



The Learning Web

SUMMER 2007 NEWSLETTER

focus on
Connection

LEARNING BY DOING IN TOMPKINS COUNTY
SINCE 1972

Connecting— Interests & careers

“It was great to hear your talk yesterday ... sorry I did not get a chance to say hello in person, because YOU are the person who started me on my engineering career in 1984 by setting me up with an internship with John Turner in this department. 23 years later, I have ended with a PhD and am teaching and researching at Cornell. A great story for the Learning Web, I'm sure.”

*2007 email from past apprentice, Francis Vanek,
to Learning Web staffer, Sally Schwartzbach*

Coming full circle

1984. Tinkering with bikes, curious about mechanical systems and automobiles, eager to learn about the world—Francis Vanek was a senior at Ithaca High. Hearing that the Learning Web could connect him with engineering research at Cornell, he approached then apprenticeship coordinator, Sally Schwartzbach. Intrigued by exploration visits to both the environmental and civil engineering departments at Cornell, Vanek stepped into the world of civil engineering as an apprentice to John Turner, a grad student in Civil Engineering.

Testing physical models for power transmission towers with Turner launched a career that led Vanek to Japan as a Cornell undergrad engineering student, to Nicaragua as part of Engineers for a Sustainable World undertaking a project to build solar ovens to roast coffee beans, to the University of Pennsylvania to complete his Ph.D, to Edinburgh, Scotland to teach engineering, and finally back to Ithaca and Cornell.

2007. Twenty-three years later, Vanek plans to connect with youth through the Web, inspiring them to use their talents to make a better world. As a Research Associate in Cornell's Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, he is a member of a transportation energy group, tackling the problems caused by transportation systems—congestion, pollution, and dependence on oil.

Vanek's commitment to sustainable living is also reflected in his personal life. He and his family are residents of Ecovillage at Ithaca, an alternative model for ecological and socially sustainable suburban living. At Cornell, he combines his research with teaching, student advisement, and writing. Coming full-circle, Vanek will work again with the Web but on the other side of the equation —this time as a mentor.



“ The apprenticeship gave me an idea of what engineering is about and how engineering in college works. Very helpful.”

*Francis Vanek, 1985
From apprentice program evaluation*

Connections—



Clockwise from top: Margaret Corbit, Bobby Salerno, Kathy Norton.

Between school & career

Mayan culture comes alive for 6th graders with the help of Dryden High School student Bobby Salerno's computer skills. Bobby is apprenticing

at the Cornell Theory Center with mentors Kathy Norton and Margaret Corbit. Bobby, age 16, is gaining skills in creating 3-D graphics for interactive websites used by elementary school educators through the Center's virtual science museum. (visit at www.SciCentr.org) Salerno hopes to transfer his computer software programming skills to both college and a career in the computer field.



L-R: Shanovah Moodie, Preston Gomes, Vanessa McComas

Connecting— Resources to Programming

We thank the following funders & supporters of The Learning Web:

- Tompkins County Youth Services Dept.
- United Way of Tompkins County
- NYS Bureau of Housing Services
- Joint Youth Commissions of the Town of Ithaca & Villages of Lansing & Cayuga Heights
- Anonymous Donor
- Cornell Family Life Development Center
- Danby Community Council
- St Catherine of Sienna Church
- Cornell Elves Program
- Marvin and Annette Lee Foundation
- Turkeyshoot Lacrosse Club
- Haro Foundation

A special "thank you" goes out to our individual contributors and to our corporate sponsors, especially:

- Emerson Power Transmission
- Dryden Mutual Insurance Company
- Security Mutual Insurance Company

