



The Learning Web

Community & Career Exploration & Apprenticeship Program (CCEAP) Final Report
January 2010— December 2010

COMMUNITY & CAREER EXPLORATION & APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Meeting a range of needs while avoiding labels — a blended program

When a young person walks up to the Learning Web’s table in the school cafeteria they feel no stigma. An honors student can be standing next to an in-school suspension frequent flyer; a student from an economically stressed family can be checking in about an upcoming apprenticeship at the same time a resource rich student checks in about his tour. A snapshot of the diversity of youth served this year includes:

Nora, age 14, was referred by the Dispositional Alternatives Program. Her family situation was very stressful with substance use and violence. She did not like school and had very little structure during the summer. Nora was interested in a summer apprenticeship so that she wouldn’t be at home and could avoid trouble.

Taylor, age 15, learned about our program from his mom who had researched youth programs in the area in search of career exploration opportunities. Taylor was a solid student with aspirations that included becoming an engineer. He was interested in finding out more about the various types of engineering by going on exploration visits or one-time tours.

Darla, age 17, went to school erratically and almost never ventured out of her home. Her mother also never left the home and did not work. Darla was referred by her DSS case worker who thought that Darla could improve her social skills and broaden her horizons through participation in our apprenticeship program.

All people want to belong, want to contribute, and want to feel of value. Adolescents, like Nora, Taylor, and Darla, because of developmental needs, have a high need for belonging and to be valued. Connection and contribution are critical pieces in the development of the competence necessary for successful adulthood. Learning Web activities develop connection and contribution in participants and provide a foundation for building competence and negotiating the sometimes difficult transition to adulthood.

No one wants to advertise their limitations and young people like Nora and Darla and their parents are no different. Labels can limit. People often divulge their special challenges because it is required to gain needed services. Though that is necessary to access services through our Youth Outreach Program, it is not the case with our Community & Career Exploration & Apprenticeship Program (CCEAP). This program transcends the boundaries of age, disability, socio-economics, academic skills, and family support, serving any youth in Tompkins County. **THIS YEAR, OVER 371 YOUTH TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OUR SERVICES, 114 APPRENTICESHIPS AND 112 EXPLORATION VISITS WERE ARRANGED AT A DIVERSE RANGE OF COMMUNITY WORK SITES.**

In reality, the CCEAP serves a small percentage of “problem-free” youth—our estimates are about 20%. Estimates were derived from a sample of youth whom staff were familiar with; self-reporting, info from referral sources, and staff observation were the major data sources. Our ability to say to every mentor and every youth and every parent that we serve ANY young person in Tompkins County, conveys an attractive, positive image, without stigma, with hope for growth and learning.

Access to opportunities and supports is often what separates youth who achieve their dreams from youth who do not. For many of the youth and parents touched by CCEAP this year, dreams were transformed into reality. Working with community adults, who generously shared their time and workplaces, the program has made a difference in the lives of the many young people this year.

“ It [apprenticeship] helped me in a few ways. I learned how to control my anger better because of working with kids and gave me experience working with adults.”

Maria, age 14, apprentice

“ Solidified what I already love, I’m interested in science, but not plant science.”

Ray, age 16, apprentice

“My mentor respected me and I didn’t expect people to be so nice and helpful.”

Caleb, age 16, apprentice

2010 Services	Goal	Actual
Total youth served	294	371
Total Apprenticeships	110	114
– Volunteer Status	60	61
– Stipended Status	50	53
Total Exploration Tours	112	112
– Volunteer Status	87	64
– Stipended Status	25	25
Community Service	48	48
Vocational Development Workshops	25	25

OUR RESULTS IN 2010

The CCEAP Program served 371 youth;

- 266 ICSD youth and 105 Rural Schools youth.
- 114 apprenticeships with community mentors were arranged
- 112 community & career exploration activities were arranged.
- 66 youth participated in volunteer service activities.
- 54 participants learned more about themselves, their community, and increased their interpersonal skills through group activities.

Program participants have achieved the following outcomes:

97 PERCENT of apprentices developed a positive relationship with an adult role model, their mentors, and increased their general employability skills.

99 PERCENT of youth participating in exploration activities or apprenticeships increased their knowledge of the specific duties, responsibilities, training and qualifications of chosen fields of interest.

85 PERCENT of apprentices improved their performance of workplace skills and successfully completed their apprenticeship: attending consistently, arriving on time at their site, cooperating with their mentor and fulfilling the goals and expectations of their Learning Agreement.

97 PERCENT of youth participating in exploration activities or apprenticeships determined whether or not the field they explored is a viable career path for them to pursue. 86% increased their familiarity with the community employment market.

96 PERCENT of youth in the apprenticeship program articulated an understanding of the importance and relationship of school performance to a future career.

