

SUNY Cortland Institute for Civic Engagement News

The Big Event Invites SUNY Cortland Students to Give Back

April 2015

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Individual Highlights:

Community Innovation Lab 2

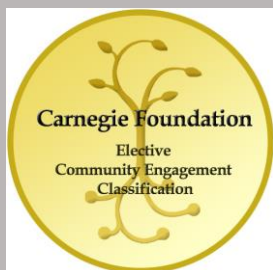
New Offices for ICE 3

Service-learning Community 3

President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll Member With Distinction



Carnegie Foundation Elective Classification in Community Engagement



Here is your opportunity to positively impact town and gown relations!

Volunteer for The Big Event, a student-led community service project taking place on Saturday, May 2nd and show how much you appreciate and value the Cortland community

The Big Event will bring SUNY Cortland students, faculty, staff, and alumni together to offer volunteer services to the Cortland community and area residents. Volunteers are asked to give four hours of time to community organizations and individuals. Campus clubs and organizations are also being encouraged to focus their spring community service projects on this special day to emphasize the importance of giving back to the community in which we reside and to have as powerful an impact as possible on a single day.

The service projects are not tied to socio-economic need. Rather, they are based on the principle of saying "thank you" to area not-for-profit and other service organizations, churches, and Cortland residents. Some of the jobs will include, painting, picking up trash, cleaning up the streets after the snow melts, putting down garden mulch, trimming hedges, and much more. We expect more than 200 pre-registered volunteers will serve over 20 job sites, not counting the annual clean-up of downtown and area neighborhoods.

At the 9 a.m. check-in for The Big Event, volunteers can enjoy breakfast and a kickoff ceremony with keynote speakers and live music at the Park Center arena before they are shuttled by campus busing to individual job sites throughout

the community. Buses will also deliver students back to campus once the jobs are completed.

Originated at Texas A&M University, The Big Event has now spread to over 70 colleges and universities in the U.S. and abroad. This first launch of The Big Event at SUNY Cortland is coordinated by a committee of nine students. The event is supported by the Non-Traditional Students' Organization, a Student Government Association (SGA)-funded, student-led club. SGA provided the event committee with enough support to enable them to purchase all the tools and supplies needed to carry out the volunteer service activities.

Volunteers are encouraged to pre-register by contacting the student director of the project, Ashlee Prewitt, at ashlee.prewitt@cortland.edu or at thebigeventcortland@gmail.com, so that Prewitt and other student organizers can match services with projects and purchase necessary supplies.

The Big Event has been made possible through collaboration with SUNY Cortland, the City of Cortland, SUNY Cortland Alumni Affairs, the Institute for Civic Engagement, Campus Facilities Management, Greek Life, Residence Life and Housing, SGA, the Cortland Downtown Partnership, Cortland Athletics, the Cortland Green Reps, and dozens of other student-led clubs and organizations

On behalf of The Big Event Coordinating Committee, Prewitt commented that they are "thrilled to have such a nurturing campus and community environment dedicated to building meaningful partnerships between students and the residents of Cortland."

SUNY Students Assist Local Not-for-Profits in Community Innovation Lab Course

Students partner with local not-for-profit agencies to develop innovative solutions in the first semester of the new special topics course, Community Innovation Lab. The course is taught by Professor Richard Kendrick of the Sociology/Anthropology department and Director of SUNY Cortland's Institute for Civic Engagement (ICE). Health department Assistant Professor, Barbara Barton, and Community Innovation Coordinator, Cyndi Guy, are serving as mentors with the class to assist students with their projects. Eight students are working in teams of two on four projects in the community:



Steve Hernandez, a Criminology and History major, diagrams a flow chart while discussing the Jail Transition Project.

Sandwich Seminar

Presented by the students participating in the Community Innovation Lab

**Thursday, April 30
Noon
Jacobus Lounge**

Jail Transition Project

Students are facilitating a needs assessment by reviewing the current systems and services in place that affect individuals housed within the Cortland County Jail who may have a behavioral health condition, such as a mental illness or a substance abuse problem. The students are developing a flow chart that reflects the current transition processes to help identify gaps and barriers in service and offer recommendations for improvement. The ultimate goal of the project is to help community service providers and jail administration to reduce recidivism and ensure that individuals are connected to the appropriate service upon release from jail.

Access to Independence Bowl-a-thon

Access to Independence (ATI), a local agency dedicated to helping local individuals with disabilities, holds an annual Bowl-a-Thon to raise funds. Individuals, families, and teams are invited to participate in an afternoon of bowling and to secure sponsorships to raise funds for ATI. Students are evaluating the planning process, marketing materials, and various strategies used in previous years to prepare for and execute the event. They will work with ATI to develop new strategies and materials to help them meet their goal of doubling participation and increase funds

raised to \$5,000 for 2015, and to continue to grow the event in future years.

Majority Rules Social Norming Campaign

Majority Rules is a social norming campaign launched on the SUNY Cortland campus in the fall of 2014 with the intention of changing the perceived norms regarding behaviors associated with the consumption of alcohol. Students are evaluating the effectiveness of the campaign and the various marketing tools used to promote the concept on campus. The students will report results of their findings and make recommendations to the sponsoring agency, Cortland Area Communities That Care, regarding additional strategies that would increase the program's impact.

