



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC AMERICA FOUNDATION
ANNOUNCES \$600,000 IN GRANT AWARDS**

WASHINGTON, DC, November 20, 2002 -- The Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation today announced \$496,000 in national “Starfish” grants to nine projects across the United States serving young people with disabilities. An additional \$100,000 will be given in matching grants and matching gifts to organizations selected by Mitsubishi Electric US employees in the communities where they live and work.

The Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation is dedicated to helping young people with disabilities, through technology, to maximize their potential and fully participate in society.

In carrying out this mission, the Foundation provides three types of grants: *Starfish Grants* for programs of national scope and impact, or for model projects that can be replicated at multiple sites; *Matching Grants* that supplement cash, products and employee volunteer time donated by Mitsubishi Electric US

employees in their communities; and *Starfish Matches* that match individual employee donations to charitable organizations.

The new grants focus on using technology for employment training and placement. One new grant supports Project Search, which incorporates personal digital assistants in training young people with cognitive disabilities for competitive employment. Another new grant, Tech Mentoring Coast to Coast, funds a joint electronic mentoring project between two nonprofits that will prepare young people with disabilities for careers in the information technology field.

A number of the grants continue support for ongoing projects that apply emerging technologies to the needs of young people with disabilities. One grant will support the expansion of a project at Gallaudet University that is piloting the extensive use of visual technologies in teaching deaf students. Another provides a third year of funding for the Pitt Crew Robot Project conducted by the Tech-Link Program in Pittsburgh, which helps high school students with disabilities to develop high-level design and engineering skills. Several grants – including the Starfish Troops project of the Girl Scout Council of the Nation’s Capital and the Congressional Internship Program of the American Association of People with Disabilities – promote individual achievement and leadership development among youth with disabilities. [A summary of the grants follows.]

“Technology is an important tool for everyone,” says Rayna Aylward, executive director of the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation. “But for young people with disabilities, it can be a lifeline. We are proud to support these outstanding organizations in their efforts to extend that lifeline to youth across the country.”

The Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation, based in the Washington, DC area, was established in February 1991 by Mitsubishi Electric Corporation of Japan and the Mitsubishi Electric US Group Holdings, which produce, sell and distribute a wide range of consumer, industrial, commercial and professional electronics products. With a current endowment of \$18 million, the Foundation has contributed nearly \$5 million to organizations assisting young Americans with disabilities to lead fuller and more productive lives.

For more information, please visit the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation website at www.meaf.org.

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NEW STARFISH GRANTS

(As of January 1, 2003)

Computer Technologies Program (two-year grant) \$100,000

Grant will support Berkeley, CA-based mentoring program to match youth with disabilities with information-technology professionals with disabilities, focusing on careers in the IT field.

Partners for Youth with Disabilities (two-year grant) \$100,000

Funds support PYD, based in Boston, MA in the development and dissemination of Partners On-Line, a nationwide computer-based mentoring program.

Tech Mentoring Coast to Coast Collaborative (two-year grant) \$14,000

This capacity-building grant will enable Partners for Youth with Disabilities and Computer Technologies Program to leverage their resources and expand their geographic impact by collaborating on their respective mentoring programs.

American Association of People with Disabilities (two-year grant) \$82,000

Grant will enable Washington, DC-based AAPD to expand its Congressional internship program, with a focus on technology policy.

Gallaudet University (one-year grant)

\$25,000

The TecEds (Technology in Education Can Empower Deaf Students) training program, initiated in Washington, DC, will be conducted in five tech centers across the country and disseminated through Webcasts.

Girl Scouts of the Nation's Capital (one-year grant)

\$25,000

Funds support dissemination of the Starfish Troops program, originally piloted in Washington, DC, which offers girls in hospitals, rehabilitation centers and long-term care facilities the chance to participate in Scouting, with an emphasis on earning badges in math, technology, and science.

Knowbility (one-year grant)

\$10,000

Grant funds assist Austin-based Knowbility in expanding the Accessibility Internet Rallies (AIR), a project that brings together information technology trainers, web designers and young people with disabilities to develop accessible websites for nonprofits.

Project SEARCH (three-year grant)

\$120,000

Funds support Cincinnati, OH-based Children's Hospital Medical Center in the development and dissemination of a training program, using handheld computers, aimed at increasing the independence and employability of youth with cognitive disabilities.

TECH-LINK (third year of three-year grant)

\$20,000

This grant supports the Robot Academy, a model program initiated in Pittsburgh that trains teams of students with and without disabilities to design and build robots, and in the process, to develop high-level technology skills.