

2007

# Program Highlights

*Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County*



# 2007 Board of Directors & Program Advisory Committees



*Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (center) poses with Reality Check youth members and Coordinator Gayraud Townsend (left). The group travelled to Washington to educate Congressional representatives about the impact on youth of smoking in films. See full article, page 16.*

***Our Mission: To strengthen youth, adults, families and communities through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work.***

*COVER: CCE-Tompkins' "Dragoneers" team in the 2007 Ithaca Dragon Boat Race (photo by George Gull); planting seeds at Ithaca Children's Garden (photo by Leigh MacDonald-Rizzo), pumpkin painting at the Kid's Harvest Festival and other scenes of Tompkins County (photos by Sandy Repp).*

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# Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Another calendar year has ended, and I am pleased to report to you on the good work that Cooperative Extension has accomplished for the residents of Tompkins County in 2007. In this publication, we've profiled some exciting projects undertaken recently by our staff in agriculture, family and community development, nutrition, and 4-H youth development. Each in some way illustrates the central theme of our mission to "strengthen youth, adults, families and communities through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work." And, like all that we do here at Cooperative Extension, each originates in the priorities of the communities we serve and is "grassroots" driven in the truest sense of the word.

As part of the statewide Cooperative Extension system, one of our inherent "learning partnerships" is with Cornell University. Our proximity makes it particularly easy for us to tap into the vast and diverse talents of its faculty, staff and students, to engage them in tackling their community's needs and concerns by providing meaningful avenues for direct local involvement. These learning partnerships with our campus colleagues help to bring cutting-edge ideas into our homes and communities, making Tompkins County a better place for all of us to live, while yielding research that responds to real life issues.

Collaborations are central to our work at CCE, and I hope that as you read the following pages, you'll notice -- as I did -- the extent to which our programs create and build upon "learning partnerships" -- both across our own program issue areas (as in the "Healthy Food for All" program profiled on page 12) and more broadly across the many sectors that make up our community. We work together with a population that is both forward-looking and eager to develop creative local solutions to the economic and social challenges that our county shares with others in upstate New York. Working collaboratively not only ensures that the widest possible range of local voices will be reflected in our programs, but it makes economic sense, too. Partnering with others helps build local capacity, create synergy, increase efficiency, and generate greater value for Tompkins County residents from the tax, grant, and contract dollars that provide our support.

Some of the measures that we believe illustrate CCE's economic value include: dollars local government saves through the contracted services CCE provides; grants and contracts CCE brings into the county from outside funding sources; and the local jobs that are created through those programs. Again this year, these numbers are significant, as the pie charts on the back cover show. County tax dollars make up just under 18% of our budget, and enable us to attract or "leverage" an additional \$3104,206 so that each tax dollar invested in CCE effectively results in a return of \$5.70 to the people in our county. When volunteer time and in-kind contributions are added in, CCE is able to create an 11-fold return in educational resources for each Tompkins County tax dollar received.

You, the reader, are one of our most important potential collaborators. CCE continues to be an organization where people can bring their ideas on ways to address priority issues, to connect with community resources, and to get help in making their ideas more far-reaching. I hope that in the future, when you identify an issue that is important to you or to your community, you will consider whether that issue fits with Cooperative Extension's mission, and if so, would also consider coming to talk with us. Our resources include: a corps of over 1600 dedicated volunteers who devote an average of 45 hours each per year on issues they care about; a staff that offers programs in every town in the county, reaching about half of our population each year; and linkages to over 350 different partner businesses and organizations throughout the county.

The accomplishments profiled here would not have been possible without the time and talents of many volunteers, and a supportive community. We are grateful for the confidence and support of the people of Tompkins County, and of our County Legislature. Without all of you, we could not provide the programs and services we do. Helping to create a strong and vibrant Tompkins County is our goal and, as you read through the following pages, I hope you will conclude that our programs are delivering on the annual promise we make to the residents of Tompkins County. With sincere thanks and good wishes,

Ken Schlather  
Executive Director



*“Collaborations are central to our work at CCE... You, the reader, are one of our most important potential collaborators.”*

# Culinary Passport & Farm Trail Promote Local Foods in August



*Buying  
local foods  
keeps money  
circulating  
in our  
community.*

Since the Campaign began in 2005 with support from CCE-Tompkins, the month of August has been promoted as a time for businesses and individuals to feature and enjoy local foods. Two new efforts sponsored by CCE-Tompkins and its community partners during this year's 3rd annual

helped to increase awareness among consumers of different avenues for buying locally, while also reconnecting them on a personal level with the farms that grow their food.

Many people who purchase local farm products through CSA programs or at farmers' markets do not realize that they also can "Buy Local" by dining at restaurants that source their menus from area farms. To promote this concept, CCE-Tompkins and

the Tompkins County Visitors Bureau partnered to develop a Culinary Passport that would encourage the public to patronize area restaurants featuring local foods during August 2007.

Fifteen restaurants agreed to join the promotion by creating at least one dish featuring local products for the month of August. Each was listed in the passport with their address, phone number, website, an example of a representative entrée, and a pricing key.

The Tompkins County Visitors Bureau paid for design and printing of the passports, which were free and available at locations throughout the county. Diners who ordered a dish featuring local products at a participating restaurant received a stamp in their passport. Those with 5 or more stamps at the end of August could enter a drawing for one of seven different prize packages donated by participating restaurants and Finger Lakes wineries.

Restaurants in the promotion were: ABC Café, Carriage House Café, GreenStar Cooperative Market Deli, Ithaca Bakery, Juna's Café, Le Petit Café at La Tourelle Resort and Spa, Moosewood Restaurant, Olivia, Smart Monkey Café, Taste of Thai Express, Taverna Banfi at Cornell's Statler Hotel, Watercress, and Willow in Ithaca; Hazelnut Kitchen in Trumansburg; and Rogue's Harbor in Lansing.

"Building and solidifying relationships between restaurants and farms is important to strengthening our local food system," says Lael Gerhart, former Community Foods Educator at CCE-Tompkins. "Special promotions like the culinary passport increase the visibility of the Buy Local concept and public

awareness of the many channels through which local can be purchased," she added.

The Culinary Passport and the Buy Local Campaign were featured on three local television shows, one radio program, and in three newsprint articles. Restaurants increased the visibility of locally produced foods on their menus and chalkboards

***If everyone in  
Tompkins County  
spent 10% of their  
grocery dollars  
on local foods, it  
would generate  
16 million dollars  
of economic value  
for our region.***

– educating the public about its availability. Before the promotion, many residents were unaware of the availability of locally produced foods at participating restaurants. "Those who support local farms are likely to dine out at restaurants that serve local foods if they know of this feature," Gerhart added.

Forty-five people completed and returned their passports for the prize drawing, however restaurants reported that many patrons carried the passports and asked for stamps. Conversations with restaurateurs and requests for additional passports at some locations showed that many more people used the passports than were reflected by the number of contest entries.

The program will be repeated again in August 2008, but the number of stamps required to enter the drawing will be reduced from five to three to make it easier for people to meet the contest criteria, *continued on p. 20*

# Annual Building Tour Highlights Tompkins' Growing Green Economy

Over 600 people took part locally in the 2007 Green Buildings Open House on October 6th, making this the most successful tour in the event's decade-plus history. Sponsored by CCE-Tompkins and the Ithaca Green Building Alliance, this free event showcased 26 homes and businesses in Tompkins, Tioga and Schuyler Counties that employ green building practices or renewable energy technologies.

