



**LEVEL PLAYING FIELD  
INSTITUTE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Mini Kahlon, Director, Innovation

Cell: 650-248-3292

[mkahlon@lpfi.org](mailto:mkahlon@lpfi.org)

**SMASH Student to Speak at BlogHer Conference**

**San Francisco, CA (July 20, 2006)** Iris Rodriguez, a student in Level Playing Field Institute's Summer Math & Science Honors (SMASH) Academy, will speak at the BlogHer Conference '06 on July 28-29 in San Jose at the Hyatt. She will be a panelist in the *Group Blogging* Room of One's Own session on Saturday, July 29<sup>th</sup> from 3:30-5pm.

Rodriguez will speak about her experience as part of a group of SMASH students who are creating award winning podcasts at [www.smashcast.org](http://www.smashcast.org). BlogHer is focused on women and blogging, but unlike other sessions at the conference, with teenage Rodriguez, *Group Blogging* will break age boundaries.

Rodriguez's inclusion in BlogHer is also unique as Smashcast.org is a product of public high school students of color. Rodriguez and the other Smashcasters are all scholars in the Summer Math & Science Honors (SMASH) Academy, an intensive academic Science & Technology enrichment program. SMASH is run by the San Francisco-based non-profit organization, Level Playing Field Institute.

By pursuing the sciences and producing podcasts about it through the lens of their family, cultural, and public school life, Smashcasters are breaking stereotypes and redefining the images typically associated with scientists and technology "geeks." As a young Latina, Rodriguez is also representative of the next generation of girls who are helping to redefine gender roles and expectations.

"[Podcasting is] about the content!!! I'm very impressed with this program in general, but then hearing what these kids are putting out on their podcast is perfect!" – C.C. Chapman's comment on BusinessWeek Online's post about Smashcast.

**About Summer Math & Science Honors (SMASH) Academy**

The Summer Math & Science Honors (SMASH) Academy is a three-year summer academic enrichment program for bright, motivated, high school students with an aptitude for science and math. Students spend five weeks on the UC Berkeley campus attending science, math, multimedia technology, and English classes that will prepare them for advanced levels of study in high school and eventually college. The ultimate goal of SMASH is to increase the number of students from underrepresented communities who pursue studies in math or science at the collegiate and graduate level. For more information on SMASH, please visit [www.lpfi.org/education/smash.shtml](http://www.lpfi.org/education/smash.shtml).

**About Level Playing Field Institute**

Founded in 2001 by Dr. Freada Kapor Klein, the *Level Playing Field Institute's* mission is to promote innovative approaches to fairness in higher education and the workplace by removing

barriers to full participation. Through their programs, the Level Playing Field Institute aims to reveal and remove hidden barriers that prevent individuals from reaching their full potential. For more information, please visit [www.lpfi.org](http://www.lpfi.org).

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