

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

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 5

March 2012

Affiliated with NY Campus Compact and the American Democracy Project

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LIBERTY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM LAUNCHES SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT

At-risk students can face obstacles such as low motivation to learn. SUNY Cortland's *Liberty Partnerships* Program (LPP) is helping to address that concern by asking students to design their own service-learning projects.

VanEtten. They work with Program Director Tracie Johnstone.

Johnstone graduated from SUNY Cortland in 1981 with a BA in English Education, and in 1991 with her MSED in Reading Education, K-12. For

"This program is the reason that I will be attending college in the fall 2012 semester" — Felicia B., Groton High School.

LPP is a New York State Department of Education program that supports at-risk students' development in ways that encourage students to enroll in college or to enter the workforce with strong skills and a commitment to helping improve society.

the next five years, she taught special education classes for incarcerated youth at the Lansing Residential Center.

For the past 26 years, she has taught English at Groton High School; between 1989 and 2010, she also served as a school district coordinator for the LPP. In 2010, she was appointed Program Director for LPP of SUNY Cortland. *(Continued on page 4.)*

LPP Coordinators are teachers and staff at area schools; SUNY Cortland's thirteen LLP Coordinators help almost 370 children in thirteen schools, from Cortland to Spencer

DEADLINE EXTENDED TO MARCH 23 FOR LEADERSHIP IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AWARD NOMINATIONS

SUNY Cortland is committed to excellence in service to the community. Since April 2005, the Institute for Civic Engagement has recognized faculty members, college staff, and community members for their significant contributions to our community's quality of life through its Leadership in Civic Engagement Awards.

The next Awards reception is on Thursday, April 19; please nominate one or more students, faculty, staff, and/or community members for a 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.)

Award recipients will be announced in April 2012; the Awards Reception will take place on Thursday, April 19th, at 4:30 p.m. in SUNY Cortland's Jacobus Lounge (in Brockway Hall). Please e-mail your completed nomination form by **March 23**, to The Institute for Civic Engagement at getinvolved@cortland.edu. For further information, call The Institute for Civic Engagement at 607-753-4271.

SPOTLIGHT: AMERICORPS MEMBER

ADAM CAMPBELL

SUNY Cortland AmeriCorps member, Adam Campbell, who is in a half-time position at Greek Peak Adaptive Snowsports, was featured in the most recent newsletter of that organization. Greek Peak Adaptive Sports focuses on providing "snowsports experiences and skill development for people with disabilities utilizing the safest and most effective adaptive equipment and qualified/trained volunteer staff in a fun, supportive and positive learning atmosphere."

In that capacity, Adam reports that, "Having the opportunity to work with Greek Peak Adaptive Snowsports has been a true honor. All the incredible people I am



meeting and friends I am making, both participants and volunteers, are making my experience so much more enjoyable.

"The amount of passion and enthusiasm people have at GPAS is astonishing; year after year volunteers keep returning to this amazing program to carry on its legacy and reputation. Keep up the good work.

"Thank you for this great opportunity and all experience I have gained and

am still gaining through this sensational program."

To see the complete Greek Peak Adaptive Snowsports newsletter, visit <http://www.gpadaptive.org/Snow%20Tracks%205%282%29.pdf>.

CORTLAND COMMUNITY MENTORS IS RECRUITING MENTORS and TRAINERS

As of this semester, anyone (including year-round Cortland County residents) who wants to mentor through Access to Independence, Family Counseling Services, or the YWCAs *Bridges for Kids* Program must successfully complete the Cortland Community Mentors' (CCM) training program.

This two-hour program was developed from evidence-based mentoring programs; it includes training in skills such as effective listening, and will soon include follow-up training on concerns such as obesity and bullying.

The Cortland Community Mentors program works with the Interfaith and Non-faith Community Service Challenge, which promotes student understanding of, and

appreciation for, people of different spiritual beliefs.

Students participating in the Challenge will mentor children and will reflect on ways in which various spiritual traditions promote civic engagement.

One of the program's coordinators, Leslie Wilkins (Family Counseling Service's *Youth Assist Coordinator*), encourages SUNY Cortland students to "take leadership roles as CCM trainers and as members of the program's leadership team."

For further information, or to volunteer as a mentor, contact Leslie Wilkins, Family Counseling Services' Youth Assist Program Coordinator, at lwilkins@fscortland.org,

THE INSTITUTE FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPATES IN THE ANNUAL *JUMP START 10* CONFERENCE

About 230 sophomores from Cortland-area schools attended this year's *Jump Start 10* Conference, an event aimed at helping students make positive choices.