Sites on the tour featured a variety of green building techniques and materials and included finished homes, both new and renovated, as well as those in various stages of construction. Examples of techniques that could be seen included: grid-tied and off-grid solar photovoltaic systems, wind turbines, passive solar design, solar hot water, geothermal heating and cooling, instantaneous hot water, masonry stoves, natural materials, timber framing, straw bale construction, non-toxic finishes, and recycled or reclaimed materials.

Homes varied in style from traditional to contemporary and featured many highlights. A Newfield home used RASTRA building blocks made of recycled materials that fit together similar to Legos to create an adobe-like look. Homes in Lansing and Enfield featured literal "green roofs" covered in living plants. These living roofs help regulate building temperature and reduce storm-water runoff.

Owners of well-insulated homes with energy efficient appliances realized substantial savings on energy bills, and many produced more electricity than they consumed through photovoltaic systems using the power of the sun. Other homes typified the term 'green building' by offering unique architecture and alternative living spaces that

included earthen floors and circular rooms.

Several tour options were available. From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., individuals could take a self-guided tour visiting any of the sites. Homeowners were on hand to answer visitor questions as were experienced green builders who could offer expert analysis. Members of the Ithaca Green Building Alliance led shuttle van tours for those preferring a guided tour. Van tours were offered for a nominal fee and provided visitors with a more in-depth analysis of a fewer number of homes. Guided bicycle and motorcycle tours also were offered.

The wide variety of techniques shown in the participating sites and the flexible event itinerary allowed people to focus on their particular areas of interest within green building practice. Even so, not all of the 26 sites could be visited during the time available, and some visitors suggested expanding the tour to a full weekend, with half the sites open on each of the days so homeowners would still only need to make a one day commitment. Changing the event structure in this way could make it a "destination event" for visitors from far beyond our region.

Event attendance has increased every year, illustrating the growing awareness of green building and its place in the progressive movement of sustainable technology and strategies.

So too has the number of "green" companies in Tompkins County increased, as evidenced

by event co-sponsor Ithaca Green Building Alliance (IGBA) whose members now number over 40, up from a dozen just two years ago.



*This straw-bale home in Freeville was under construction during the 2007 Tour, allowing visitors a view of many construction details.*

IGBA is a not-for-profit trade association comprised of local small businesses and individu-

**Event attendance has increased each year, illustrating the growing awareness of green building...**

als whose goal is "to help make healthy, environmentally sound, energy efficient homes an option for anyone building or remodeling." Members agree to a set of green building principles, which includes a commitment to "place" by sourcing materials locally and using locally produced renewable energy, for example. Green builders support the local economy from sawmills to independent hardware *continued on p. 19*



# New Initiative Encourages Emerging Community Leaders

Many people agree on the need to build a diverse group of community leaders and engaged citizens who are representative of the entire community. But they

formal community leadership roles.

NLI is a collaboration between Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, Greater Ithaca Activities Center, the Multicultural Resource Center and Tompkins Community Action. Margo Hittleman is NLI's coordinator and brings to the project over 25 years of experience in community-based leadership and program development, as well as advanced study and experience in adult education.

Hittleman explains that research and program evaluation (by the Kellogg, Ford, and Annie E. Casey foundations, for example) show that leadership

development initiatives designed specifically to address the needs of under-represented groups can successfully engage new groups of citizens in formal public leadership. The program was developed on this evidence-based foundation.

In 2007, the first group of 12 emerging leaders was recruited through the collaborators' networks. All were from low/moderate income backgrounds and three-quarters were African-American, Latino or Asian-American. The group ranged in age from 20s to 50s and included equal numbers of men and women.

Members were drawn both from the City of Ithaca and rural towns. They were all people whom others look to for help solving problems and "getting things done." And all were passionate about improving community life. But many did not see themselves as "leaders" and had not had

many opportunities to fully explore their own abilities. As one participant noted in an early session, "I'm here because I want to know why people keep telling me I'm a leader."

NLI participants attended a series of 12 group sessions in 2007, addressing topics such as asset-based community development, project planning, communication skills, public speaking, creative problem-solving, understanding and accessing community resources, managing conflict, supporting yourself and others, and navigating systems that have not traditionally been inclusive of diverse voices. They were introduced to established community leaders and organizations, and they explored local avenues for greater involvement.

Several established community leaders – including the mayor of Ithaca – shared their own "leadership journeys"; others volunteered as coaches and mentors to the participants as they carry out their projects. Child care, supper and (if needed) transportation to each session were provided.

NLI participants also worked on community "action projects" of their own choosing. They received help identifying and defining projects, mapping and leveraging community assets and resources, planning and taking action, and documenting project impact. All projects were done in collaboration with community organizations, enabling participants to learn about building collaborations, increasing their networks, and identifying new leadership opportunities.

One participant organized the first monthly Pre-K 'Family Fun Nights' at her child's rural school in order to help make the school more "family-friendly." She has committed *continued on p. 18*



Margo Hittleman, Natural Leaders Initiative Coordinator, with group members.

say it is difficult to find enough people to step into those leadership roles, particularly from under-represented groups. At the same time, there is a large, untapped pool of informal leaders, people without formal leadership titles or roles who have a demonstrated passion, commitment and aptitude for improving community life. With targeted support and the opportunity to develop their skills and confidence, these "everyday leaders" could move into broader leadership roles.

The Natural Leaders Initiative (NLI) bridges this gap, helping to foster community vitality by developing the diverse leadership potential inherent here. Launched in January 2007, NLI offers emerging leaders from low/moderate income communities and communities of color the chance to expand their leadership skills and knowledge, build self-confidence, enlarge their networks, and move into more

*“There’s no other door of entry for what we’re doing,” says one participant.*

# Students “Voice their Choice” on Healthy School Lunch Selections

“Fiesta Tacos” and “Taco-Licious” were just two of the creative names proposed by local elementary, middle, and high school students for a new vegetarian bean taco that they tried and voted on during taste-tests held at several area after-school programs in Fall 2007.

Over 260 votes were gathered in taste-testing events in October and December that included students at Fall Creek and Northeast Elementary Schools, Boynton and Dewitt Middle Schools, Ithaca High School, and the Greater Ithaca Activities Center. Ithaca School District food service staff prepared and delivered the tacos for the tastings, then modified and retested the recipe based on student feedback before adding it to the district school lunch menu.

This new initiative to involve students in developing healthier menu items results from the efforts of the Healthy School Food Partnership, formed in July when CCE-Tompkins educators who work in agriculture, nutrition and community development discovered that they were having separate discussions with school food service personnel about the challenges of providing healthy and/or local foods. The educators’ efforts were combined, and school and community partners from across Tompkins County were invited to join forces to help improve school foods.

Since then, the Healthy School Food partnership has grown to include school representatives and food service directors from five school districts (Ithaca City, Dryden, Lansing, South Seneca, and Trumansburg) and other local partners, including representatives from the GreenStar Cooperative Market, the Day Care & Child Development Council of Tompkins County, the

New York Coalition for Healthy School Food, and the Greater Ithaca Activities Center.

Positive marketing and student buy-in are key to making successful healthy menu changes, according to Dale McLean, Food Service Director for the Ithaca City School District which serves an average of 3,000 school lunches each day. The taste-testing project was envisioned as a way to engage both kids and adults in the move to healthier menu items. Several possible entrées were suggested for taste-testing by members of the partnership, and bean tacos were chosen as a variation on a familiar and already popular student food.

Students were enthusiastic about both the bean tacos and the taste-testing process. Some were hesitant to try vegetarian tacos, asking “Where’s the meat?” They loved the results, however, especially in a second tasting when they were asked to compare tacos made with canned beans and those made from local beans grown by Cayuga Organics in Brooktondale. (The local beans won.) A “Zesty Turkey Stir Fry” recipe, recommended by Trumansburg School Food Service Director Deb Bush, will be tested in early 2008.