92 PERCENT of group members took responsibility for positively shaping group dynamics.

97 PERCENT of group members developed a personal goal plan that linked short and long term goals.

96 PERCENT of youth stayed in school.

“I learned [from my apprenticeship] that I need to graduate from high school and go to college.”

Apprentice

“[my apprenticeship] showed me that even though there are things that I don’t like to do, just toughen up and do them.”

Apprentice

“[Son] has commented many times on all he is learning and how lucky he is to have the experience.”

Parent

“Yes,[increased my knowledge of the field], he made me do work for the company. A lot of responsibility was in my hands so it was hard work. It was quite an experience.”

Apprentice

“I like teaching youth about what we do and how we do it. I also appreciated getting to know [apprentice] and helping him build confidence.”

Mentor



On Saturdays, you can find Amber De Jong getting a taste of occupational therapy (OT) at Clare Bridge, a Brookdale Senior Living Community.

Cultivating civic participation—

Many evenings last summer, 14-year-old Keyasha Evans could be found at an Ithaca City Council meeting. Keyasha was apprenticing to Common Council member, Svante Myrick. With impressive leadership and communication skills, Keyasha hopes to become an advocate for youth, a politician, or someone who works with youth in social services. Given her aspirations, she was matched with Svante in a dual apprenticeship— part time with Cornell Alumni Affairs and part time with the Ithaca Common Council. “I think what was special about our apprenticeship was that no two days were alike,” Svante said, “At times Keyasha was helping me in my role as City Councilman by taking notes and attending meetings. Other times she was freeing my schedule by reading and reporting on books and articles I would not have gotten to otherwise. The entire time, I watched Keyasha’s confidence and ability grow.” Keyasha loved her apprenticeship, and Svante says he will continue to mentor her long after the apprenticeship ends. Her work and her leadership skills garnered her a recommendation for the summer Ithaca Youth Bureau Leadership Camp, and a nomination from Svante to the City Youth Council.



Keyasha Evans, right, and her mentor, Svante Myrick, covered a lot of ground in their apprenticeship—dividing their time between City Hall and Cornell Alumni Affairs.

Turning work into wheels —

Hot summer afternoons couldn’t keep Cameron Chrisman from his passion—cars. Cameron joined his mentor, Frank Borra, under the hoods of cars at Frank’s auto repair shop, Pony Hollow Motors. Cameron, a Newfield High student, learned how to replace brakes, tune up engines, and do auto body work and painting. He gained skills in changing oil and tires, salvaging parts, and working on every system in the autos. Cameron, who wants to be an auto mechanic, says he enjoyed “being able to experience and learn auto mechanics hands-on.” He also learned something about himself, saying, “It makes me feel like I can do more.” He gained more than just experience through his apprenticeship. Frank gave Cameron the opportunity to earn a car during his apprenticeship. He taught Cameron the skills he needed to repair his car from bumper to bumper. Frank says that Cameron was a “quick learner.”



Cameron is enjoying the car he earned through his apprenticeship at Pony Hollow Motors in Newfield.

2010 Community Exploration & Apprenticeship Sites

160 apprenticeship & exploration experiences were arranged in diverse fields. The following is a sample of the areas youth explored:

Veterinary Medicine	Journalism	Cosmetology
Alpaca farming	Dog Grooming	Carpentry
Legal assisting	Sewing & Textile arts	Sword making
Early childhood education	Sound production	Green engineering
Politics & government	Computer programming	Medicine-surgeon
Emergency Med Technician	Film making	Auto mechanics
Food prep	Ornithology	Ornithology
Arts & Theater	Skateboard manufacture	Police science
Academic research	Plant Science	Aviation
Restaurant cooking	Computer graphic design	Aerospace engineering
Small engine repair	Local history	Financial planning
Medicine- nursing	Sports training	Occupational therapy

“I liked the freedom and hands-on experience with co-workers [at my apprenticeship] and a chance to do things that are not [offered] in school.”

Apprentice

“[My apprenticeship] made me realize that I am more capable of doing things even though I am so young. [Mentor] trusted me which improved my self-esteem.”

Apprentice

Facing life's challenges—needing extra support

Kenny has no role model for learning about work. He never knew his Dad and his Mom is a drug addict. He lives with his grandmother who hasn't worked in 30 years. He's been in trouble for stealing and is a very talented musician. He sees no point in working "for nothing" and initially participated in the apprenticeship program to earn the stipend. However, once he experience the satisfaction of a job well done, he could see beyond the paycheck.

Stipended (paid) apprenticeships are offered to youth who face barriers to a successful transition to adulthood. The incentive of a paycheck is key to motivating youth to commit to an apprenticeship. Stipended youth receive additional support from the apprenticeship coordinator both on an individual basis and through group vocational development workshops. Many of the young people attending the workshops are socially delayed, have truancy issues, and have a lot of trouble with follow through. The group dynamic becomes a vehicle to build social skills and work on responsibility. Group members are able to learn how to interact and they friendships are formed. The apprenticeship takes on a bigger focus as the young people share their experiences and their pride in contributing to the work site. Young people feel more accountable for their apprenticeship performance because the group has an investment in each member's success. Youth support each other in their efforts to be a successful apprentice.