The conference featured nine workshops on topics that included career paths, bullying prevention, the risks of alcohol and tobacco products, and community service. Ashley Aurilio, the Institute for Civic Engagement's Civic Engagement Program Coordinator, facilitated a workshop entitled: "What's in it for me? Exploring the Benefits of Community Service."

Students were asked to identify problems that they noticed in their community; they named concerns such as bullying, peer

pressure, poverty, drugs, and even poor-quality school lunches. Students also proposed community service-based solutions, and explored ways in which becoming involved in the community can improve the community and their professional lives.

Other presenters from the Institute included current AmeriCorps members Janeille Frazenburg of the Seven Valleys Health Coalition and Sara Watrous of Sustainable Cortland, who conducted a workshop entitled "Real vs. Ideal Communities."

The conference was organized by Cortland Area Communities that Care, Seven Valleys Health Coalition, Catholic Charities, and Access to Independence.

SERVICE-LEARNING BEING INTEGRATED INTO TEACHER-EDUCATION PROGRAMS

K-12 teachers and administrators face strict new accountability standards, so they can be understandably reluctant to jeopardize their performance by accepting college students into their classrooms or by dedicating time to guiding pre-service teachers.

Complicating this situation are New York State's more stringent teacher certification requirements.

To help pre-service teachers exceed those requirements, and to help assure K-12 host teachers that SUNY Cortland students will contribute to K-12 teachers' success, the Institute for Civic Engagement has been collaborating with SUNY Cortland faculty and administrators, and with Cortland County non-profit agencies, to refine the integration of service-learning into teacher-education programs.

In service-learning courses, future teachers can – even as freshmen – apply their knowledge of their discipline as they tutor children. They can also learn and refine teaching-related skills, such as methods for adapting a message to a specific audience (as our students do in writing classes).

Additionally, pre-service teachers in service-learning classes can learn about, reflect on, and develop ways of addressing social issues that affect their own students' learning.

Since spring 2011, Inclusive Special Education majors have registered for a section of *Writing in the Community II* (CPN 103) that is dedicated to them, and that is partnered with sections of *Introduction to Urban Education* (FSA 101) that are taught by Professors Michelle Kelly and Brian Barrett.

Students in this mini-learning community polish their writing skills by (for example) integrating their experiences with their research, and by writing extemporaneous ("in-class") assignments with education-related content. Such writing is a critical part of NY State's Teaching Certification exams.

Students who take CPN in this fashion are able to synthesize quantitative and qualitative data from researched- and primary-sources across multiple disciplines, and to design their messages for specific audiences. They also develop a more nuanced understanding of issues such as diversity and poverty.

These more complex understandings develop from a combination of course readings, written assignments, reflection, and extra-curricular training and events.

One extra-curricular event is *The State of Poverty Simulation*, conducted by the Cortland County Community Action Program (CAPCO), in which students try to survive a one-hour "month" while living in poverty.

With the help of Lindy Glennon (CAPCO's Executive Director), Frances Pizzola (Project Coordinator, Access to Independence), and Assistant Professor Natalie Dobson (Foundations and Social Advocacy), the Simulation now incorporates concerns of people with disabilities.

A new training opportunity is the *Cortland Community Mentor* training program (see page 2).

This spring, the college added another section of CPN 103; this one is dedicated largely to education majors, and is taught by Geoff Bender, who taught high school English for twelve years.

Students in both sections of CPN 103 know that the students in their own classes will represent a wide variety of cultural backgrounds (as they are already noticing in their service-learning tutoring and mentoring projects).

These future teachers recently participated in a *Cross-Cultural (mis)Communication* Panel Discussion; panelists and discussion participants described humorous or dangerous situations caused by cultural differences in verbal or nonverbal communication, by historical contexts, or by cultural expectations.

The panelists were Bruce Mattingly (Dean, School of Arts and Sciences), Noelle Paley (Director, Multicultural Life and Diversity), Isa Jubran (Chair, Mathematics), Lin Lin (Childhood/Early Childhood), Liz Bliss (Director, Migrant Education Outreach Program), and Christopher Musick and Susanne Gnädig (doctoral students from the University of Potsdam, Germany).

Through this discussion, future teachers learned that they need to be culturally sensitive for the sake of their students and their careers.

