



Vieques Technology Initiative: 2005-2007

VYLI was selected by Microsoft Caribbean to receive the Unlimited Potential grant. With this first private technology grant in Vieques, we started working towards our dreams of a Technology Learning Center, where we will conduct train-the-trainer sessions, recruit mentors and develop projects that benefit our young people and the Island community.

We held our first technology training at our 2nd Annual Summer Institute – teaching website design so young people can create their own website and create on-line interactive relationships with young people from other communities in our youth exchange program. We conducted training programs for members of the Vieques community.

In 2004, VYLI youth participated in the Alliance for New Humanity conference in San Juan at the Youth & Technology Panel hosted by Ms. Canada – and then hosted an event in Vieques with Anand Shah, Gandhi Ashram, India. Our goal is to incorporate a range of learning technologies including a Digital Radio Show-Music Studio; Web design, web casting and video Conferencing; Distance Learning which allows students to enroll in advance placement courses and teachers in continuing education courses; Global Youth Leadership Institute using proven Education Curriculum and building a Global Learning Community with those building a sustainable planet.

Island Hop Computers was VYLI's first technology partner. Owner Tito Pena moved back to Vieques two years ago with a dream: to create the technology hub for Vieques and the Caribbean. Since then, he has designed and implemented network technologies for most Island companies and organizations and maintains over 2,100 computers. A Microsoft certified trainer, Tito has 8 years experience in network administration and engineering.

Tito was recently featured in *Forbes Magazine* for the innovative technology infrastructure developed for the entire Island using wireless high-speed internet access to carry airwaves using direct line of site to cell towers.

Youth Technology Coordinator: Josue Morales is a friendly, bi-lingual, 16-year old who is passionate about computers and the power of technology. Josue presented at the Alliance for New Humanity Conference and helped write the Microsoft proposal. On weekends, he manages on-line reservations from Amapolo, a bed & breakfast inn. This summer he will realize his dream of becoming a web-master. Josue's dream is to become a lawyer.

Josue Cruz has been working with VYLI since the first Summer Institute in 2004. Before working with VYLI, Josue was an average student, struggling in school and with his life. He felt hopeless about his future and that of the other young people in Vieques. He credits the Microsoft programs with his ability to make significant academic gains. He graduated from high school with a 3.8 grade point average. Josue completed received a 4.0 his first semester of his freshman year at the University of Puerto Rico Carolina.

Early on, Josue contribute to Microsoft grant by conducting a community resource assessment of technology needs in Vieques. He then joined Microsoft certified trainer Tito Pena to provide coaching for adult students. Thanks to Josue's patient coaching, the Vieques Humane Society now has someone who can manage their office and databases. Josue has used many of the applications and trained other youth to use them to improve their academics.

Power Point Presentations

Josue found that the Microsoft Power Point has been helpful in organizing his presentations. Most importantly, these Microsoft tools have given Josue the self-esteem, poise, courage and ability to clearly articulate and make bi-lingual presentations speak about difficult issues facing his people and the urgent need to provide more educational opportunities for the island's youth. Josue has made presentations at major conferences such as the Alliance for New Humanity (2004), Caribbean Youth Exchange (2006) and Caribbean Media Exchange (2007) as well as to the First Lady of Puerto Rico Doña Luisa Gandara de Acevdea Vila, Mayor Damaso Governor's Aide to Education Dr. Javier Colon Morera, Serrano Lopez, British Virgin Islands Chief Minister Orlando Smith.

Portfolios

Josue believes that creating portfolios is one of the keys to a successful college application. Josue was chosen as one of the *El Nueva Dia* finalist. He was proud to stand on the stage with Education Secretary Aragunde to receive his award with the first high-ranking team of Vieques students.

Slide Show Presentations

For his high school graduation Josue created an inspiring slide show presentation that featured highlights from his senior class activities. The presentation was so well received that his fellow students asked him for their own personal copies so they could treasure these special memories for the rest of their lives.

Josue's sister Tania was so inspired by the changes in Josue's life that she decided to serve as VYLI's Project Coordinator. Tania just participated in VYLI's 3rd annual educational site visit to California to work with the Stone Soup Leadership Institute's partners. She created a slide show presentation from her interviews with youth and community leaders with over 100 photos.

Published Reports

In order to receive grants from other foundations, we were asked to make a case for the need in Vieques.

The Brookings Institute reported that Puerto Rico is twice as poor as the poorest state in the U.S. -- and Vieques is the poorest in all of Puerto Rico. Josue collected the research from several government agencies. We then worked together to prepare a report on the challenges facing young people. It is featured on our website <http://www.vyli.com/reports/> and published in *Business Puerto Rico* (Nov. 2006).

VYLI Website Design

In the summer of 2005, Josue was invited by Cesar Chavez to travel to Los Angeles to design the VYLI website and be trained as a radio host. During the process, he discovered that he was best suited as a radio host and spokesperson, not a website manager. So we recruited someone else to manage the site.

Photo Story

Josue worked with youth at VYLI's 3rd Annual Summer Institute to use photo story to create an inspiring presentation at the Graduation ceremony so parents, friends, supporters could experience our program.

VYLI Newsletter

For VYLI's 3rd Annual Summer Institute, Josue was the leader of the Computer and Technology group. This group had great resilience, flexibility, and creativity. They photographed each of the other six workshops, interviewed young people and then produced 2nd VYLI newsletter on the Summer Institute.

VYLI Office Management Systems: Josue used these programs to create our accounts and mailing list.