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Inside this issue:

<i>Leaders in the Arts</i>	2
<i>Service-Learning</i>	3
<i>AmeriCorps</i>	3
<i>Youth Leadership</i>	4

Lessons on Leadership from the *Fire It Up!* Leadership Conference

Over 200 participants, including twenty-two Cortland High School students and their teachers, attended the “Fire It Up: Lead the Way to Change” leadership conference on Tuesday, October 26, in Corey Union. Keynote speakers Catherine Bertini and Joel McCarthy, as well as Dr. Erik Bitterbaum (who introduced the morning keynote address) provided excellent advice and examples on leadership development.

Dr. Bitterbaum, SUNY Cortland President, introduced the morning keynote speaker by listing characteristics of a good leader: A leader is someone who helps set and work toward goals, helps solve problems, is person-centered, is a “worker bee,” is an excellent communicator and a good listener, gives credit to others, and asks “are we doing the right things” (not just “are we doing things right?”).

Ms. Bertini, a professor at Syracuse University’s Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and the former Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Program, echoed several of Dr. Bitterbaum’s themes. She called upon her extensive experience in a variety of positions to challenge students to ask themselves, “how should the world be? Then set up [your] goals to get it there.”

She suggested that leaders engage in three important tasks: work to create good policy, do the right thing, and take risks. The basic ingredient in creating good policy is common sense, she said. The basic ingredient for doing the right thing is listening to your “gut” without worrying about political or job consequences, while the basic ingredient for taking risks is strategic analysis so that you understand the costs and benefits of any risk that you are taking.

Ms. Bertini mentioned the special challenges facing women in leadership positions, such as the prevalence of “old boy” networks, rumor mills that question a woman’s competence or ability to serve, and the need to work twice as hard to receive the same recognition as a man in a similar position. On the other hand, she said that new opportunities are presenting themselves as organizations seek to be more inclusive by reaching out to include women and members of other underrepresented groups. She encouraged women who are offered an opportunity for a new experience to “grab on!” to it.



Catherine Bertini, SU Professor of Citizenship and Public Affairs

(Continued on page 4)

Research & Economic Development: Cortland Art Downtown at Main Street SUNY Cortland

Cortland Downtown Partnership Executive Director (and Main Street Building Administrator): Adam Megivern

The Research and Economic Development activities are operated from Main Street SUNY Cortland which is located at 9 Main Street

Leaders of the Arts

The Beard Gallery proudly announces its new exhibit: *Dingle, Ireland*, which runs through November 13rd, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. The show is curated by the Art Exhibition Association (AEA), and showcases the works of 17 students who traveled this summer for a month-long trip to Dingle, Ireland. The students were part of an International Studies program taught by Professor Emeritus George Dugan. This program is offered by SUNY Cortland's James M. Clark Center for International Education.

Painting and drawing in Dingle, Ireland, are challenging and overpowering experiences in the fantastically beautiful. The peninsula of Dingle is on the southwest coast of Ireland. The town is a fascinating fishing village that is both captivating and picturesque, and the surrounding landscape has some of the most stunning images in the country. Dingle offers a great variety of subjects, from brightly painted storefronts to ragged coastline to the ever-present blue mountains. Students work in the open air, which can often be a formidable task because of changes in the weather, shifting light, and the constant wind. However, it is also rewarding to face such challenges when producing art.

When looking at the paintings, you will notice that many of the works are small in scale. This size is because of the complex demands of painting out-of-doors. Everyone is encouraged to work in a modest scale, along with limited (palette) colors so they capture only some essence of the complex views. They are encouraged to work fast and spontaneously and to not become too detailed, since the weather conditions do not allow for meticulous work.

Adam Megivern of the Cortland Downtown Partnership said that "the show's October 23rd opening drew

approximately 100 visitors, 17 families and friends from out of the area into our community. Many Downtown businesses benefitted from the influx of out-of-town visitors."

The Beard Gallery, Historic Downtown Cortland's foremost year-round gallery, has been reinvigorated by the emergence of leaders from the SUNY Cortland students' Art Exhibit Association (AEA). The Beard Gallery, located at Main Street SUNY Cortland (9 Main Street), was founded as a collaborative effort of the Cortland Downtown Partnership, the Institute for Civic Engagement, and the Cortland County Cultural Council to provide a space for SUNY Cortland Bachelor of Fine Arts students and community residents to exhibit art in the Central Business District.

SUNY Art and Art History professors Kathy Kramer, Martine Barnaby, and Vaughn Randall have been instrumental in developing programming for the gallery. As of this semester, all Beard Gallery exhibits during the academic year will be curated and promoted by the AEA. Randall, the AEA's advisor, noted that "the motivation demonstrated by the AEA's leadership to become more involved in all phases of the operation of the Beard Gallery has transformed the space beyond a location for public art into a learning laboratory for students interested in pursuing their interests in the arts."

The Dingle, Ireland, show is on display from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Beard Gallery. The new exhibit, "GIRL," begins on November 15. For more information on these exhibits, contact Adam Megivern at the Cortland Downtown Partnership at 753-4270. To stay current on all the cultural and commercial offerings of Historic Downtown, Cortland, find the Cortland Downtown Partnership on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

The activities of the Institute for Civic Engagement and Main Street SUNY Cortland are made possible through the support of the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, the Office of Sponsored Programs, the MacDonald Foundation, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Cortland Fund, the Cortland College Foundation, the Division of Institutional Advancement, the Auxiliary Services Corporation, the American Association of Colleges and University's Bringing Theory to Practice Project, and the Office of Congressman Michael Arcuri.

