



**LEVEL PLAYING FIELD
INSTITUTE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, June 22, 2005**

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Summer Math & Science Honors Academy begins program for underrepresented youth interested in math and science, July 5 – August 12

San Francisco, CA (June 22, 2005) – According to a recent study by the National Science Foundation, only 24% of workers employed in a science and engineering occupation were women, around 3% were Black, another 3% were Hispanic, and less than ½ of 1% were American Indian. On July 5, the Summer Math & Science Honors Academy (SMASH), a program of Level Playing Field Institute, a San Francisco education innovation incubator, will begin its six-week, residential academy on the UC Berkeley campus as an initiative that specifically addresses the underrepresentation of women and people of color in math, science, and technology fields.

“Our program provides an environment where talented, underrepresented students are recognized and supported when their interest in math and science starts to take shape,” said new SMASH Program Director Irene St. Roseman. This summer marks the second year of the program, which will serve a total of 48 Bay Area high school students—24 returning, rising juniors and 24 new, rising sophomores.

SMASH students are 67% Latino/Hispanic, 31% African American, and 2% Asian. In addition to serving underrepresented students in the fields of math and science, we are proud to maintain gender equity with 50% female students. The majority of SMASH students, 81%, are from Bay Area public schools, including Mission High School, Castlemont High School, East Palo Alto High School, and Gateway High School. Sixty-seven percent of SMASH students would be the first in their families to go to college.

For six weeks, SMASH students will take intensive classes and labs in biology, chemistry, math, and English, as well as experience living on the campus of one of the nation’s top public universities. Students will spend three summers in the program, which will prepare them for math- or science-related majors at competitive universities and colleges.

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“Exposing Summer Math & Science Honors Academy students to a research university environment while still in high school will undoubtedly open their eyes to possibilities that may well have escaped them otherwise,” said UC Berkeley Dean of Physical Sciences Mark Richards.

The Summer Math & Science Honors Academy is privately funded through the support of individuals and grants from foundations and corporations, such as The William Randolph Hearst Foundations, The James Irvine Foundation, The Bothin Foundation, The Gamble Foundation, The Kimball Foundation, Peninsula Community Foundation, Genentech Foundation for Biomedical Sciences, Rockwood Capital Corporation, and Vodafone-US Foundation.

“The experience in the Summer Math and Science Honors Academy has gone far beyond our expectations. No matter how much homework is given or how many hours we have to study, nothing scares us because we are dedicated to this program and we believe that all this hard work will take us somewhere. Like they say, ‘No progress is made without struggle.’ We are all part of a family in which we all play a major role. At SMASH, we have learned to trust each other, help one another, and be all we can be. We are all thankful to be here, to have the opportunity to participate in this wonderful program and have the chance others don’t,” recalled returning SMASH student, Carlos Alas.

To find out more about the Summer Math & Science Honors Academy, please visit www.lpfi.org/education/smash.shtml. To arrange to interview Program Director, Irene St. Roseman, or a SMASH student, please contact Jessica de Jesus at 415/946-3062 or jessica@lpfi.org.

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Level Playing Field Institute is a non-profit organization with a mission to promote innovative approaches to fairness in higher education and workplaces by removing barriers to full participation. For more information, please visit www.lpfi.org.

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