For fall 2012, five college offices have collaborated to dedicate two sections of *Writing Studies in the Community I* (CPN 102) to secondary-education majors, regardless of discipline: the Office of the Provost, the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, the English Department and its Writing Program, and the Institute for Civic Engagement.

These two sections of CPN 102 will be taught by Jack Carr, another Writing Program instructor with years of experience teaching in public school and volunteering in the community.

As SUNY Cortland's teacher education programs add service-learning courses to their curricula (including methods courses that teach service-learning methodology), the college will serve as a model for other SUNY campuses. For more information on service-learning in teacher-education, contact John Suarez, Coordinator of the Office of Service-Learning, at john.suarez@cortland.edu or at (607) 753-4391.

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Last August, Johnstone contacted SUNY Cortland's Office of Service-Learning to begin collaborating on a professional development project for LPP's coordinators, through which the coordinators are incorporating service-learning into their LPP lessons.

Johnstone praises the Coordinators who work with her, saying that "they're pioneering service-learning for [New York] State's Department of Education, and they're doing so by letting children come up with projects that *they* want to do."

Their students have begun designing a range of projects, including "Go Green" campaigns; one group is writing letters to US soldiers in Afghanistan.

Johnstone said that at a recent meeting, Coordinators listed lessons that students were learning through their service-learning projects: "Students are learning language arts skills, geography, and problem-solving, and they're learning about – and thinking about and acting on – social justice issues."

Children in three schools, for example, are creating and conducting anti-bullying campaigns. In one case, two seventh-graders are conducting a Google Docs survey of attitudes from students who are bullied – and from those who are bullies.

One group of LPP students also created a "pull-tab" activity for their project: Posted throughout the school were sheets of paper with tabs that can easily be removed from the paper (in a way similar to tabs with contact information for people who want to learn about an apartment for rent). Each tag had a word or two written on it.

On Valentine's Day, each student (who took a tag) pinned the tag his or her shirt; another student (or a teacher) read the tag and responded to the words on the tag. Some tabs, for example, had the words "a hug," others had "listen, please."

LPP's success is reflected in students' comments about the program; here are two:

"If it wasn't for Liberty, I would be failing because before I joined Liberty, I didn't care that much for my education. Liberty opened my eyes and made me realize that if I don't have an education, then I won't get very far in life and for that I am entirely indebted to Liberty for making me realize that." Jacob T., Groton High School

"I saw a change in myself after I began being part of the LPP. My whole attitude towards life changed. I started to do better in school and going to most of my tutoring sessions just because I knew it would help. This program is the reason that I will be attending college in the 2012 fall semester, and the reason I am trying to better my life." Felicia B., Groton High School.

Students reflected on various aspects of this year's projects during LPP's March 9 "The IDES of March" Conference, held in Corey Union's Function Room. ("IDES" stands for "Inclusion, Diversity, Equality, and Self-Respect.") Students participated in four workshops focused on ideas that promote anti-bullying and tolerance; some students were recognized for their achievements.

Students enjoyed a day of collaboration and strengthening relationships – and pride in projects that they, themselves, started.

COMING EVENTS

Discussion Series: *Multicultural Perspectives on Education, Civic Engagement, Sport Psychology, and Study Abroad.*

Two University of Potsdam (Germany) doctoral students will discuss the topics below with conversation participants:

- Monday, March 19, 4:10 to 5:30 in Moffett Center's Brooks Museum: *Personal reflections on studying abroad.*
- Wednesday, March 21, 9:10 to 10:00 in Old Main #24: *A Comparison of the German and U.S. K-12 Systems.* A discussion of Germany's "Common Core" by language professor and student-teacher supervisor, Susanne Gnädig.
- Wednesday, March 21, 11:20 to 12:20 in Old Main #B-17A: *Doctoral Research Updates.*
 - ◊ Chris Musick explains his doctoral research rationale ("Values, Roles and Personality of Elite Referees") for his doctoral research (*Identifying Critical Personality Traits in Basketball Refereeing*)
 - ◊ Susanne Gnädig explains her doctoral research rationale ("Communicative Grammar and Communicative Language Teaching") for her doctoral research (*Grammar Instruction and Grammar Acquisition in the Communicative Classroom – an Empirical Study for Polish as a Foreign Language*)

The discussions are free and open to the public; for further information, contact John Suarez at john.suarez@cortland.edu.

This discussion series is supported by the Institute for Civic Engagement and by the Faculty Development Committee.