School food directors value this up-front approval, which may help to reduce the financial risk that accompanies the introduction of healthier menu items. While all local district wellness policies address cafeteria and à la carte foods in some manner, school food service programs are not subsidized by district budgets but instead must function as self-

supporting businesses.

Challenges to making healthy menu changes include: rising labor and health insurance costs for food service staff; limited availability of whole grain breads and pastas at affordable prices or in appropriate quantities; lack of variety within USDA-mandated domestic food products; and student preferences for unhealthy foods.

“We are very lucky in the Southern Tier to have a group of really great food service directors who are working hard and in many cases doing much better than some other districts around the state,” says Amie Hamlin, Executive Director of New York Coalition for Healthy School Food and a member of the partnership. “These directors are doing things



*Fall Creek Elementary’s after-school program was one site that taste-tested the new vegetarian bean tacos in Fall 2007.*

like offering whole grains...and farm-to-school programs to bring students fresh and local produce, salad bars, and plant-based entrees.” But, she continues, “until we address the whole school food environment, cafeterias have an unfair disadvantage. Class parties, fundraising, *continued on p. 17*

**Positive marketing and student buy-in are key to making successful healthy menu changes.**



# From Poets to Press Corps: 4-H Provides New Experiences

A two-year grant from the New York Life Foundation that concluded in 2007 enabled Tompkins County 4-H to target clubs and activities to



*Lito Marte (left) and G-Quan Booker interview Governor Elliott Spitzer in the 4-H Pressroom at the New York State Fair in August 2007.*

youth who previously were under-represented in local 4-H programs. Each summer the grant funded a week-long trip to Washington, D.C. for local 4-H teens and their adult chaperones, to take part in a "Citizenship Washington Focus" event held at the National 4-H Center.

For many of these teens, this was their first trip outside the Ithaca area and their first visit to our nation's capitol. For others, it provided a chance to gain independence since they travelled without their parents. For over a month before the trip, they prepared for this leadership opportunity by taking part in workshops on Youth Community Action, a signature 4-H program in which youth explore governance systems and develop skills that equip them to initiate and create positive change in their communities.

During the July 2007 trip, chaperone Tilly Garnett – a long-time 4-H volunteer – became acquainted with two of the youth participants, G-Quan Booker and Lito Marte. The young men shared with Garnett some poetry they had written, and she encouraged them to enter their work in the upcoming Tompkins County 4-H Youth Fair. When Garnett informed the young men that their fair entries would be due within days after returning to Ithaca, they spent the return bus trip from Washington, D.C. writing new poems.

On judging night in July, Garnett drove the young men and then-volunteer Patrice Lockert Anthony to 4-H Acres, where the annual 4-H Youth Fair is held. Booker and Marte read their poems before Peggy Adams, a local writer who served as evaluator of creative writing submissions for this year's fair. Both young men received 4-H Blue Ribbons for their entries, and Booker's poem was chosen to advance to competition at the New York State Fair in Syracuse, where it subsequently received a Blue Ribbon in state competition.

Remarkably, when the young men arrived at the State Fair, there still were openings for student reporters in the 4-H Press Corps, and Booker immediately signed up. During the next four days, he worked collaboratively with several 4-H youth from other counties to produce an issue of "The Clover Connection", the 4-H State Fair

newsletter. This youth press corps (with minimal oversight from Chip Malone, 4-H Educator from Genesee County, and CCE-Tompkins' chaperone Patrice Lockert Anthony) determined what stories needed coverage, conducted interviews, took photos and produced the newsletter.

An unexpected highlight of the week was an opportunity to interview New York's Governor during his visit to the Fair. The governor viewed exhibits in the 4-H Youth Building and spoke with teens about the "Choose Health" initiative they had presented. He then met the members of the 4-H Press Corps, and answered their questions on his plans to address childhood obesity, the accessibility of health care, and on how they as teens could promote healthy lifestyles. His responses to the students were covered in the weekly newsletter.

Since returning to Tompkins County, the young men and Lockert Anthony have been involved in forming the Poets & Scribes 4-H Club in order to continue to pursue their interests in poetry, creative writing, and publishing.

"The story of G and Lito is a wonderful example of how teens became engaged in meaningful activities to strengthen their own lives, and to contribute to their community," says Brenda Carpenter, 4-H Club and Volunteer Coordinator for CCE-Tompkins. "As a result of being involved in the Citizen Washington Focus trip, G has become a regular visitor to the 4-H office, and has made many new friends around the county and the state. Lito was empowered to enroll in TC3. He successfully completed his first semester in the fall, and is *continued on p. 20*



# 2007 FARM CITY DAY: 10 Years of Celebrating Tompkins County Farms!

In 1998, Tompkins County's fledgling Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board, in collaboration with CCE-Tompkins, was searching for a farm to host Farm City Day, a newly conceived event that would offer the public a chance to visit a working farm and learn about agriculture. Lewis and Linda Stuttle of Lew-Lin Farm in Dryden stepped forward that year and were the first to open their farm to visitors for a day, taking on faith that it would be a worthwhile experience. It was, and when the tenth anniversary of this now-popular event arrived in 2007, it again returned to its roots on the Lew-Lin Farm.

Nine years of Farm City Day have introduced thousands of area residents and visitors to the realities of farming. Children delight in learning the relationship between corn plant tassels and the "silk" on an ear of corn (pollen from the tassels is dropped by wind, insects or birds onto the silk, each stand of which fertilizes what then becomes a kernel of corn on the ear), one of the questions included in the

. This scavenger-hunt style activity leads families in an exploration of Farm City Day, turning up interesting "ag facts" in every corner of the event.

Farm City Day remains a free, family oriented, non-commercial event that now attracts 750 to 1000 visitors to the host farm. The public typically can view 50 different exhibits, hands-on activities and demonstrations, and can take a guided "hay-ride" tour of the farm. Perennial favorites include the sheep and Border Collie exhibition with local shepherd and herd dog trainer Sharon Garland, a visit from "Ronnie Raindrop" from the Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District, and free dishes of the giant ice cream sundae concocted each year

by the Tompkins County Dairy Princess and her court.

The event has featured farms from across Tompkins County in its ten-year history, including: Ainslie Farm, Ithaca (1999); Carey Farm, Groton (2000); The Melon Foundation (2001) and Hardie Farms (2002) both in Lansing; Jerry Dell Farm, Dryden (2003); Fouts Farm, Groton (2004); Freebrook Farm, Freeville (2005); and Clear View Dairy, Groton (2006).

Financial support for Farm City Day comes from the agricultural community, and the event has built strong collaborations between CCE-Tompkins and other ag agencies and organizations: Tompkins County Soil & Water Conservation District, Tompkins County Farm Bureau and the Tompkins County Dairy Princess Program are key contributors.

Area businesses provide support, typically by donating goods for the Farm City Day Silent Auction which funds the county's Ag-in-the-Classroom program. Auction proceeds support the purchase of new resources and the hiring of college work-study students who develop programs for agricultural education in the county's elementary schools.

Since its inception in 1998, Farm City Day has played an important role in helping the public understand farming. With less than 2% of the population involved with agriculture, and at a time when many people are moving into rural areas, accurate agricultural education is crucial to positive relationships between farmers and their non-farm neighbors. Farm City Day meets this vital need.

