

State University of New York College at Cortland

- A President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll Member With Distinction
- Carnegie Foundation Elective Classification in Community Engagement

Institute for Civic Engagement

www.cortland.edu/get-involved

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NOMINATE A PERSON OR A GROUP FOR A LEADERSHIP IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AWARD

SUNY Cortland is committed to excellence in service to the community. Since April 2005, the college has recognized area students, faculty members, college staff, and community members for their significant contributions to our community's quality of life through their leadership in a variety of civic engagement activities.

The Institute for Civic Engagement has done so by awarding those individuals and groups its *Leadership in Civic Engagement Award*. The Institute and the Office of Institutional Advancement have also provided students with scholarships for their exemplary civic engagement initiatives.

The Institute encourages SUNY Cortland students, faculty, staff, and people in the greater Cortland community to nominate a person, a group, or themselves for a Leadership in Civic Engagement Award or – in the case of qualified students – for a Scholarship.

The nomination form is available at www.cortland.edu/get-involved. (Look for the button at left.)

Scholarship nominees are automatically considered for a Leadership in Civic Engagement Award, one of three non-monetary awards also administered by the Institute for Civic Engagement. (The nomination form describes those awards.)

Award recipients will be announced in April 2012; the Awards Ceremony will take place on Thursday, April 19th, at 4:30 p.m. in SUNY Cortland's Jacobus Lounge (in Brockway Hall).



One of last year's Award winners was Ashley Mosgrove, who is shown above receiving her *Institute for Civic Engagement Scholarship* from Dr. Raymond Franco, Vice President for Institutional Advancement. President Erik Bitterbaum is at left.

Last year, thirteen students, three student clubs, four faculty/staff, and eight community members were presented with Leadership in Civic Engagement Awards.

Please e-mail your completed nomination form by Friday, March 2, 2012, to The Institute for Civic Engagement at getinvolved@cortland.edu. For further information, call The Institute for Civic Engagement at 607-753-4271.

Students Award Grants to Community Agencies

On December 8th, students from the course *Philanthropy and Civic Engagement: Teaching Students How to Give* (POL 129) awarded *Learning by Giving* Grants to Cortland County nonprofit organizations. SUNY Cortland President Erik J. Bitterbaum, Institute for Civic Engagement Director Richard Kendrick, and Political Science Professors Christopher Latimer and Henry Steck welcomed the audience and the grant recipients.

Doris Buffett, sister of the famous hedge fund manager and philanthropist Warren Buffett, began the grant in 2011 when she founded the Sunshine Lady Foundation as a way of helping students understand the social and economic roles of the nonprofit sector and philanthropy, as well as the processes through which social change is funded and implemented across sectors.

Through the Philanthropy and Civic Engagement course and its grant activities, students develop critical leadership, professional, interpersonal, and analytical skills as they carry out an effective philanthropic plan in their local communities.

Students established their own selection process to identify the most creative, professional proposals. After evaluating nineteen proposals, they awarded grants to the Cortland County Community Action Program (\$1,220), the SPCA of Cortland (\$1,100), Cortland County Youth Soccer Association (\$1,525), the YWCA of Cortland (\$3,000), Cornell University Cooperative Extension (\$1,000), Seven Valleys Health Coalition (\$1,177), and Lime Hollow Center for Environment and Culture (\$978).

Glenn Reisweber (in photo), Executive Director of Lime Hollow Nature Center, accepts the grant for the Center.

The philanthropy class will be offered again next academic year. For more information, contact Chris Latimer at christopher.latimer@cortland.edu.



Ashley Aurilio: New Program Coordinator for The Institute for Civic Engagement



Ashley Aurilio, the Institute for Civic Engagement's new Program Coordinator, felt like many freshmen when she arrived at SUNY Cortland, saying recently that at that time "I wasn't sure what to expect. I struggled to find my niche in a new place and felt lost among the various clubs, activities, and people. I wondered how could I (a timid freshman) possibly make a difference?"

Ashley's Residence Hall Assistant provided the answer - "a spark" Ashley said - by encouraging her to join Student

Government (SGA); as a result, Ashley became *Speak Magazine's* SGA Club Representative. In that role, she was instrumental in changing dining hours to better suit student needs, and she helped plan the annual *Spring Fling* carnival.

Ashley also registered for *Business Writing*, a service-learning course in which she developed informational materials for a variety of programs, including the Women, Infants, and Children Program (available through the Cortland County Community Action Program).

She helped with many other programs, including Toys for Tots, Adopt-A-Family, and Community Clean-Ups. She notes she "was able to make a difference for both the campus and the surrounding community, and all it took was one small spark." She points out that the Institute for Civic Engagement's programs can be that spark for the young people in this community.