Between youth & adult



L-R: Savante Myrick, Asa Alpert-Eschbach, Shad Ryan

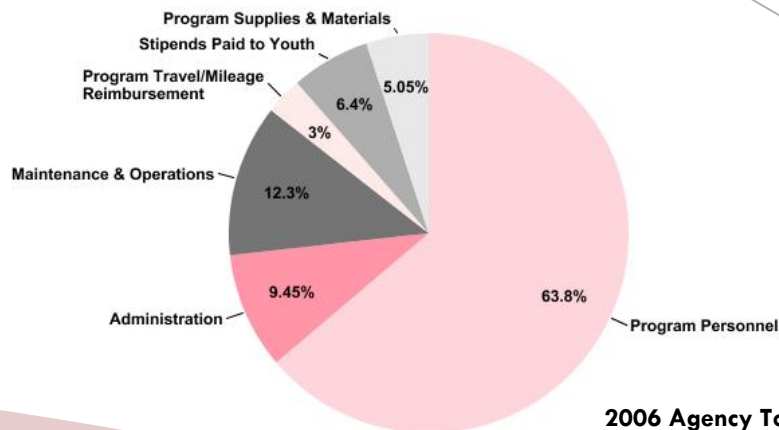
Asa Alpert-Eschbach, apprentice, helps his friend and mentor, Savante Myrick, become comfortable with the snake collection at the Cayuga Nature Center as center staff, Shad Ryan offers his expertise. Asa, age 13, is a Boynton Middle School student. He and Savante, both interested in animals, spend Saturdays working together to care for CNC's menagerie of falcons, foxes, chickens, dragon lizards, turtles, parakeets, and, of course, snakes!

Between youth & community

Learning about the challenges and needs of homeless youth was the goal of the Independent Living Survey (ILS) Project. Members of the ILS research team (pictured at left) presented the findings of the 2007 ILS at the Cornell Faculty Fellows in Service Symposium this past April.

The project, sponsored by the Tompkins County Continuum of Care Youth Sub-committee, utilized a unique research design. Emphasizing youth voice, the research team included the Tompkins County Youth Services Department, Cornell University's Family Life Development Center, The Learning Web, and formerly homeless young adults served by The Learning Web's Youth Outreach Program. More than 15 youth served on the team, participating in designing and administering the survey, interpreting data, and presenting the report findings to the community.

2006 Agency Expenditures by Percentage



2006 Agency Total Revenues: \$492,678

The Learning Web would like to thank Ithaca College for underwriting the printing of this newsletter.

Connecting—

Youth to opportunities—a summary of 2006 services

718 youth & young adults ages 11–25
participated in The Learning Web in 2006

The Community & Career Exploration & Apprenticeship Program

459 youth were served in 2006;

359 Ithaca City Schools youth and 100 Rural Schools youth.

158 youth apprentices worked alongside community mentors in fields ranging from chemistry and computer programming to cosmetology and cooking.

189 youth enjoyed face-to-face meetings with entrepreneurs, artists, scientists, craftspeople, educators and many other professionals through exploration activities.

87% of youth participants reported that they increased their knowledge of specific duties, responsibilities, training and qualifications of chosen fields of interest, and were better able to identify their skills and abilities.

60 participants contributed their energies to the community through service activities while having fun, learning more about themselves, their community, and increasing their interpersonal skills.

“It helped me to see that they [adults] are more helpful than most teenagers think, and that they are really there for you.”

Apprentice

“[Bryan’s apprenticeship] gave him confidence, skills, work habits, etc. The apprenticeship has had a tremendous impact on my son. . . He soaked in every experience.”

Parent

The Youth Outreach Program

259 homeless & transient youth and young adults were served by Youth Outreach in 2006;

139 participants received Outreach Services.

120 received General Independent Living Program Services.

100% of participants had no stable housing upon entering the program.

After participating in program services, youth achieved the following milestones :

80% of youth secured and maintained stable housing.

83% of youth with a prior history of eviction, avoided further eviction.

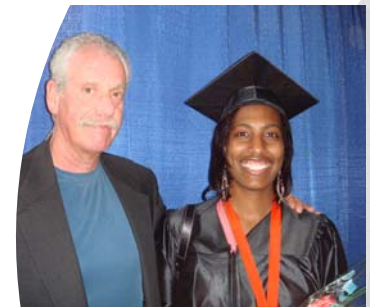
61 participants were eligible for Section 8 housing vouchers but avoided using them. With staff help, youth located other safe housing options that they could afford without having to use this benefit.

AN ESTIMATED \$237,180 PUBLIC DOLLARS HAVE BEEN SAVED assuming these youth’s subsidies were reduced by one year.