For more information, or to become a supporter of the 2008 Farm City Day, contact Debbie Teeter at 272-2292 x151 or email [dlt22@cornell.edu](mailto:dlt22@cornell.edu). ☼



Scenes from 2007 Farm City Day

# MRC Sponsors Talking Circles on Race and Racism

Dialogue is a simple yet powerful tool that empowers people from both disenfranchised and privileged groups to create positive change. In Syracuse,

Laura Branca of Training For Change (TFC) Associates in Ithaca. The two agreed that an ideal circle would include 12 participants who would reflect

an even balance of white people and people of color, and a mix of men and women. They hoped to include participants with a range of perspectives and degrees of insight into racism, and people with a commitment to change as well as those taking their first steps to explore issues of racial identity and how racism operates. The sessions would be free and refreshments provided.

Cooper recruited participants through a press release, community contacts, and through an announcement at a listening forum hosted by State Assembly member Barbara Lifton in late Fall 2006 at the Greater Ithaca Activities Center (GIAC).

Community response was overwhelmingly enthusiastic, and demand quickly exceeded available spots, with the result that MRC hosted five talking circles that reached more than 70 participants in 2007. While each of the groups was larger than the ideal 12 members, participants were asked to talk in pairs and fours to ensure that everyone had a chance to speak.

The circles each met for 3 to 5 two-hour weekly sessions. Three circles were open-enrolled by a diverse selection of interested community members that included elected officials, activists, parents, and others. A fourth circle was comprised of

members of the City of Ithaca's Diversity Team, who considered how to offer additional circles to the city workforce for expanded dialogue on race and racism.

A fifth circle was facilitated for the Cultural Climate Committee at Dewitt Middle School, to provide the group with uninterrupted time to discuss issues of racism in education and how to provide leadership to their school.

"While participants may initially feel anxious or uncertain, once the Talking Circles begin, the relief of having a safe and respectful environment in which to exchange thoughts, and gain insight and encouragement toward useful action, makes people want to continue and go farther," says Cooper.

The facilitators provided excerpts from readings to stimulate the conversations and, although participants were not obliged to read them, their thoughts and responses were welcomed.

The small group size allowed for an intimate atmosphere and the participants began sharing personal experiences almost immediately, demonstrating a strong need to talk about racial identity, racism and to elicit support from others. The groups required minimal intervention and facilitation, and used working agreements and reminders for people to share 'air time'.

"The sessions intentionally were not structured as workshops or trainings," said Cooper. "While the facilitators were all experienced trainers on dynamics of racism and diversity, we agreed instead to guide the circles instead of instructing, which created a space for self-discovery and learning through one another's stories and perspectives." *cont. on p. 17*



*Audrey Cooper, Executive Director of the Multicultural Resource Center (left) with Laura Branca of TFC Associates, at the Multicultural Resource Center.*

dialogues to end racism have led to urban/rural school partnerships, teen-led dialogues, university initiatives, rising morale in the jails, and corporate commitments to end structural and cultural racism. The Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) believed that Talking Circles could lead to similar successes here in Tompkins County.

A talking circle is a frank and respectful on-going dialogue that offers a group of people an opportunity for self-reflection, to share experiences, find support, and to influence each other's perspectives and attitudes. The ultimate outcome can be an increased awareness of and an ability to challenge racism in the community.

A series of Talking Circles on Race and Racism were planned for Spring 2007 by Audrey Cooper, Executive Director of MRC, and

*The ultimate outcome can be an increased awareness of, and an ability to challenge, racism in the community.*



# More Kids in the Woods: U.S. Forest Service Supports Outreach Effort

Research points to a multitude of benefits that children gain from exposure to nature. These can include higher levels of concentration, increased ability to control impulsive behavior, greater resilience against stress and adversity, more creative play, and more responsible environmental behavior later in life. Yet from 1981 to 1991, outdoor activities such as backpacking, fishing, hiking, hunting, and visits to national and state parks and forests have declined nationally at rates from 1 percent to 1.3 percent per year.

To help counteract this trend, the U.S. Forest Service has begun offering a matching grant called "More Kids in the Woods" aimed at increasing outdoor recreation and National Forest use by youth. Of 250 applicants for the national grant in 2007, 24 proposals were chosen, including a joint submission by two programs at CCE-Tompkins: Primitive Pursuits and 4-H Urban Outreach.

The grant funds a project that targets teens and pre-teens who live primarily in two subsidized housing developments in downtown Ithaca: West Village and Parkside Gardens Apartments. Both sites are home to a large proportion of families with limited resources, who come from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds or who belong to recent immigrant groups. Many target population youth do not have transportation or access to natural areas beyond walking distance from their apartments, or they lack adult role models to involve them in outdoor activities. In addition, agencies

serving these communities have observed that the youth often hold negative attitudes towards nature (e.g., it is uncomfortable, frightening, boring, or of little value)

The goal of is to introduce these young people to the Finger Lakes National Forest, and to natural areas that they can explore in their own neighborhoods. The project employs the curriculum of Primitive Pursuits, an 8-year old environmental education program offered through 4-H Youth Development at CCE-Tompkins.

The curriculum teaches ecology, field natural history, personal empowerment and peer mentoring in the context of wilderness survival and ancestral living skills. Activities include teambuilding challenges, wildlife tracking, shelter building, aidless navigation, storytelling, gathering and preparing wild edibles, crafting primitive tools and more.

Primitive Pursuits provides this curriculum to 300 youth each year in the Ithaca area. The program's effectiveness has been featured several times in the local media, and is regularly praised by parents and educators.

During the project's first session in Fall 2007, 18 youth aged 9 to 15 met weekly at West Village Apartments, where a large patch of woods on the property was used to teach wild edibles, shelter-building, and teamwork. One activity, making fire by friction, was so popular that the youth didn't want to stop. By the end of this eight-week session, all the participants were taking part in singing and drumming activities. *continued on p. 20*



Scenes from Urban Forest Adventures

1. See: Fact Sheet #1: Benefits of Nature For Children's Health, April 2007, compiled by the University of Colorado's Children Youth & Environments Center, online at: <http://thunder1.cudenver.edu/cye/> and: Oliver R. W. Pergams and Patricia A. Zaradic, Evidence for a fundamental and pervasive shift away from nature-based recreation, Proceedings from the National Academy of Sciences, published February 4, 2008.

# Collaborations Support “Healthy Food For All” CSA Program

Accessing fresh nutritious produce is often a barrier for underserved populations who may not have the financial resources to purchase fresh, local farm products. A lack of familiarity with the variety of produce grown locally and ways to prepare it are additional barriers to adopting a healthy diet for many. Building upon a successful 2006 pilot initiative, members of the nutrition and agriculture staffs at CCE-Tompkins continued to develop the

subsidized CSA program in 2007.

CCE-Tompkins partnered with the Full Plate Farm Collective (comprised of three farms) and the Early Morning Organic Farm to offer subsidized Community Supported Agriculture shares and free cooking and nutrition classes to Tompkins County residents with limited fi-

ancial resources. Grants and other donations were secured to subsidize CSA shares for 36 households to receive a variety of fresh, local, organic produce at a price they could afford (\$32/month) for 12 weeks in 2007. Participating farmers joined the fundraising effort and raised funds to provide an additional 12 weeks of CSA shares for the subsidized participants.

By partnering with community based organizations, churches and schools, project staff were able to identify and enroll a diverse group of participants in the program. They were further able to establish a way for program participants to use Food Stamps for payment of their portion of the share cost. The 36 participating households included 59 children and 105 adults, with 15 of the households representing people of color or differently-abled popu-

lations. Nineteen of the households renewed participation to receive an additional 12 weeks of produce

The Community Supported Agriculture model is an example of how farms can remain economically viable by connecting directly with consumers. CSA members enjoy fresh, quality food, help preserve farmland and connect to their food source. Farm fresh food becomes the conduit through which new relationships are established.

