

Upstate Institute at Colgate University

Summer Field School 2007

In its third year of existence, the Upstate Institute Field School is well established and recognized throughout the region. The program provides students with hands-on opportunities to engage in community-based research on behalf of area non-profits. Upstate Institute staff conduct a thorough selection process to ensure the projects proposed by community organizations are clearly defined and research-oriented. The selection process is designed to create a fit that matches a student's skills, knowledge and interests to a project in the community. Students enhance their academic growth by immersing themselves in an issue within a community context and by producing work necessary for building the capacity of regional non-profits. Together, students and community partners work to deliver services that strengthen regional assets and address community needs.

This past summer, 18 Colgate students participated in the Field School. They partnered with 23 different host organizations located within three upstate New York counties. Student fellows worked on many diverse regional issues with their host organizations including: literacy, the arts, health, the environment, community planning and zoning, and education. Projects listed below include GIS mapping, database development, training, reports, and program development.

Each student worked approximately 35 hours per week for a regional community organization, contributing a combined total of over 600 work hours to the region. The students also participated in a weekly field school curriculum that examined issues surrounding regionalization.

Adult Learning Center

The Adult Learning Center in Utica provides English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to residents of the Utica area, many of whom are newly arrived refugees from more than 25 different countries. The Adult Learning Center, which is a program of the Utica City School District, is developing a pilot program for the New York State Department of Education to create a community wide "Literacy Zone." This Literacy Zone will initially focus on the needs of adults whose first language is not English, and will evolve into a program that will benefit all adults in the community. Sarah Lee, '08, designed and implemented a Literacy Directory for Oneida, Madison and Herkimer counties while working with the Adult Learning Center this summer. She contacted literacy providers in the area and compiled their information in a user friendly format. The directory will allow literacy providers in the area to find appropriate and available literacy programs for clients. She also prepared a presentation that enabled ALC staff to teach their students how to use digital cameras to record and communicate their experiences in adjusting to life in Utica.

BRiDGES

BRiDGES: Madison County Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Inc., works to

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improve the quality of life by providing advocacy and services to the community, the workplace, families and individuals affected by addiction and the abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other substances. Liz Harkins, '09, worked with BRiDGES on a Change for Good fundraiser this summer, and promoted TiPS (Training on Intervention Procedures for Servers) training to local alcohol vendors. She created informational brochures about the program, developed a safe selling packet, and traveled to stores across Madison County to promote the program. She also worked with local high school students to raise awareness of alcohol advertising in Madison County. Susan L. Jenkins, executive director of BRiDGES, said, "Liz had ownership of the Change for Good campaign. Without Liz, this campaign would not have been possible. It was helpful having Liz write letters to the newspaper from her own perspective. The community frequently hears from us, and it is valuable to hear from another in support of the work against underage drinking."

Chenango United Way

Chenango United Way builds partnerships and maximizes resources to improve the quality of life for local residents. Chenango United Way raises hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to support more than 26 programs and services in Chenango County. Chenango United Way is also a community impact organization, the convener of collaborations and coalitions for a better community.

Dan Laurence, '08, assisted the United Way in conducting mid year site visits with funded community partners. At the site visit, he and a panel of United Way volunteers and board members collected information on program activities, program outputs and program outcomes and scored the data for the purposes of inclusion in the upcoming request (RFP) process for 2008. Elizabeth Monaco, executive director of Chenango United Way, said, "Dan's work was of great importance to our ongoing efforts to track usage of United Way funds. The Mid Year Community Impact Report that Dan created will be viewed by donors and community representatives. We believe that this detailed level of disclosure will strengthen our fiscal accountability to donors and position the United Way as a strong community impact organization."

The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties, Inc.

The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties' vision is to be the "recognized resource for helping donors and nonprofit organizations meet community needs forever." The Foundation has recently published a history book, *Keeping the Promise*, which documents its passage through the late 20th and early 21st century. Kyla Dzwilewski, '08, created a companion website for the book. She condensed the book into usable web content and enhanced the story with new material which connects the history of the organization with present day grantmaking. The site pays tribute to those individuals who had great influence with the foundation and highlights ways in which the foundation has impacted recent grantees or funds held at the foundation. The website can be found at [http:// foundationhoc.org](http://foundationhoc.org).

