! The DigitalConnectors program is being run alongside MOUSE Squad by instructor Bill McGinnis, and both programs will help prepare students for better academic and career opportunities and become more involved in community service.

Three other Turlock schools also implemented MOUSE Squad this year as a result of the technology grant and the successes at Turlock High: Pitman High School, Dutcher Middle School, and Turlock Junior High School. All of the squads are off to a great start and the MSCA team is excited to see Turlock’s dedicated teachers and students implementing MOUSE Squad!

**Computer Outside the Box: Innovative Tech Teaching at Coronita Elementary**

Shannon Adams and Kristen Lindsay from Coronita Elementary in Corona never let anything get in the way of effective hands-on learning with their MOUSE Squad students. With a limited number of computers available, they opted to incorporate the use of a document camera as an LCD projector, along with an interactive whiteboard to introduce new topics and modules.

Shannon and Kristen discovered their students were far more likely to be engaged in meaningful learning if they were able to use technology while they were learning about it.

In accordance with their district’s safety policy, Shannon and Kristen photographed the inside of the computer without dismantling it. Students could identify and label key components as part of MOUSE Squad’s Module 8: Cracking the Case, and still participate in an engaging way to keep the activity hands-on and relevant.

These instructors always think outside the box and both know that elementary students love music, so when considering how to cement their recently acquired knowledge in their students minds, they figured: why not a song? Imagine Computer Hokey Pokey... "You put the keyboard in...you take the mouse out...." The students couldn’t stop singing. Now that’s innovative teaching and learning with MOUSE Squad!
Two MOUSE Squad students, Kasey Lockhart and Billy Jackson, were hired through a workforce preparedness program as summer tech support interns for South Fork High, South Humboldt (SoHum) County. Kasey now attends College of the Redwoods and plans to earn a CIS degree, to become an Information Systems Support Specialist. Billy will graduate this year and plans to major in electrical engineering in college.

MSCA is a program of Aspiranet, a California nonprofit social services agency, providing family support, youth and after school programs. MSCA partners with MOUSE (Making Opportunities for Upgrading Schools and Education), a New York City-based nonprofit organization.