***36 households received a variety of fresh, local, organic produce at a price they could afford for 12 weeks in 2007.***

In addition, small-scale sustainable farmers are often low-income residents themselves. Participating CSA farms receive income from the subsidized shares and have the opportunity to provide produce to members of the community who would not normally be able to afford or may not be familiar with the benefits of eating fresh, local, nutritious, and organic produce.

Collaborators on the project included the Greater Ithaca Activities Center, Baptized Church of Jesus Christ, 4-H Urban Outreach, Beverly J. Martin Elementary School, CCE-Tompkins' Nutrition Program, Full Plate Farm Collective, and Early Morning Organic Farm. Financial support was provided by the Ithaca Health Alliance, GreenStar Cooperative Market, United Way of Tompkins County, Cargill Inc., the Park Foundation, and NESARE.



***The Community Supported Agriculture model is an example of how farms can remain economically viable by connecting directly with consumers.***



# Ithaca Children's Garden Pilots "Seed-to-Salad" Curriculum

For the past four years, the Ithaca Children's Garden (ICG) has engaged young people in growing salad gardens of their own at the Children's Garden site in Cass Park. In Spring 2007, through an Ithaca Public Education Initiative grant with teacher Kelly Craft at Northeast Elementary, ICG was able to expand its successful Seed to Salad Program to a school-based program.

Seed to Salad takes a multidisciplinary approach to gardening in which youth engage in garden-based activities that include language arts, science, math, art, nutrition, physical activity, and horticulture. The cornerstone of the program is a high level of meaningful youth participation and decision-making.

All Seed to Salad Program activities took place outside of class time: before school, during recess, and after school. Working across grade levels, Seed to Salad in February engaged students in planning a

assembly for the entire school. The 20 students involved developed the activities for the assembly, helped recruit parent volunteers, and wrote, directed, and starred in an original play,

During the assembly, all students voted on the vegetable varieties they wanted to see grown in the salad gardens. Beforehand students conducted a

in which they identified vegetable varieties to nominate and created persuasive campaign posters, slogans, and speeches in an effort to educate the entire school on the merits of certain varieties. The third grade classrooms tallied the votes.

In April, students focused on designing and planting 11 garden plots. Instead of planting traditional rows, youth designed their 3'x3' plots as quilt blocks, using

the colors and textures of lettuces and greens to create intriguing geometric patterns. Families were invited to a Saturday morning work party to prepare the gardens for planting.

In May and June, the focus was on gardening. In addition to developing horticultural skills needed to plant and care for the plots, students explored the science of garden ecology and the nutritional content of the vegetables they were growing, while being active outdoors in the garden.

To celebrate the June harvest, students planned a Salad Party for the entire school. They also initiated a salad bar in the cafeteria during the last few days of the school year. Both the party and salad bar were a hit with students and teachers alike. Students expressing interest in making the salad bar a permanent part of lunch time at their school.

Involving students in meaningful decision-making was the thread that ran throughout the many activities that comprised the Seed to Salad pilot. Many original plans changed due to youth input, resulting in a better, more interesting, highly educational program in which students felt ownership and pride in their accomplishments.

ICG will offer a training in February 2008 for educators who wish to implement Seed to Salad in other schools or youth programs. Contact Leigh MacDonald-Rizzo at 272-2292 or email lam26@cornell.edu or seedtosalad@yahoo.com with questions or for more information.

Ithaca Children's Garden is an independent 501(c)(3) organization that was developed and is now housed at CCE-Tompkins.



*Northeast Elementary School students participated in the Seed to Salad Program in Spring 2007.*

# Young Philanthropists Raise Funds for Parents Apart® Program

Two second-grade girls at South Hill Elementary are putting their money where their hearts are, by starting a small business that allows them to raise funds for local charities, including

was checking coats and passing hors' d'oeuvres at a birthday party. "We made almost \$100," Clarkberg said. "People gave us really big tips when they found out we were raising money for the SPCA."

To date, the girls have earned and donated almost \$600 to local non-profits that they research and select. Their most recent gift was \$126 to Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County for the program.

is a 6-hour workshop for parents or guardians who want to learn ways to help their child(ren) cope with the adults' separation and divorce. Stratton's mother, Amanda Spaulding,

is coordinator of the program. The girls specifically asked that their donation be used to buy gift books for the children of participants. They also have made donations to Tompkins County S.P.C.A., Hospicare & Palliative Care Services of Tompkins County, and Loaves & Fishes of Tompkins County.

Like many philanthropists, Stratton and Clarkberg enjoy presenting their donations in-person to program staff. Although their gift to Cooperative Extension was made up of small bills and change, the girls created a large poster board "check" that they presented to Anna Steinkraus, Parenting Education Coordinator at CCE-Tompkins, and Susie Hatch, chair of CCE-Tompkins' Family and Community Development Program Committee and a volunteer member of the Parents

Apart® advisory committee.

"We are delighted to receive this wonderful donation which will mean so much to children of our Parents Apart® participants," said Steinkraus. Hatch in turn acknowledged the girls' generosity with the gift of a book.

**Parents Apart® is a 6-hour workshop for parents or guardians who want to learn ways to help their child(ren) cope with the adults' separation and divorce.**

was developed collaboratively in 1998 by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, CDRC, Cornell Law School, Citizens Concerned for Children/Law Guardians Office, Family Court, The Advocacy Center, Tompkins County Bar Association, and other community organizations.

As of January 2007,

workshops are being coordinated by CCE-Tompkins County, after 6 years with the Community Dispute Resolution Center (CDRC).

For more information on workshops, visit "parenting" under "Family" at [www.ccetompkins.org](http://www.ccetompkins.org) or contact Amanda Spaulding at 607-272-2292 ext 243 or email [amandaspauling@verizon.net](mailto:amandaspauling@verizon.net).



**The girls specifically asked that their donation be used to buy gift books for the children of Parents Apart® participants.**

the program at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County.

IndiAnna Stratton and Thea Clarkberg, both 7, are the proud proprietors of "Shiny Clean", a cleaning service that has tackled a variety of dirty jobs ranging from cars and silverware, to a 100 lb. bell.

Stratton and Clarkberg started "Shiny Clean" the summer after they finished kindergarten. "We were cleaning lots of things around our houses," Stratton says, "and I asked Thea, 'How come we like cleaning so much and we don't have a business?'"

Thea's father Larry Clarkberg helped the girls make business cards, and when neighbors and adult friends learned of their enterprise and its charitable purpose, job offers began arriving. Their most lucrative assignment



# Volunteers Help Expand GrassRoots Festival Composting Efforts

When Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County (CCE-Tompkins) volunteer John Sullivan first approached Finger Lakes GrassRoots Festival organizers in 1995 with the idea to compost at the festival, he reportedly was told, "You can't do that -- we have children here."

Now in its 13th year, the composting program has grown to collect more than 5 tons of material during the four-day music and dance festival. Almost 13,000 people attended the 2007 festival, held July 19-22 at the Trumansburg Fairgrounds, north of Ithaca.

"To see the pounds add up is pretty amazing," said volunteer Jenny Pronto as she and Cornell graduate student Dan Pendleton collected compost on the site.

"On Our Way to Zero Waste" signs touted the latest evolution of the festival's composting effort, which accepted more types of materials than in the past; the materials otherwise would have gone into landfills. (Other festival volunteers collect trash, recyclables and returnable containers and donate bottle-deposit proceeds to local charities.)

The GrassRoots performer hospitality area was geared to serve approximately 13,000 meals during the festival, with not one regular trash can in sight. Everything used by hospitality visitors -- napkins, plates, cups, forks and spoons -- was entirely compostable, along with their food scraps. Each year, CCE-Tompkins volunteers collect compost and staff an information tent at the festival to educate the public about home composting. The outreach mission includes Compost Theatre, featuring volunteer actors who use stories, props and costumes to educate small children (and parents).