211 Marketing Plan

Seven Valleys Health Coalition manages the Cortland area's 2-1-1 Information and Referral Services program that connects callers in the community with needed health and human services programs. Students working on the project are currently evaluating the effectiveness of the existing 2-1-1 marketing efforts as well as that of other 2-1-1 programs. The initial goal is to determine what is working and what isn't and to make recommendations on how to improve. Ultimately students may develop a new marketing campaign and materials.

SUNY Cortland's Institute for Civic Engagement Establishes New Offices in Cornish

The Institute for Civic Engagement, now in its twelfth year, at SUNY Cortland, has official offices on campus. Located in Cornish D116, the space will offer a meeting place for students and faculty, in addition to housing offices for the Director of the Institute, Dr. Richard Kendrick, and Service-learning Coordinator, John Suarez. Students can come by the offices to work on projects, meet in groups, or to learn about volunteer and service-learning opportunities in Cortland and other communities.

Visitors can also learn about the many programs that the Institute for Civic Engagement runs for students, including the Explore program for early field experience for teacher candidates and the President's Recognition for Engaged Learning and Leadership, Designation in Service-Learning. Students can also investigate other special learning opportunities like permission-only courses such as the Community Innovation Lab, through which students work on projects with community-based organizations, or participate in the American Democracy Project's Economic Inequality Initiative.

Students are welcome to borrow civic engagement materials, propose new ideas for service-learning and community projects, participate in the development of hands-on learning experiences that are career-relevant, and to simply stop by to talk or ask questions.

The Institute also offers workshops on such topics as active listening, reflection, and empathy, including a role-play that can be conducted during a class period, the "Socio-Economic Docu-Drama."

The phone number for the Institute for Civic Engagement offices on campus in Cornish is 753-2481. For the Institute's Office of Service-Learning, the number is 753-4391.

The Institute for Civic Engagement will continue to maintain its presence at Main Street SUNY Cortland, 9 Main Street in downtown Cortland - the historic Beard Building. Main Street SUNY Cortland also houses the Cortland Downtown Partnership, the Center for Economic Education, the Beard Art Gallery, and two smart classrooms, where both undergraduate and graduate classes are held, as well as trainings, workshops, meetings, and other community events.

Cyndi Guy, community innovation coordinator with the Institute for Civic Engagement, manages the facilities at Main Street SUNY Cortland and works as a liaison between the college and Cortland community organizations. Individuals are welcome to contact Cyndi to reserve space in the building, to inquire about volunteer opportunities in the community or to discuss projects or events. She can be reached at cynthia.guy@cortland.edu or by calling 753-4271.

For more information on any of the programs of the Institute for Civic Engagement visit www.cortland.edu/getinvolved.

Childhood Education's Service-Learning Learning Community: First Year Review

The Childhood/Early Childhood Education (CECE) Department's *Flourishing Teachers, Flourishing Students* service-learning learning community is completing a successful first year. This new program connects SUNY Cortland teacher-education candidates with the

mentoring and tutoring needs of students in the Cortland Enlarged City School District. The project also studies effects of service-learning and learning on our communities students' psycho-social well-being. Professor Kendrick, a Co-Primary

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(Childhood Ed continued from page 3)

Investigator (PI) with School of Education Dean Andrea Lachance, says that flourishing involves “persistence, resilience, and empathy.”

Seven math and English Language-Arts (ELA) teachers at Parker and Virgil Elementary Schools mentor 33 SUNY Cortland tutors. The SUNY Cortland tutors, in turn, work with about 30 children in the Cortland City Schools. Five SUNY Cortland faculty participate; one of those faculty members, Valerie Behr (CECE), coordinates the program’s operation and is Assistant PI for the project.

At a recent meeting, participating teachers described benefits for the children, including “learning how to learn.” For example, children are self-assessing, which is a sign of strengthened confidence. Quiet youngsters have become more vocal; children are more motivated, and they have asked for help in a range of subjects.

Children and tutors formed strong bonds, which Amoreena Tellaeche, the program coordinator at Virgil, says is a key to program success. Lyssa Filtch, a remedial math teacher at Parker and Virgil, recounted a moment when one child waved a test with a good grade, shouting, “I gotta show my tutor!”

Tutors are learning classroom management techniques, and they are learning that the child needs to solve problems for him/herself.

Amoreena Tellaeche recounted a story that illustrates some of the empathy that tutors are developing for their tutees: In preparation for a lesson, Tellaeche asked a tutor to conduct a learning game at the white board (as children would be doing later) – “[The tutor] looked at me and I said, ‘now you know how the child feels when *he’s* at the board.’”



First-year education majors work one-on-one with children in Virgil Elementary School.

Behr noted that this program gives first-year education majors the chance to “learn now - not three years from now – whether teaching is for them.”

Seven of this spring’s SUNY Cortland participants are on the President’s List. Three volunteered over Winter Break. Many of the students want to continue with the program in fall 2016, when a new cohort arrives.

Behr and the teachers brainstormed ways to grow the program for fall 2015. One challenge would be overcoming the “dumb” stigma that many children attach to a tutoring program. One solution was to make this a project-based service-learning enrichment program in which children would design the project, and tutors would help with implementation.

This multi-disciplinary approach would involve math, English Language Arts, and other areas; it would include children who would like to participate in a self-directed and hands-on learning activity, as well as those who need remedial help.

The learning community is funded through a Bringing Theory to Practice grant. The Childhood Education department has also helped fund the project.

For additional information, contact Valerie Behr at Valerie.behr@cortland.edu.