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Earlville Opera House

The Earlville Opera House Multi-Arts Center houses a beautiful historic theater, two art galleries, an arts cafe, and an artisan gift shop in the village of Earlville in Madison County. The Earlville Opera House strives to promote the arts in a rural region by offering programs of cultural, educational and historical significance, and to preserve and restore the architectural and historic integrity of the building, which is a unique second-story theater constructed in 1892. Allison Salewski, '09, experienced arts management by working with the organization this summer. She assisted the organization with a summer performance series of music and theater and with the East and West galleries, which present year-round exhibits of regional and national artists. She also assisted with 'A Joyful Noise,' the EOH's children's choir, and the popular theater and circus camps organized by EOH for children in the region

The Kelberman Center

The Kelberman Center is a regional center for excellence for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and related learning challenges. Cara Delaney, '08, helped the organization develop a skill-based program for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Mohawk Valley, which began this summer. She designed and conducted data collection for research on effective autism programming using a novel tool to measure the development of social skills in the campers which she then used to begin a research paper dealing with the effectiveness of the summer camp.

Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Inc.

The Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York, Inc. (LASMNY) is a not-for-profit law office which was created in 1952 by the Oneida County Bar Association and local attorneys to provide civil (non-criminal) legal services to low-income people in Oneida County. Throughout the years it has expanded to include thirteen counties in the Central New York region. LASMNY provides legal information, advice and representation to low-income clients in civil cases involving public benefits, healthcare, consumer and debt problems, housing, education, employment, family matters and other legal problems. Also provided are community legal education programs for clients, community agencies and the general public regarding legal rights and responsibilities. Ruben Leavitt, '08, assisted the organization in providing assistance to the community with funds awarded through a Violence Against Women Act grant from the U.S. Department of Justice. In order to help the organization increase affordable housing opportunities for women leaving abusive relationships, Ruben reviewed local low-income housing plans administered through government programs. He compiled copies of preference policies to use as models for other programs. He also worked with other housing programs in the area that do not yet have a domestic violence victim preference. He assisted the lawyers at LASMNY in their work to represent victims, research legal issues, and attend court hearings.

Lorenzo State Historic Site

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Lorenzo State Historic Site is operated by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The site was constructed in 1807- 1808 by John Lincklaen, the founder of the village of Cazenovia. In 1968, the property was conveyed to New York State after 160 years of continuous occupation by the Lincklaen and Ledyard families. Today, the 87 acre site is operated as an historic house museum property, and enriches the community via year-round cultural activities and programs. The site attracts over 60,000 visitors annually and is recognized as a community anchor. This summer, Jeremy Bennick, '08, served as an educational, programming and outreach intern for the organization. He assisted with the research, development and planning of the site's bicentennial activities which occurred this fall. He also assisted with the research, development, and implementation of the site's living history program, conducted historic tours of the mansion and grounds, and provided documentation photographs for the interpretive guide to the site.

Madison County Department of Social Services

The Department of Social Services administers a variety of programs that ensure that health and safety of individuals and families in Madison County. Kate Serrurier, '09, analyzed all the contracts the department has in place with outside provider agencies as a means to determine community needs and resources in relation to the goals of each program. She gathered data that will help the department determine whether a community agency is the best 'fit' for a program and examined other local, state and national models of similar programs to determine best practices. She prepared a detailed report on twelve different programs in which she identified a number of national programs that will be used to better deliver services to residents of Madison County. Michael Fitzgerald, commissioner of the Madison County Department of Social Services, said, "Kate was able to prioritize the money available for contracted services. Her analysis allowed DSS to go back to our contractors to ensure the mission of the organization was further developed."

Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees

The Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees strives to promote the well-being of culturally diverse individuals and families within the community by welcoming refugees and immigrants and by providing individual and community-centered activities designed to create opportunity and facilitate understanding. MVRCCR offers a combination of programs and services, including refugee resettlement, health services and referrals, interpretation, translation, ESL education and technical assistance. Jeremy Fisher, '10, worked with the organization to host the International Mile portion of the annual Utica Boilermaker race. This event gives the center an opportunity to highlight the many different cultures and traditions in the community to the 10,000 runners who participate in the race and to the 30,000 spectators. He also prepared a photo catalog of some of the stories of the center's clients who now live in Utica. The catalog will be added to the

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center's website and used for promotional purposes, and will become a basis for introducing local residents to the refugee communities in Utica.