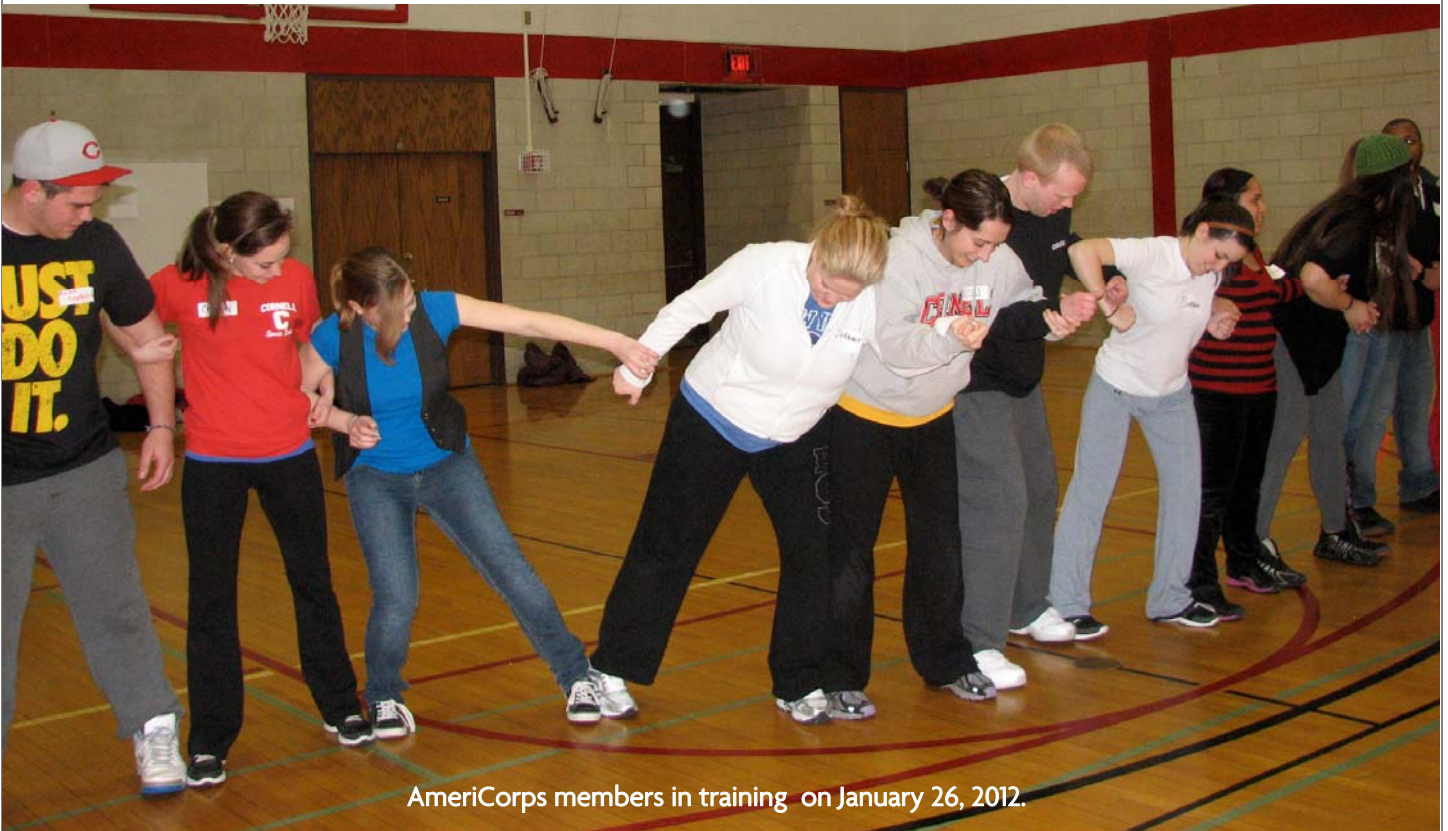
Ashley graduated from SUNY Cortland in May 2011 with a BA in Communication Studies with a concentration in Public Relations and Advertising, and a minor in Professional Writing. You can reach her at Ashley.Aurilio@cortland.edu or 607-753-4271.

AmeriCorps Recruits, Trains, and Develops Community Leaders

SUNY Cortland AmeriCorps is a community-based coalition that strengthens our community and increases civic involvement through service. AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, which is an independent federal agency. (Refer to www.americorps.gov.)

Cortland County in collaboration with Cortland Area Communities that Care (CACTC).

He was brought on to assist CACTC's coordinator and to manage Catholic Charities' *Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing* Program. Derek was recently hired as the



AmeriCorps members in training on January 26, 2012.