76% of participants worked on educational goals. 45% of participants were school drop-outs or chronically truant upon entering Youth Outreach. The truancy/drop out rate fell from 45% to 23%. 7 youth earned their high school diploma/GED, 15 youth entered post secondary school, and 9 others entered other post secondary vocational training programs.

54 youth secured jobs, up from 13 at the time of admission. At admission, 88% of youth were unemployed. 73% of participants worked on employment skills. By year’s end, only 37% of youth were unemployed, dropping the unemployment rate by 51%.

37 youth worked in paid apprenticeships with community mentors, strengthening their employment skills, discovering career aspirations, and making connections with adult role models.



Shanovah Moodie has been living independently since her teens and has impressive achievements; she works for Tompkins County and earned her A.S. degree from Empire State College in June. She is a single mom who balanced parenting her son, Dyshawn, age 4, with work and school—and did so with grace! Larry Farbman, Youth Outreach Program Coordinator, pictured here with Shanovah at her graduation, has enjoyed working with Shanovah since she began participating in YO in 2002.

“She [16 year old sister] is a really great kid that had a horrible upbringing. She deserves to have a fair chance at life. You guys really helped me and got me on track, I would like to do the same for her.”

Shauna, 20, upon taking in her sister and attempting to become her legal guardian.

Connecting—

The Learning Web Board of Directors

President, Doug Stayman: Associate Dean for Curriculum and Associate Professor of Marketing at the Johnson School of Business at Cornell. Doug and his wife, Geri, have been married for 25 years and have two sons.

Vice President, Mary Bendley: Associate Professor and Department Chair of Health Promotion and Physical Education at Ithaca College. Mary has a deep commitment to youth and in programs that promote healthy growth and development for all families.

Treasurer, Jeff Dobbin: Vice President of Commercial Lending at First Niagara Bank. Jeff is active in several non profit organizations and coaches 6th & 7th grade travel basketball. Jeff and his wife, Desiree, have two children.

Secretary, Jon Hilton: Offers sound production services through his company, Hiltonox Sound, and is a Lecturer in the Department of Communications at Ithaca College. Jon has been a Learning Web mentor and is active in the local music scene. Jon and his wife, Tina, live in Ithaca.



to community resources

Member, Susan West Engelkeneyer: Dean of the School of Business at Ithaca College. Susan has been a consultant with the American Association for Higher Education and MBA Program Director, Director of Quality, and on the faculty at Babson College. Susan holds an M.B.A. from East Carolina University and a Ph.D. in Industrial Management from Clemson University.

Member, Scott Sears: Organizational Development and Mediation Consultant with a long-time commitment to helping people learn and work together in ways that wrestle with their circumstances while fulfilling their hopes and needs as individuals, groups, and communities.

We welcome new members—

Member, Paul Banfield: Employed at Tompkins County Trust Company and a graduate of Ithaca College. Paul has served on the Boards of INHS, Hospicare, Alpha House, and he is a member of the Sunrise Rotary Club. Paul and his wife, Diana, have three children; Belinda, Joe, and Frank.

Member, Tim Little: New York State Court Officer at the Tompkins County Courthouse and a life-long Ithacan. Tim enjoys coaching and spending time with family; wife, Samantha, and their two children, Luke and Mia.

Member, Barbara Logan: Currently working as a counselor for students in the Bridges Program at T-S-T BOCES. Barbara also has worked for numerous other area educational and social service agencies. whom is a grateful recipient of The Learning Web program.

Member, Mindy Rosenthal: An English and History teacher by trade, Mindy is also a coach and religious school teacher. Mindy's husband works at Cornell and they have two teenage children, one of

Learning Web Staff

Dale C. Schumacher,
Executive Director

Sally Schwartzbach,
Associate Director

Community & Career Exploration &
Apprenticeship Program

Sue Schwartz

Rebecca Bowersox

Danielle Lightbown

Youth Outreach Program

Larry Farban,
Program Coordinator

Monalita Smiley

Rick Alvord



The Learning Web
515 West Seneca Street
Ithaca, New York 14850

www.learning-web.org



Cortland SPCA doggies benefit from the attentions of service group members, Tenzin Dikyakhangsar & Phoebe Patwell.

*Supporting youth —
as they find their place in the world.*

Nonprofit Org.
U.S Postage
PAID
Ithaca, NY
Permit No. 99