

April 2013

Volume 5, Issue 6

Individual Highlights:

Reflections on Civic Engagement	2
AmeriCorps Success Stories	3
Building Ties to Morocco	4

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



Carnegie Foundation Elective Classification in Community Engagement



April is Sustainability Month

Starting April 8, Sustainable Cortland will be hosting the first ever Sustainability Month. In the past, only a week was dedicated to exploring and promoting sustainable living; however, the SUNY Cortland community will now enjoy an entire month's worth of green activities.

Each of three weeks in April is dedicated to a different topic concerning sustainability, beginning with energy week (April 8-14), followed by climate week (April 15-21), and concluding with food week (April 22-28). Lectures and activities will focus on each of these themes.

Here are some highlights of the events that will be taking place during Sustainability Month:

Energy activist and author of "Power from the People," Greg Pahl, will kick off Energy Week with a lecture on April 10 in Sperry 204 at 7:00 p.m. His lecture will explain how communities can plan, finance, and produce their own local renewable energy.

On April 13, there will be a tour of the Preble Town Hall solar panels.

Mark Hertsgaard, an author and journalist who has dedicated his career to investigating and writing about environmental issues, will introduce Climate Week. His lecture will take place on April 18; more information will be provided on Facebook at SUNY Cortland Sustainability Month.

On April 19, The NYS Grange will also hold a Lecture; it is called "Weather or Not? Effects of Changing Weather on Local Agriculture." It will run from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m and includes registration, breakfast, and a lunch.

On April 20, the Climate Smart & Climate Ready Conference will be held in Ithaca.

The Cortland Blooms festival will wrap-up Climate Week, the second week of Sustainability Month. It will take place on April 21, from 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. A bike path will be set up between the Cortland County building and the Corset building; it will wind through an art gallery set up by local artists. There will also be free helmet fittings and bike rentals!

Food week will be the final week of Sustainability Month. On Earth Day (April 22) the group *Students for Local Food* will hold a workshop that will show participants how to prepare food in a sustainable manner. The workshop will take place at the Blue Frog Cafe in Cortland 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

The Sustainability Month lecture series will end on April 24, with Main Street Farms' Allan Gandelman, who will focus on sustainable agriculture and his experiences developing aquaponics. He will be speaking at 7:00 p.m. in Sperry 204

If you would like more information about Sustainability week, please check out Sustainable Cortland's website at www.sustainablecortland.org or our Facebook page at SUNY Cortland Sustainability Month.

End of Semester Reflections on Civic Engagement

Over two days (March 25 and 26), 39 people reflected on their spring 2013 service-learning experiences. Participants included 31 students, three AmeriCorps members, a community agency supervisor, and four faculty/staff. Participants represented ten community organizations and schools.

Most of the students are volunteering as tutors.

Students began their discussions by recounting “Memorable Moments” from their service-learning experiences, which often centered on this idea: Integrating field experiences with course work generates a deeper understanding of issues’ complexity.

Students referred to their service-learning courses, *Introduction to Urban Education* (FSA 101) and *Writing Studies in the Community* (CPN 103), and to professional development workshops offered as part of CPN 103.

In one of those workshops, for example, Jennifer Drake (A.S.A.P.) trains students in tutoring skills.

Students also referred to non-service-learning courses, such as *Psychology of Children with Exceptionalities* (PSY 331).

Course lessons included Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, as well as teaching- and learning-styles.

Students described ways in which they applied lessons, such as tutoring skills. For instance, when children requested answers, students did not give answers, but rather helped children come up with answers by asking them questions that prompted further thought.

Many students confessed that this technique is difficult because it requires them to break the habit of simply giving children the answers.

Some students reinforced the importance of positive reinforcement. Danielle Ben-Horin, for example, recounted an incident in which a 2nd-grader’s teacher told the child, “I’m writing-down everything bad that you do!”

Later, while tutoring the child, Ms. Ben-Horin created a reward sheet in which she and the child wrote-down every *good* action that the child took. Eventually, the child reached his goal: He

had won ten stars. Both his behavior and his learning had improved.

Lessons regarding socio-economic considerations also surfaced. Some students commented on childhood hunger; another, Trinel McDermott, referred to a personable youngster who is homeless.

Regina Gianfreda described a textbook that is intended to help Hispanic children learn English by highlighting some English words’ Latin roots; unfortunately, she said, “a lot of the children in my class speak Arabic, so this book doesn’t help them at all.”

Students also identified the importance, to teachers, of their tutoring performance, especially in this climate of standardized testing. Paige Barnaby said that “it’s hard for the teacher to have Cortland students” [because he/she might be compromising students’ performance on exams]. Norah Mallet agreed, saying, “Yes, we could ruin the kids’ lives and the teachers’ careers.”

Caitlin Majka added to this idea by pointing-out that, in the ESL class that she had just begun visiting, “the teacher has too much material to go thru, with two 5th-grade ESL children who are reading at a kindergarten level,” so she needs to observe carefully before actively helping in the classroom.

The combination of hands-on experience and nuanced understandings of education’s complexities has helped strengthen students’ confidence. Many students had experiences similar to Samantha Massaro’s experience in which a 3rd-grader, who is at the pre-K reading level, gave Ms. Massaro a hug after a successful lesson, saying, “You’re the best teacher I’ve ever had!”

Students requested more events such as this. As one student explained, through such discussions, “we’re learning how to deal with the unexpected.” Another noted that “we need to learn how to reflect on our experiences so that we can learn from them.”

AmeriCorps Success Stories

The members of the SUNY Cortland AmeriCorps program serve eighteen agencies throughout the Cortland area. Members provide an invaluable resource to their host agencies by developing and running programs, serving clients, and providing general support to their agencies. Each AmeriCorps member brings a unique set of skills and experience to the agencies where they serve, and they are generating excellent results. At a recent training, members took some time to think about success stories from their service.