AmeriCorps members agree to devote a full year to a specific service activity, such as tutoring, mentoring disadvantaged youth, operating after-school programs, cleaning parks and streams, providing health education, or fulfilling a wide range of other community needs.

Janielle Frazenburg, a SUNY Cortland AmeriCorps member at Seven Valleys Health Coalition, says, "The program makes me feel like I'm part of a positive force that can really make a difference. I'm amazed at the level of engagement that the people in Cortland County have. Cortland really is unique."

Janielle is one of thirty-five AmeriCorps members serving in agencies throughout the county.

Some AmeriCorps members have used their experience to secure full-time positions with their agency. Derek Witty, for example, joined AmeriCorps at Catholic Charities of

Emergency Assistant Coordinator and went on to become the Assistant to the Program Coordinator for CACTC.

"I spent a lot of time getting to know the at-risk population," Derek says, noting that the best part of his AmeriCorps experience was being able to develop connections within the community. He urges new members to "do as much as they can and take advantage of the opportunities outside the walls of their agency."

He adds, "Make sure people know who you are."

Although most of the SUNY Cortland AmeriCorps positions for this term are filled, please feel free to contact Ashley Aurilio, Civic Engagement Program Coordinator, for more information about the program. Reach her at (607-753-4271 or at ashley.aurilio@cortland.edu).

Cortland Community Mentors: A new and rigorous mentor-training program

Of the roughly 225 Cortland County children who have requested mentors, 125 continue to hope that they will soon have a mentor. To help meet those hopes, a coalition of four organizations has drawn on established, evidence-based mentoring programs to design a rigorous two-hour training program: *Cortland Community Mentors* (CCM).

CCM trains mentors for some of Cortland County's existing mentor programs, such as those in Access to Independence, Family Counseling Services, and the YWCA. For these programs, the CCM training will be mandatory.

Children who need, but do not have, mentors are more likely to be involved in risky behaviors, and are more likely to drop-out of school.

In contrast, children *with* mentors tend to avoid risky behaviors, they are more likely to enjoy better physical and emotional health, and they are more likely to stay in school (and, therefore, they are more likely to succeed economically).

Through CCM, trainees learn about the roles of a mentor, about the children served by agencies' mentoring programs, and about mandated abuse-reporting requirements; they also practice listening skills.

Follow-up training (optional) includes sessions on resiliency (as a buffer against bullying), physical education (to help fight obesity), and volunteering in the community (with the mentor's mentee).

The process includes an application, an interview (with the agency specified by the applicant), a variety of reference checks, and mandated training in child abuse reporting.

Mentors commit to a minimum of a year's service. Program participants benefit by refining interpersonal skills that help develop a mentee's sense of belonging and worth - a key element in a child's mental and physical health.

The program's effectiveness will be assessed on the basis of quantitative and qualitative measures collected by mentors, parents, the participating agencies, and schools.

Trained and experienced mentors, including SUNY Cortland students, may serve as mentor-trainers. Three SUNY Cortland students (all of whom are experienced mentors) took part in

CCM's first training session, held on January 26 at Access to Independence. These students will join the program as trainers.

On January 28, CCM held an awareness-raising event at Cortland's Bowling Alleys. Eighteen mentors - including community members - and fourteen mentees enjoyed bowling and healthy snacks. During the event, agency supervisors, mentors, and mentees were interviewed for live broadcast on WHXC.

The individuals who collaborated on the creation of Cortland Community Mentors are Aaron Baier (Peer Mentoring Specialist, Access to Independence), Sara Earl (Director, Bridges for Kids Program, the YWCA), Michele Whalen (Coalition Coordinator,



Mentor Boone and her friend Ryan

Cortland Area Communities That Care), Leslie Wilkins (Youth Assist Coordinator, Family Counseling Services), Ashley Aurilio (Program Coordinator for SUNY Cortland's Institute for Civic Engagement), and John Suarez (Coordinator, SUNY Cortland's Office of Service-Learning).

CCM is supported by the Cortland Area Communities That Care, SUNY Cortland's Institute for Civic Engagement, and SUNY Cortland's President's Interfaith and Non-Faith Community Service Campus Challenge.

To learn more about Cortland Community Mentors, contact Leslie Wilkins at (607) 753-0234, ext. 134, or at lwilkins@fscortland.org.

Coming Events

The State of Poverty Simulation. Wednesday, February 8, from 3:00 to 5:00 in Corey Union's Function Room. Participants try to survive a "month" in poverty; in this way, they develop a more complex understanding of poverty. For more information, contact John Suarez at (607) 753-4391 or at john.suarez@cortland.edu.

Access to Independence fund-raising event. Saturday, February 25, from 1:00 to 4:00 at Cortland's (on Thompson Road, near Route 281). For more information, contact John Suarez at (607) 753-4391 or at john.suarez@cortland.edu.