"There's a lot of levels of composting going on here," said Adam Michaelides, Coordinator of CCE-Tompkins' Compost Education Program.

Large blue collection bins and white plastic five-gallon compost buckets dotted the festival site, and smaller covered containers were distributed in festival camping areas this year and collected by volunteers.

"It's a way to reach more people and go out where they are," Michaelides said. The total collected at this year's festival was 10,040 pounds. Program volunteers collected 8,275 pounds of compost at GrassRoots in 2005 and 6,630 pounds in 2006. The decrease was attributed in part to less waste from festival food vendors.

"One year we composted over 2,000 pounds of bagels and bread," Michaelides said. "We were able to tell the vendors, which helped to eliminate waste on that end."

In past years, most composting was done on the festival site, in up to 25 welded-wire cylindrical compost bins layered with straw. This year, the compost went offsite to Cayuga Compost, which delivered 62 of its blue 64-gallon collection bins to the fairgrounds. The commercial facility's compost pile generates enough heat (in excess of 130 degrees) to process animal bones and meat, cooking oil, dairy products and biodegradable plastics made from vegetable starch. All of these were collected at the festival for the first time.

About half of the 34 composting program volunteers at the fairgrounds were trained as Master Composters in an extension workshop offered annually from February to April.



*CCE-Tompkins' compost education booth at the 2007 GrassRoots Festival.*

The volunteer force grows every year, Michaelides said, and they also work at the Ithaca Festival in June, Apple Harvest Festival in October and a Compost Fair held in conjunction with Ithaca Earth Day in April.

CCE-Tompkins holds free composting classes at Ithaca Community Gardens, the last Saturday of the month from June to October. Also, worm composting (vermiculture) classes "are very popular - people jostle for position in the classes," Michaelides said. "A worm bin, or a couple of bins, can really take care of all your scraps -- they make really good compost."



**Compost  
collected at  
the 2007  
Grassroots  
Festival  
totalled  
10,040  
pounds.**

# Reality Check Educates Lawmakers on the Impact of Smoking in Films

Educating the public about marketing practices used by big tobacco companies to get young people to smoke--and addressing those practices locally--have been the focus of teens involved with *Reality Check*, a statewide youth-based media literacy program founded in 2001 by the New

York State Department of Health. Locally, *Reality Check* is housed within the 4-H program at CCE-Tompkins and, like other sites, is funded by annual grants from monies received through New York State's tobacco litigation.

Tompkins County youth members stress that they are not "anti-smoker" but instead work to de-normalize and deglamorize tobacco through educational events and action projects. To help reduce or prevent tobacco sales to minors, the teens undertook a "point-of-purchase" effort (for which they visited local convenience store owners and asked them to voluntarily decrease, rearrange or remove tobacco industry advertising around their stores. For a statewide effort, they encouraged organizations to sign a pledge not to accept donations

from tobacco companies or from events that promote tobacco use. The teens also have encouraged local healthcare providers to remove magazines containing tobacco advertisements from their office waiting rooms.

These efforts provide opportunities for participants to acquire substantial leadership skills: they learn to work together, become effective public speakers, meet other youth from around the state, and take action that can have an impact on the lives of others.

By far their largest and most visible effort has been a

Although violence, language and sexual situations have long been considered in the national movie rating system, tobacco smoking was not addressed. According to research from the American Legacy Foundation, a non-profit created with money from tobacco litigation in the U.S., tobacco is featured in 75% of G, PG and PG-13 rated movies and in 90% of R-rated movies.

After four years of grassroots activities, including local events focusing on the influence of smoking in films and an extensive letter-writing campaign to the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) which determines movie ratings,

youth decided it was time to educate members of Congress on this issue and ask for their support. In 2006, the statewide programs pooled funds to hire the Downey McGrath Group, a Washington, D.C. based media consulting firm, to help with this initiative. CCE-Tompkins provided leadership and administrative oversight for the effort.

The Downey McGrath Group researched effective ways to accomplish a change in the MPAA

rules and devised a strategy that entailed educating legislators on the harms of glamorizing and normalizing depictions of smoking in movies. The idea was that, once educated, these State and National legislators would lend their voice to the call for Smoke Free Movies.

For several months, youth leaders from around the state held a series of conference calls with the consultants to discuss the steps involved in effecting the proposed policy change. After much preparation, the teens were eager to go to Capitol Hill, meet legislators, and deliver the pitches they had practiced.

In April 2007, nine members of Tompkins County's youth and three chaperones traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with Congressional representatives and ask for their signatures on a letter to Dan Glickman, President of the MPAA, asking that the ratings system be revised to include smoking. Congressman Martin Meehan of Massachusetts authored the letter, and the teens hoped that their D.C. trip would help to gather additional endorsements.

Once they arrived, the group went to the Downey McGrath Group offices for an informal lunch with former Congressman Tom Downey and John Olinger, Executive Vice President of the DMG. They spoke with Downey and Olinger about Washington and the purpose, methodology, and effectiveness of lobbyists. Later, the teens were escorted to the Capitol Building where they met with local representatives Congressmen Hinchey and Arcuri. The teens took turns pitching the smoke free movie rating system, and both local representatives enthusiastically agreed to endorse *continued on next page*



*Reality Check youth members and Tompkins County Coordinator Gayraud Townsend (left) pose with Congressman Maurice Hinchey outside his Washington, D.C. office.*

York State Department of Health. Locally, *Reality Check* is housed within the 4-H program at CCE-Tompkins and, like other sites, is funded by annual grants from monies received through New York State's tobacco litigation.

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**Tobacco is featured in 75% of G, PG and PG-13 rated movies, and in 90% of R-rated movies.**



### Reality Check, from p. 16

the initiative. The youth also met with staffers from the offices of Senators Clinton and Schumer.

With Downey as their guide, the group had access to many offices and areas that otherwise would have been off-limits to them. They encountered legislators from all over the country, and even had a chance to give an 'elevator pitch' about their effort to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi. While in D.C., the youth also met with staff of the national Coalition for Tobacco Free Kids and learned about how the missions of the two groups are compatible.

On May 10th, shortly after the teens' return to Ithaca and after Congressman Meehan's letter was mailed, the MPAA announced that it would consider film depictions of smoking among the criteria for assigning movie ratings.

The Tompkins County and other state groups are continuing to lobby the MPAA for more comprehensive restrictions on smoking in films. As it currently stands some smoking is still permissible as long as it isn't deemed "pervasive", however the Harvard School of Public Health determined after thorough study that there is no "safe" level of smoking depictions in films.

The Tompkins County group is also turning it's attention to more local matters, including an increased attention to P.O.P. advertising and to new legislation in the City of Ithaca that would prohibit smoking on all city property. Teens from the core group also continue to recruit youth to the cause by sponsoring teen focused events and delivering presentations about the tobacco industry to middle and high school audiences.

For more information, or to get involved with Reality Check, contact Megan Tift at 272-2292 or met38@cornell.edu. ☀

### School Lunch, from p. 7

vending machines, food used as a reward, and school stores all compete with the cafeteria, and even the snack line in the cafeteria competes with the meals. ...How can we expect our kids to make good choices in an environment that surrounds and tempts them with soda, sports drinks, cookies, ice cream, potato chips, and other unhealthy food daily?"

The Healthy School Food partnership is organized and facilitated by the Whole Community Project, a community-based childhood obesity prevention project that is housed at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County. For more information, or to receive the Whole Community Project newsletter 'Reality Bites', contact Shira Adriance at 272-2292 or sma38@cornell.edu. ☀

### Circles, cont. from p. 10

Evaluations were overwhelmingly positive, and most participants wanted the circles to have had more sessions or longer meetings. Participants reported personal changes and new or strengthened relationships, as they took steps toward further dialog, learning, and action. For example, in the first talking circle, two participants who were involved in local government -- and of different racial identities -- improved their working relationship and left wanting to take further steps in ending racism.