National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum

The National Abolition Hall of Fame (NAHOF) honors exemplary people from three centuries that have dedicated their lives, efforts, and personal wealth to gain equal rights for all. For the purposes of the Hall of Fame, abolition is recognized as both the legal ending of slavery, or the First Abolition, and the moral ending of discrimination, or the Second Abolition. Carrie Dewitt, '07, worked with Dot Willsey, Director, to organize the Second Induction ceremony of the National Abolition Hall of Fame and Museum, to be held on October 20, 2007 at Colgate University. She created mailings, programs, press releases, and grant research. She also reached out to past and potential members of NAHOF to ensure their continued support and attendance at this year's event. Carrie said, "In the past ten weeks at the National Abolition Hall of Fame, I have learned a great deal not only about working at a small non profit, but also about the rich history of Upstate New York. Overall, it has been a wonderful summer experience in which I have learned a great deal from a very talented, visionary, smart, and dedicated woman. I look forward to coming back to Peterboro someday and visiting what I know will be an impressive museum."

New York State Department of Labor

The Division of Employment Services at the New York State Department of Labor assists and prepares the general public in obtaining and retaining suitable employment. The Division also assists businesses in securing a qualified workforce. Ben Callaway, '07, assisted the Division to explore ways to reach customers and staff within a 10-county region via videoconferencing, webcasts, podcasts, and other means using technology. He helped to develop job search related presentations suitable for webcasting. He also created template Powerpoint presentations with live video panes and a user guide which will enable the department to create similar presentations in the future. The goal of the project is to present effective, interactive employment-related workshops to clients at many of the Department's One-Stop Career Centers from one location. This will allow the Department to provide necessary services to customers in the face of staffing reductions and budget constraints. It will also allow the Department's most effective communicators and presenters to have regional impact as opposed to affecting only one local office at a time.

Oneida Community Mansion House

The Mission of the Oneida Community Mansion House is to maintain, preserve and restore the House, its ambiance and contents and such products and publications or possessions of the original Community and its members for the benefit of present and future generations of scholars, students and an interested public. The Mansion House is nearing completion of the work that precedes the writing of a new strategic plan, a process which involves surveying the community about the public dimension of the

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House. Fiona Mulligan, '07, designed a survey to gauge the public's awareness of the organization, its mission, and how well that mission is carried out. She summarized the findings of the survey and presented her research to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees.

Opportunities for Chenango, Inc.

Opportunities for Chenango, Inc. (OFC, Inc.) is a community action agency, serving the citizens of Chenango County, NY. The agency helps families and individuals recognize their 5 strengths, set realistic goals, make responsible choices, and become successful, self-sufficient members of the community. OFC, Inc. programs focus on child and family development, housing security, life-skills training, education, literacy, health and nutrition, community, employment and economic development. Robert Lucas, '09, helped the organization with an evaluation of the Buy Local presentations for Bullthistle Products, which provides economic opportunities for all microentrepreneurs within the Chenango region. The Buy Local campaign works with local retail outlets to carry products produced in Chenango County and provides a public education program to the residents of the county about how buying locally produced products supports the local economy. Nancy Morey, Bullthistle Products Director for Opportunities for Chenango, said, "OFC, Inc is a strength-based organization; Robert's strengths and his willingness to help others were apparent from the first day. He became an integral part of the program and program (and agency) promotion. By the end of his time with us, we came to rely on Robert's assistance with all aspects of the program, especially his computer skills. He helped not only our program area, but other individuals in the organization who needed assistance with whatever they were doing."

