FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 17, 2014

Contact: Kath Connolly, The Learning Community
kath@thelearningcommunity.com
c: 401-743-6625

The Learning Community to Launch Innovative Tech Lab
with Support from Verizon

$20,000 Verizon Grant to Support Student Work in Robotics, Application Development and STEM Achievement

CENTRAL FALLS, RI -- Students at The Learning Community will soon be building their own robots and software applications with support from Verizon.

The Learning Community, a K-8 public charter school serving 560 students, is one of only 80 schools nationally to receive a Verizon Innovate Learning Grant. The $20,000 grant is part of Verizon's investment to help teachers engage students in innovative science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education.

The Learning Community's proposal is based on the belief that students must understand that they are not only consumers of technology, but that they can control it too. With support from Verizon, The Learning Community will build on its partnership with Brown University and NASA to create an innovative middle grades computer science curriculum. The curriculum centers on solving real world problems in a new Learning Community Innovation Lab, stocked with tools for students to address practical challenges through application design, robotic programs, digital video and more.

Michele Cinquegrano of Verizon presents check to Learning Community Co-Director Meg O'Leary
“We created this program to support the integration of innovative STEM initiatives in schools across the country, and we are pleased to recognize the 80 schools that have been chosen to receive the award,” said Michele Cinquegrano, regional director of government affairs for Verizon. “The proposal submitted by The Learning Community exemplifies the type of initiatives that will provide exposure to students around STEM fields, and also offer students hands-on project-based learning opportunities that will help increase their interest and achievement in STEM.”

The significant demand for STEM-educated workers has been well documented in recent years, and a [2014 report](http://www.thinkfinity.org/innovateaward/docs/innovate-learning-grant-recipients-14-15.pdf) found that the STEM job market is even larger than had been reported previously.

“A new tech lab will help engage our students in addressing real world problems through our technology curriculum, said Meg O’Leary, Co-Director of The Learning Community. “We have the strongest math achievement of any urban elementary school in the state. We are so pleased that Verizon’s investment will help us deepen our commitment to STEM education by providing our students with the tools to apply their knowledge in computer science.”

Education Commissioner Deborah A. Gist said, “I congratulate the students, teachers, and school leaders at The Learning Community on receiving this grant. You are one of the schools that is leading the way when it comes to innovation powered by technology.”

The [Verizon Innovate Learning Grants](http://www.thinkfinity.org/innovateaward/docs/innovate-learning-grant-recipients-14-15.pdf) program is part of Verizon’s commitment to the Obama administration’s ConnectED initiative, under which Verizon is providing up to $100 million in cash and in-kind contributions to drive student achievement, especially in STEM subjects.


**About The Learning Community**
The Learning Community has gained a national reputation as an excellent urban public school that shares what works with other public schools. Approximately 560 students from Central Falls, Pawtucket and Providence, Rhode Island attend The Learning Community, a charter school, in grades K-8. Founded in 2004, The Learning Community is known for its phenomenal faculty and a rigorous, inquiry-based approach to learning – emphasizing dialogue, debate and real world problems. By nurturing the voices of teachers, students and families, The Learning Community has built a welcoming culture, deep family engagement, and a systematic focus on supporting achievement. The Learning Community is one of 30 Commended schools in Rhode Island and is home to a teacher-led consulting practice that partners with other public schools. Learn more at [www.thelearningcommunity.com](http://www.thelearningcommunity.com)

**About the Verizon Foundation**
The Verizon Foundation is focused on accelerating social change by using the company’s innovative technology to help solve pressing problems in education, healthcare and energy management. Since 2000, the Verizon Foundation has invested more than half a billion dollars to improve the communities where Verizon employees work and live. Verizon’s employees are generous with their donations and their time, having logged more than 6.8 million hours of service to make a positive difference in their communities. For more information about Verizon’s philanthropic work, visit [www.verizon.com/about/responsibility/](http://www.verizon.com/about/responsibility/); or for regular updates, visit the Foundation on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/verizonfoundation](http://www.facebook.com/verizonfoundation)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/verizongiving](http://www.twitter.com/verizongiving)).

####