Service-Learning

Service-Learning Coordinator: John Suarez. The Office of Service-Learning is located at Moffett #2105

Community Agencies' Leadership Training Reinforces Academic Course Lessons

Students develop leadership qualities and skills through service-learning courses and through the community organizations with which they volunteer.

You can develop the key leadership quality of *initiative* by volunteering with Access to Independence, for example. Access is a community organization that helps people with disabilities. Volunteers at Access participate in projects that focus on independent living, self-determination, and "systems change advocacy." Students need initiative in courses taught in departments such as Physical Education and Foundation and Social Advocacy.

Learn observation skills by volunteering with the YWCA's *Bridges for Kids Program* or with Family Counseling Services' *Homework Help* or *Peer Mentoring Programs*, among others. Those skills are important because these organizations participate in New York State's *Mandated Reporter* program, through which agencies notify authorities about possible child abuse. Observation skills and active listening skills are important to Education majors.

A core leadership skill is the ability to individualize your message by identifying and applying your audience's needs and interests to your message. Refine your skill in this area by volunteering with organizations such as the YWCA, where trainers model it and help you to use it. This is a central skill for students in Adapted Physical Education and Sport (PED 356), Children, Family, and Communities (ECE 333), Writing Studies in the Community I and II (CPN 102 and 103), and Community Health (HLH 203).

Apply your improved communication skills at many community organizations. For example, Sarah Fenster, the AmeriCorps VISTA member at the American Red Cross, notes that after you take The American Red Cross's disaster relief lessons on mass care, shelter operations, client casework, and psychological first aid, you can apply your communication skills by

"giving presentations to the community on health and preparedness topics such as fire safety."

These skills and experiences are important to students in courses such as *Writing in the Community I* and *II* (CPN 102 and 103).

You can also refine your leadership skills by attending the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG's) Student Leadership Conference on Saturday, November 13th at SUNY New Paltz. You can learn valuable leadership skills from NYPIRG's professional staff.

The conference fee is \$15 per student, which includes two meals, transportation, and all of the workshops.

NYPIRG is a student directed reform organization. For more information, contact Project Coordinator Taryn Bunger at tbunger@nypirg.org.

SUNY Cortland AmeriCorps Celebration

On October 21 at Main Street SUNY Cortland, SUNY Cortland AmeriCorps celebrated its new and completing members. The following members joined the program over the summer or this fall:

Angelique Bovee (Lime Hollow), John Wick (Lime Hollow), Trevor Curry (YWCA), David Bitterbaum (Catholic Charities), Aaron Fumarola (Lime Hollow), Kim Mullins (returning for a second year to Family Counseling Services), and Stephanie Plude (returning for a second year at Main Street SUNY Cortland).

Angelique, John, and Trevor are all currently-enrolled SUNY Cortland undergraduate or graduate students. David and Kim are recent SUNY Cortland graduates. Stephanie and Aaron are SUNY Binghamton graduates, and Aaron has a Master's degree from SUNY ESF.

Main Street community Outreach

Main Street Community Outreach Coordinator: Stephanie Plude

The Cortland County Youth Leadership Program meeting

On the same day as the “Fire It Up!” Conference, the 7th annual Cortland County Youth Leadership Program was held at Main Street SUNY Cortland. Thirty-five youths from seven area high schools worked with community volunteers, such as Joe Cortese, a Cortland High School Social Studies teacher, and Michelle Phelps, Director of the Cortland County Regional Sports Council. They met with Cortland-area non-profit organizations to design community service projects while sharpening their leadership skills. One of the many projects was the “Red Hands Campaign,” in which students send red handprints to governments, urging them to cease the recruitment of children soldiers. According to *The Red Hand Campaign Website* (<http://www.redhandday.org/index.php?l=en&view=info>), about a quarter of a million children serve as soldiers. By the end of November, the Youth Leadership Program participants expect to finalize their service plans for the year.

(Lessons on Leadership, from page 1)

Finally, Ms. Bertini discussed the importance of being culturally competent and being sensitive to the customs in other regions of the world. Any aid program, however meaningful, can be undermined if we are unfamiliar with the local rituals and traditions of indigenous peoples around the world.



Joel McCarthy, Dean of Students at Wells College

Mr. McCarthy, the Dean of Students at Wells College, offered a definition of a leader as “someone who influences positive change.” Using the Social Change Model of leadership as his framework, he urged students to understand and articulate their values. Following the metaphor of leadership as a ladder, he said that students need to pick a ladder to climb that is consistent with their values,

whether it is a college to attend, a volunteer activity in which to participate, or a career to pursue.

He said you should continue to climb that ladder as long as it is challenging you to explore your values, learn new knowledge and skills, and discover who you want to be.

Mr. McCarthy said you should think about switching ladders and seek new opportunities when you don't think there is anything more for you to learn from a particular set of experiences. Similar to Ms. Bertini, he said this will most likely include taking some risks. Using stories from his own life, he described his own decision making processes as he changed positions during his career and developed his own set of values.

In particular, he provided examples of how his mother was a positive influence on his personal life and career. The values that were instilled in him while growing up still impact his life today and influence his decisions as the Dean of Students at Wells College.



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