It is truly amazing to see what many of these young people like Kenny are able to accomplish with the help of some additional guidance and skill building.

"I became more confident of what I can do and can take charge of a situation."

Stipended apprentice

"I learned that I can do a good job, I'm reliable, hardworking."

Stipended apprentice

"I valued being able to mentor a young man in developing his work habits. [Apprentice] was anxious to contribute his time to benefit the community."

Mentor of stipended apprentice

4. Working Together to Provide Quality Services

Casey, a student at BOCES Smith School was referred by his guidance counselor. Casey was developmentally disabled but was high functioning. Casey was placed in a construction apprenticeship and did very well. To make the apprenticeship work, though, LW staff had to work closely with BOCES staff, grandparents, parents, step-parents and the staff of 2 residential agencies. Casey was in a transition period where he was moving from his grandparents home to a residential setting. To assure that Casey could attend his apprenticeship, LW staff worked with Casey's mentor and all of the other players to make sure that schedules and transportation would be coordinated. Casey's mentor was impressed with Casey's commitment and skills and Casey had a great time learning!

From The Ithaca Youth Bureau (IYB), Joblink, the Dispositional Alternatives Program (DAP), and the Mental Health Clinic, to the Office of Children & Family Services, Cooperative Extension, Family & Children's Service, school staff, the Bridges Program, and other county youth-serving agencies, Web staff exchange referrals, share resources, and communicate about youth with whom both agencies work. Beyond sharing referrals, we also do joint case management on the occasions when a youth is receiving services from more than one agency (this is unusual among the employment providers but is more frequent with County Social Services and Probation Depts.). Often, collaboration yields the best result for the youth.

It is important to be efficient and effective when delivering services with scant resources. With wait lists in both the ICSD and Rural Schools Programs, we welcome assistance from other programs in providing the best experience for each youth. Many young people need more services than we can provide or youth who we are able to serve need something positive in their lives for a longer period of time than we are able to offer. Our Coordinators work with other service providers to transition young people to appropriate follow up services.

2. Program Evaluation— Improving Our Performance

We take seriously our commitment to evaluate all of our programs and services and the staff who work for our agency. Web staff and Board engage in a number of levels of evaluation and monitoring. 100 PERCENT of program outcomes indicators for youth who participated in the program were achieved this year. Beyond the numbers though, we look to our most important stakeholders: youth participants, their parents, and the mentors for feedback about our services and the performance of our staff. We gather regular feedback through the use of Program Evaluation forms. Evaluations reflected a high degree of satisfaction with the program and staff in almost all cases:

100 PERCENT of youth felt they met and 82% felt they exceeded the goals of their apprenticeships.

100 PERCENT of youth felt their apprenticeship experience influenced and 82% felt it had a strong influence on their future career plans.

86 PERCENT of youth felt they significantly increased and 14% felt it slightly increased their knowledge of the of the career field they explored.

100 PERCENT of parents felt that their child achieved what they had hoped they would gain.

100 PERCENT of parents said their child communicated that they were satisfied and 90% said that their child was very satisfied with their experience.

100 PERCENT of mentors felt that their apprentice met and 75% felt they exceeded the goals for the apprenticeship.

100 PERCENT of mentors felt that their apprentice increased and 92% significantly increased their knowledge of the field of work.

Suggestions about how our program can be improved were few—most respondents feel the program works well. When suggestions are made they usually relate specifically to a particular mentor match. In these cases we update our mentor database to reflect the wishes of a particular mentor or feedback from a youth or parent so that staff can make more effective placements in the future. This year mentors' comments ranged from a need for some mentors to have an apprentice who was a bit older, to others wanting the stipended status youth to be able to have longer apprenticeships. Parent comments were very positive and both mentors and parents comments regarding the staff and program reflect their strong support for our program.

Youth, mentors & parents talk about the value of Learning Web experiences:

“The residents made me think differently. They have a lot of history. Didn’t know it would be so interesting. They have a lot of their own opinions.”

— Apprentice at a senior living facility

“Working with the Learning Web was a great experience for me to see a professionalism and dedication in helping young people to understand their role in the community.”

— Mentor

“The Learning Web was great! They made this possible. Without them [apprentice] could not have worked here.”

— Mentor

“Thanks for giving [son] a chance to join this program. He learned how to manage time, how to deal with people, and care about each other.”

— Parent

“I liked the lab work. It was independent and cool. I felt good because I learned all these new skills.”

— Apprentice in a science research lab

“I really appreciated [LW staff’s] persistence and willingness to work with us on finding an apprenticeship that was close by and worked for [daughter].”

— Parent

“This is a great program to help kids explore career choices and gain experience.”

— Parent