Resource Center for Independent Living

The Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL), a Utica-based civil rights organization serving the disabled community, promotes a dynamic environment where society and the individual mutually benefit from a world with "no limits." The center coordinates over 100 programs, include elderly, employment, youth, and interpreting services, and offers assistance to people with all types of disabilities, including cognitive, physical, mental and sensory disabilities. Matt Inbusch, '08, worked with the organization to develop a database of public and private foundations in order to catalogue past grants and identify potential funding sources for RCIL. The agency receives some 70 percent of its funding from the Federal government, with the remainder coming from private foundations. Matt's research will allow the agency's grants department to have easy access to critical information and will result in increased fund raising capacity. Matt said, "The biggest thing I will take away from this experience has less to do with a specific set of skills or even the problems of the disabled community specifically, and more to do with my understanding of the overall atmosphere and inner workings of a non-profit organization. RCIL is a highly dynamic agency that employs innovative and creative individuals. It is also in the midst of a major expansion both in terms of its physical space as well as its annual funding. These factors and more made working at

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RCIL an invaluable experience, giving me a behind-the-scenes look at a well-managed, successful non-profit that is having a huge impact on the community.”

Southern Madison Heritage Trust

Southern Madison Heritage Trust works to conserve, for public benefit, natural resources in and around the townships of Brookfield, Eaton, Hamilton, Lebanon and Madison in Madison County, N.Y. The trust strives to protect land, water, unique habitats, scenic landscapes, recreational sites and historic features through public education and support of practices that advance natural resource conservation. This summer, Sam Torrey, '09, developed an interpretive trail and an informational brochure aimed at maximizing the educational and recreational value of the SMHT's Leland Reserve property. The 18-acre Leland Reserve had already been open to the public but had no public trail or signage to attract any visitors. Sam mapped out a new trail with Arc-View GIS software, traversing the property in order to enhance public access of the Reserve. He also designed a self-guided brochure which walks visitors through the diverse habitats of the reserve and showcases the natural resources and conservation practices being used by SMHT. In addition, he wrote a series of informational articles about land trusts and current and future land conservation trends in the community, which were published in the local newspapers and used for community outreach campaigns and on the organization's developing website. Sam said, “Working with SMHT has proved to be an invaluable experience; I have learned a great deal about the rich history of the Hamilton area as well as the importance of the land here. Overall, my project this summer greatly helped enhance public access of the Leland Reserve on Preston Hill Road as well as further public education of natural resource conservation, which is the core value of the SMHT non-profit organization.”

Stop NYRI, Inc.

Stop NYRI, Inc., is a coalition of citizens from Madison and Chenango counties committed to exploring the impact of the 8-county, 200-mile long New York Regional Interconnect, Inc. 400,000-watt power line project. The goal of the coalition is to use grounded and accurate research to educate and inform regional citizens, as well as national, state and local officials, about the impact of this project on the area. Tom Blonkowski, '07, researched local zoning laws, conservation easements, Native American heritage sites and historic districts to further the organization's mission. He coordinated the GIS work being done at Colgate University with work conducted at Columbia University with regard to the NYRI proposal. His research will be used to inform the organization's constituency and will be used by the Stop NYRI, Inc. and CARI (Communities Against Regional Interconnect) legal teams.

Town of Cazenovia

David McKenzie, '08, created digital maps of the Town of Cazenovia, a Madison County community of 6500 residents. The town is in the process of creating a new Comprehensive Plan that will define zoning laws and areas that must be protected from

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development. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology, he inventoried these notable properties, assigned geographic coordinates, and created visual representations of them in the form of digital maps. His work will be used as a reference for persons and organizations interested in identifying a certain tax parcel, property or scenic viewpoint in the town. The inventories will provide a reference for decisions about land use, development projects, environmental protection, as well as the promotion of development without sacrificing valuable views and resources. "This project has allowed me to make great strides in my understanding of GIS software and digital analysis," said David. "I have improved my ability to make poster and PowerPoint presentations of my data and explain my findings. It is one thing to make a presentation to informed peers and teachers in a classroom, but I found it much more challenging to translate the technical terms of my work into universal concepts so people without GIS experience can understand them."

Upstate Cerebral Palsy

Upstate Cerebral Palsy was founded in 1950 as the United Cerebral Palsy Association of the Utica Area, Inc., by a group of parents and grandparents of children with cerebral palsy who wanted to ensure that their children would have every opportunity for success regardless of their abilities. The agency has become a comprehensive community services agency serving children and adults who exhibit some level of developmental, intellectual or emotional disability. Cara Delaney, '08, developed and implemented a database in the organization's four county service delivery area to identify the family support needs of families in Madison, Oneida, Herkimer and Lewis counties. The collected data will help UCP maximize their limited funding resources by planning for future services according to clients' county of residence.