

# Cisco Hosts Group of Minority Students and Teaches Basics in Networking

**6 i g]bYgg`K fYž(August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2000)** - Cisco Systems, the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet, hosted a group of 40 students from Unity Care Group, Inc. at its San Jose headquarters earlier today.

The group of 11-16 year-old 'at-risk' students had the opportunity to learn the basics about computer networking and the Internet in this five-hour workshop.

"When it comes to networking, the students didn't understand what Cisco actually does," said Shon Ellerbe, Program Manager at Unity Care Group, Inc. "But after today, the kids have a better sense of the importance of networking in schools, the workplace and the Internet."

The lesson included having a group of students model a network by 'connecting' to each student with an Ethernet cable. The instructor demonstrated, by dropping one of the cables, what would happen within a network if a link went down. Students were also shown how to remedy the situation.

In addition, students had an opportunity to write their name in binary code -- a bunch of 1s and 0s that may mean nothing to the average person, but everything to data transport. The highlight of the program was the hands-on cable building exercise. Students were equipped with crimpers, cutters, connectors and other materials to build an Ethernet computer cable that would 'test' clean on the testing equipment. About a dozen students tested successfully on their first try.

The workshop ended with a tour of the Manufacturing facility at Cisco.

The students who visited Cisco are part of the Pre-College Minority Engineering Program at Unity Care, which prepares youth to pursue professions where minorities are usually underrepresented.

According to a recent study by the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA), 1.6 million jobs in the United States will require IT-related skills, with a shortfall of 846,000 qualified workers this year alone. Programs like the Cisco Networking Academy and Pre-College Minority Engineering are working to bridge this gap. Both programs are designed to increase students' interest and ability in science and math.