The Multicultural Resource Center (MRC) is an independent 501(c)(3) housed at CCE-Tompkins that provides education, creates dialogue and supports community leadership toward inclusion and celebration of diversity in Tompkins County. For more information on how to host, co-sponsor, or participate in up-coming circles, contact Audrey Cooper, Director, MRC at 272-2292 or ajc39@cornell.edu.



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2007 NEAFCS Dean Don Felker Award recipients Barbara Henza (left) and Ann Gifford (right) with Josephine Swanson, Associate Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension and Assistant Dean of Cornell's College of Human Ecology. Swanson recognized Gifford and Henza before 71 Extension Educators responsible for implementing the EmPower curriculum and 12 program funders and guests during an inservice training in Ithaca on September 26th.

## Local CCE Educators Receive 2007 NEAFCS Dean Don Felker Award

Ann Gifford (CCE-Tompkins) and Barb Henza (CCE-Cortland) received the First Place Eastern Region Dean Don Felker Financial Management Award from the National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) for their work implementing the CCE/EmPower New York curriculum.

The Dean Don Felker Financial Management Award is given to Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Educators who have developed an outstanding educational program on some aspect of family financial management.

The award was presented at the Annual NEAFCS National Conference September 18, 2007 in St Paul, Minnesota. Gifford and Henza are responsible for developing and fostering the implementation of the curriculum through the statewide CCE System.

The mission of the National Extension Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) is to educate and recognize Extension professionals who impact the quality of life for individuals, families and communities. More than 2,000 Cooperative Extension Educators across the United States belong to this professional organization. For more information, visit [www.neafcs.org](http://www.neafcs.org).

For information on upcoming Save Energy, Save Dollars, Making Ends Meet, or Exploring Credit/Debt Management Issues workshops in Tompkins County, visit our Calendar of Events or look for "Statewide Empower New York SM Workshops" under "House & Home" at [www.ccetompkins.org](http://www.ccetompkins.org). ☀

to leading this successful program for the next three years and became an active member of the school's PTA. Another participant coordinated an evening of music, poetry and speakers that introduced the community to a nonprofit agency's new "re-entry" initiatives for former offenders, and provided opportunities for networking and conversation among the agency's clients, community organizations, and other attendees; he is now exploring membership on a city board.

Project effectiveness is measured through anonymous feedback forms; ongoing conversations with participants also document progress and challenges. A more comprehensive evaluation with an outside evaluator is scheduled for mid-2008.

Hittleman is pleased to report that over 80% of the NLI participants report or demonstrate significant learning and change. These include new skills and knowledge, enhanced self-image and confidence, increased civic participation, increased appreciation for diversity, expanded networks and support, and expanded horizons.

As one participant said, "This project has helped me move from the sidelines to believe that I have something to offer. Talking in the group – formally and informally – has helped me see that I have a perspective that others don't have, and if I don't share it, it won't get said. The exercises have helped me to see that I have something to offer."

And another, "Because of mistakes that I've made in my life, I didn't think I was wanted. Being nominated for NLI was like having someone open a door and invite me into the community." A young rural mom of three put it this way: "Through NLI, I have developed long-lasting friends and a leadership ability I never knew I had... I have truly *cont. on next page*



## Leaders, cont. from p. 18

come out of my shell and with this new attitude, I am making a difference.”

One-third of the participants in the first cohort have already taken on new leadership roles, including membership on a non-profit board of directors. In addition, NLI participants have enhanced their education (enrolling in the Family Development Credential training, returning to college). Others are seeking, have found, or have enhanced their employment. Several spoke publicly about NLI at the statewide Cornell Cooperative Extension conference, the Human Services Coalition Forum, and to nonprofit organizations locally.

### ***One-third of the participants in the first cohort already have taken on new leadership roles.***

Finally, members of the first cohort have demonstrated a growing “ownership” of the project and pride in their involvement. “This group is very important. There’s no other door of entry for what we’re doing,” says one participant.

Some members of the first cohort have asked to continue to meet, and they are working with the NLI coordinator to develop an “ongoing” group. Many of the first participants have asked to offer their support and mentoring to members of subsequent cohorts. Several participants of the first cohort will join the NLI Steering Committee in 2008.

As the Natural Leaders Initiative develops over the next two years, two program components will be added to strengthen community organizations in their efforts to diversify and develop leadership: (a) assisting boards



*Participants on the 2007 Green Buildings Open House examine the energy-saving features of the Newfield home of Pat Floyd and Kate Halliday. Over 600 people visited the 26 homes and businesses that were part of this year’s tour.*

and committees to strengthen their capacities to recruit, support and retain new leaders from under-represented groups, and (b) assisting community organizations to more systematically and effectively embed leadership development elements in their own programs. This work is being developed in partnership with the Multicultural Resource Center’s ongoing efforts and expertise in that area.

The Natural Leaders Initiative is funded by grants from the Park Foundation and the Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency, with substantial in-kind support provided by the four collaborating organizations. In addition, NLI draws upon existing community resources to help deliver the content for the group sessions. The Human Services Coalition provided scholarships for NLI participants to attend their Board Basics training. Judy Saul, director of the Community Dispute Resolution Center and Jeff Bercuvitz, president of SPARKS! The Center for Creativity & Community Building, led sessions at no charge.

For additional information, contact Margo Hittleman at 272-2292 x 167 or email [mjh17@cornell.edu](mailto:mjh17@cornell.edu). ☀

## Green Building, from p. 5

stores and provide living wage employment opportunities for many in the trades.

The annual Green Buildings Open House coincides with the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association’s Green Buildings Open House and American Solar Energy Society’s National Solar Tour. Some funding for this year’s event was provided by a renewable energy seed grant from Cornell University. Assistance for non-Tompkins County tour sties was provided by CCE Associations in Schuyler and Tioga Counties.

CCE-Tompkins also partners with the Ithaca Green Building Alliance on a series of workshops each winter on green building practices and alternative energy technologies, with presenters who are designers and contractors in the local green building field. For more information, call CCE-Tompkins at 272-2292. ☀



*Poets, cont. from p. 8*

eager to tackle new courses in the spring,” Carpenter continues.

One goal of the Tompkins’ 4-H program is to provide a “seamless movement of youth between program opportunities”. According to Carpenter, “As a result of these teens participating in the CWF trip, they were introduced to volunteers who helped them make connections to the 4-H Youth Fair, which led to a 4-day experience at the State Fair, which then led to their participation in the creation of a new 4-H club designed to meet their needs. It doesn’t get any better than this!”, Carpenter concluded.

Patrice Lockert Anthony, who was hired by 4-H in Fall 2007 as a Community Educator/Volunteer Trainer, elaborates: “The beauty of this seamlessness is that it isn’t just within the walls of 4-H.

is a joint club opportunity between A Writer’s Alchemy (a community organization) and 4-H. We [at 4-H] are using our resources and research to reach out and bring in the community. This effort is what 4-H has always been about: exploration and discovery. Now, we are expanding our horizons even as we help youth expand theirs. It is a wonderful time to be a part of the 4-H experience!”



*Passport, from p. 4*

and for Cooperative Extension to accurately track numbers of participants

A second Buy Local event encouraged people to visit the farms where their food is grown. CCE-Tompkins coordinated a one-day “Farm Trail Open House” on Sunday, August 19 that included nine farms in Tompkins and Schuyler Counties. Participating farms

opened their gates for the afternoon, giving visitors a unique opportunity to tour working farms, meet the farmers, learn about a variety of sustainable production methods, and to purchase locally grown and raised products.