The following examples are just a few of the many success stories highlighting the accomplishments of the SUNY Cortland AmeriCorps members.

At the Inclusive Recreation Resource Center, the AmeriCorps members helped raise \$4,440 for an accessibility project.

The AmeriCorps member serving at the Cortland Downtown Partnership started an ad campaign for the Cortland County Business Competition and helped make Chill-A-Bration a huge success, selling all 500 mugs.

At The Cortland County Community Action Program (CAPCO), the AmeriCorps member assisted 18 families in receiving a grant of \$200 each to help with heating costs through the National Grid Care and Share Program.

The Cortland Prevention Resources' AmeriCorps member started the organization's first LGBT youth group, helping to facilitate the group, and serving as a mentor.

At Lime Hallow, the AmeriCorps member has helped clean up an old mill site that will be used as a future day camp for children.

The AmeriCorps member at Cornell Cooperative Extension modified a one-time lesson on eating fruits and vegetables – making it kid friendly – and piloted it at

McGraw Elementary with the Cornell Cooperative Extension's horticulturalist. The program was met with great success by the 3rd and 5th graders.

While every success story is important, perhaps the most meaningful success story came from our AmeriCorps member serving at Greek Peak Adaptive Snow Sports. The member worked with a young boy who has brain cancer, and who experienced a traumatic brain injury because of the cancer and surgeries. Within two weeks of starting the program, the child's physical therapist noticed he was walking better and had more torso and gait range. When the physical therapist asked the father what had changed in the past two weeks, the father said that the boy has been skiing five times.

These examples show the difference AmeriCorps members are making in the community and in the lives of individuals they serve.

Richard Kendrick, Director of the SUNY Cortland AmeriCorps program said, "Our AmeriCorps members are each doing exceptional work in the Cortland Community; their success stories highlight the wide range of services the program and its members are providing to the community."

In recognition of their service to the community, and as part of the Corporation for National and Community Service's "Mayors' Day of Recognition for National Service," Cortland Mayor Brian Tobin will present the SUNY Cortland AmeriCorps members with certificates of appreciation on Tuesday, April 9. This is the first ever Mayors' Day of Recognition, and mayors across the country will be holding similar events to highlight the value and impact of national service to the nation's cities.

Contact Information

Richard Kendrick: Director.
(607) 753-2481 or
Richard.Kendrick@cortland.edu

John Suarez: Office of Service
Learning Coordinator.
(607) 753-4391 or
John.Suarez@cortland.edu

Wendy Burton: Interim
Program Coordinator.
(607) 753-4270 or
Wendy.Burton@cortland.edu

Matt Whitman: AmeriCorps
Outreach Coordinator.
(607) 753-2298 or
Matthew.Whitman02@
cortland.edu


Colleen Honan: Intern
Colleen.Honan@cortland.edu

Sponsors

The Office of the President
The Office of the Provost
The Office of
Sponsored Programs
The Corporation for National
and Community Service
The Cortland Fund
The Cortland College
Foundation
The Division of Institutional
Advancement

Connect with us!

 /GetInvolvedCortland

 @CortlandICE

 /CortlandICE
cortland.edu/get-involved

Building Ties to Morocco

By Richard Kendrick, Director, Institute for Civic Engagement

Over the past several years, the faculty and staff of the Institute for Civic Engagement have been building ties to faculty, staff, and students in Moroccan higher education. Through our involvement in Syracuse University's U.S. State Department-funded program, Civic Education and Leadership Fellows (CELF), we met a number of Moroccan participants. The Moroccan participants in the CELF program, upon returning home, began building their own networks of faculty, staff, and students interested in developing their own civic education and civic engagement programs.

Their efforts culminated in a conference in Marrakech in February, which focused on civic education, civic engagement, and the scholarship of civic engagement, particularly in Moroccan higher education. Approximately 35 Moroccan faculty, staff, students, and heads of NGOs participated in the conference along with several non-Moroccan participants.

Following the two-day conference, about a dozen Moroccan educators remained for a two-day training that I conducted with Dr. Julia Ganson of Syracuse University. The picture you see on this page is of the participants in the training. The conference organizers, Ms. Halima Ouamouch, Professor, English Studies Department, Faculty of Arts and Letters-Ain Chock Hassan II University in Casablanca; and Dr. Mohamed Behnassi, Associate Professor of Global Politics and Governance,

Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences, Ibn Zohr University of Agadir, and Director of the North-South Center for Social Sciences, are third from the left and first on the right in the photo below, respectively.

In the fall of this year, we will be hosting a Fulbright scholar from Morocco, Dr. Larbi Touaf, Associate Professor, English Department, Mohammed I University in Oujda., who will be spending the semester at SUNY Cortland working with the Institute for Civic Engagement and the Maxwell School at Syracuse University.

Being involved with this dedicated group of Moroccan academics was an inspiring opportunity to learn about Moroccan society and culture and the ways that Moroccan academics are integrating ideas of civil society and civic engagement in their own institutional and cultural contexts. If anyone is interested in working with the Institute for Civic Engagement as we develop our Moroccan ties, please let me know. Contact information for all Institute faculty and staff is on the last page of this newsletter.



Upcoming Events

Sunday, April 14: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
The 4th Annual Diversity, Equity, and Social Justice Student Conference

Thursday, April 18, 4:30-5:30 pm:
Leadership in Civic Engagement Awards (Jacobus Lounge)

Cortland Blooms

Sunday, April 21: 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: The County Office Building gymnasium and the Cortland Corset Building.

For more information go to:
sustainablecortland.org
or Facebook/CortlandBlooms