Trail visitors paid \$5 per person or \$8 for a carpool of 4 persons for the day, for which they received an “I Love Local Farms” trail button and a printed guide with descriptions of each farm and a map of all participating farm locations. The guides were available in advance and at the farms on the day of the event. Forty people attended an optional “Farm Trail



Brunch”, prepared and hosted by the Cayuga Nature Center before open house began. The brunch featured items sourced from farms on the Trail.

Farms on the 2007 Trail included: Blue Heron Farm in Lodi; Glenhaven Farm, Hi Point Farm and Sweetland Farm in Trumansburg; Indian Creek Farm and Six Mile Creek Vineyard in Ithaca; Cayuga Pure Organics in Brooktondale; The Happy Farmer in Slaterville Springs; and Kingbird Farm in Berkshire. Together, they represented meat, produce, bean and grain producers.

Participating farms also reflected the diversity of local channels through which local foods can be purchased, including producers with U-pick operations or farm stands, and others that sell their products through farmers’ markets, Community Supported Agriculture, retail outlets, and restaurants. Each farm averaged 21 visitors, with a total of 155 people visiting farms on the Trail.

All farmers who participated

*Woods, from p. 11*

“All but one youth showed up for the end-of-session camping trip, and almost all of these early participants want to sign up for a second session if space is available,” says Melissa Mueller, Primitive Pursuits program manager.

has the opportunity to become part of a growing body of research. Dr. Nancy Wells, an environmental psychologist in Cornell University’s College of Human Ecology, studies people’s relationship to the built and natural environments. Dr. Wells, and youth development and evaluation specialist Kristi Lekies, will assess project impacts by examining the participants’ environmental knowledge and behavior, and academic and life skills, before and after they take part in the program.

For additional information on Primitive Pursuits, 4-H Urban Outreach, or the

project, contact Jed Jordan, Tim Drake or Melissa Mueller at 272-2292. ☀



*Leaders, cont. from p. 18*

felt that the event was worth their time and said they would participate again. Farmers reported that visitors asked a lot of questions and seemed genuinely excited to have an opportunity to visit a working farm. Visitors were encouraged to bring a cooler and to purchase farm-fresh products along the way. Farmers who offered products for sale reported sales between \$250 and \$500 for the day.

The Farm Trail event was coordinated by Lael Gerhart of CCE-Tompkins and co-sponsored by GreenStar Cooperative Market which provided staff design services and paid the printing costs of the Farm Trail Guides. Community volunteers were enlisted to assist each participating farmer with greeting and registering visitors, and directing them to the fields. Partnering with other community organizations and businesses in this way increases

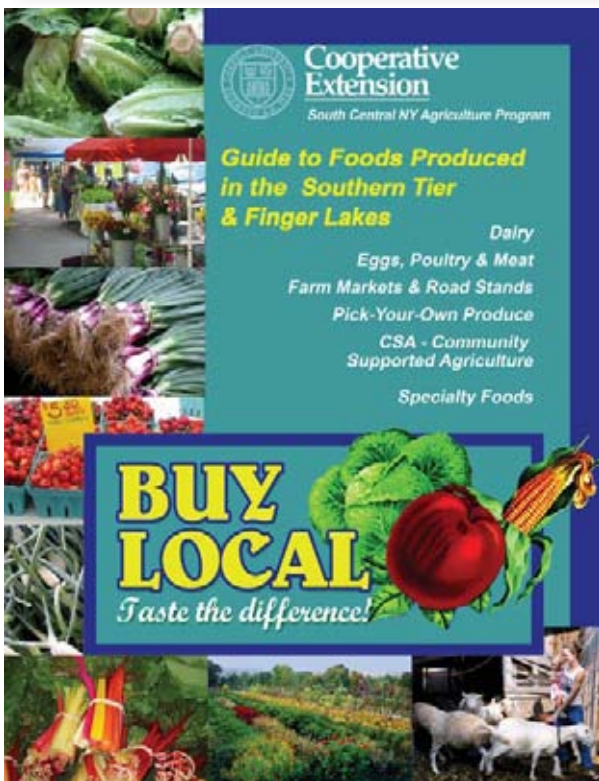


*Local farmer Brent Welch holds turnips grown last season at Red Tail Farm.*

capacity to create a more sustainable food system through outreach and education, and the established partnership between GreenStar Cooperative Market, the Cayuga Nature Center, and CCE-Tompkins' Campaign was strengthened as a result. The Campaign is a community-based initiative facilitated by CCE-Tompkins that emerged from community interest

in building a stronger local food and agriculture system. For more information or to get involved, call Monika Roth at (607) 272-2292.

To find local and regional food producers, visit "local foods" at [www.ccetompkins.org](http://www.ccetompkins.org). ☀



## "Buy Local" Guide from CCE Regional Ag Team

An updated "Guide to Foods Produced in the Southern Tier & Finger Lakes" was compiled by CCE-Tompkins and released by the South Central NY Agriculture Program in August 2007. 5,000 copies were printed and distributed at no charge by CCE Associations in the 5 county region. Printing costs were covered by paid advertisements.

The 24-page booklet lists producers by categories of Dairy; Eggs, Poultry & Meat; Farm Stands and Road Stands; Pick-Your-Own Produce; CSA providers; and Specialty Foods.

A second printing is planned for spring 2008. The guide also is available in pdf form at [www.ccetompkins.org](http://www.ccetompkins.org). For information, contact Debbie Teeter at (607)272.2292 or [dlt22@cornell.edu](mailto:dlt22@cornell.edu). ☀

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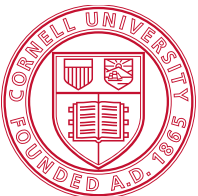
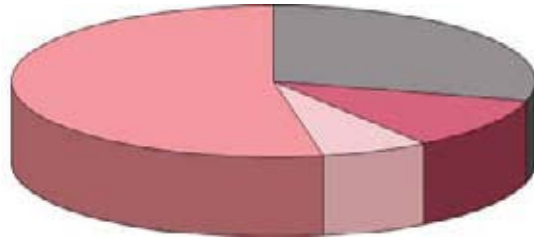
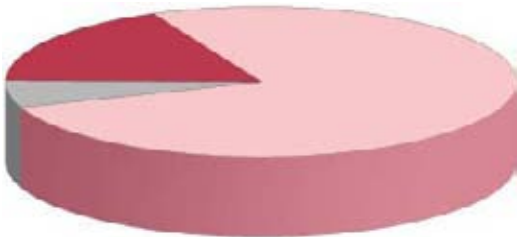
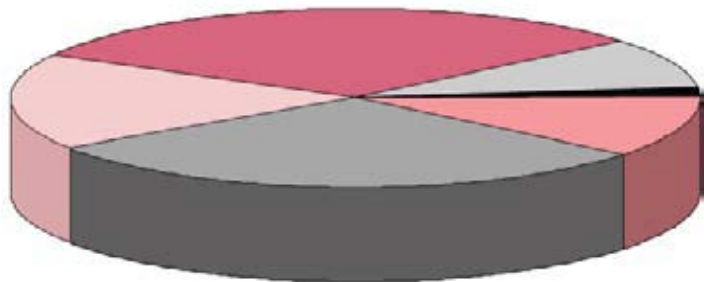
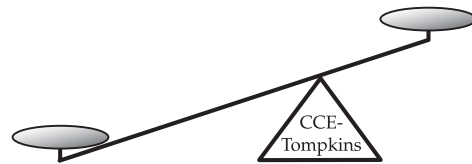
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