



focus on
EXPLORATION!

the Learning Web

Learning by doing...youth becoming adults

From the Executive Director's Desk

Years ago I had just moved to the Adirondack Mountains and was looking for a trout stream on which to spend some time fishing. I searched in a variety of areas and though I ran into some dead ends, I finally found a small mountain brook that was full of native trout. Coincidentally, at about the same time in my life I was looking for a career change and considering a number of options. I explored every lead and idea that seemed probable, and while some of my searching didn't lead to a change in my life, the process allowed me to experience a number of possibilities before making a move toward something that was enjoyable and beneficial. It's clear in the research on Youth Development that youth mature and transition from adolescence to adulthood more easily if they connect with an adult and get their help in exploring their community, and learning all that is available.

Here at The Learning Web we're all about youth exploration; helping youth of Tompkins County explore their areas of interest. Sometimes the exploration takes them to areas

that had seemed very exciting, only to find out that they are not interested in the field. Other times their search ends in a lifelong pursuit of a career.

This newsletter highlights several youth and their respective exploration journeys. It also debuts a name change for our Community & Career Exploration & Apprenticeship Program. To better communicate the program's focus, we are now calling it the Youth Exploration Program. Same great services, a simpler name, the Youth Exploration Program is still about providing opportunities for youth to make discoveries about careers, life, and the future.

As we approach the New Year, The Learning Web and our Youth Exploration Program and Youth Outreach Program wish youth and adults alike a year filled with new discoveries and fulfilling twists and turns on life's journey.

Dale C. Nicholson



"You're going there to learn about what you could do in the future, you look around at other people and think, maybe that could be me someday."

Arthur Campello

Apprentice,
Cornell High Energy Synchrotron Source. p.2



"Don't shut yourself off to opportunity... if there's an opportunity, take it... the experiences you have tell a lot about you."

Melcolm Crutchfeld

Apprentice,
Finger Lakes Land Trust, p.2

The Youth Exploration

EXPANDING HORIZONS, EXPLORING CAREERS

The Youth Exploration Program (f...
is a vehicle for young people to ste...
community by participating in app...
activities. Join us as we hear abo...

Melcolm Crutchfeld— Path to Great Basin Starts at The Learning Web

Melcolm Crutchfeld was looking for a generic job experience when he came to The Learning Web. Learning that he loved working outdoors and was ‘trying to understand the ecosystem,’ Web staff designed an apprenticeship at the Finger Lakes Land Trust that built on Melcolm’s interests, transforming them into an abiding passion that Melcolm pursued with fervor, leading to his recent appointment as a “Noxious Weed Botany Technician” at the federal government’s Great Basin Institute in Nevada.

We recently caught up with Melcolm when he contacted us to check on the dates of his Web apprenticeship so he could complete his federal employment application. Melcolm told us that after his Web apprenticeship with the Land Trust, he set his sites on a B.S. in Conservation Biology from SUNY Cortland. His focused passion resulted in an impressive list of internships: New York State Parks, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Florida.

Melcom sees his current Great Basin work as another important step in the journey that began with his Web apprenticeship. “I want to work on [a] masters and then see if I can go ahead and earn a Ph.D. As for my masters I may even switch over and study fungi. This interest started after I took a course in fungi . . . I think fungi are very beautiful [and] there are a lot out there that need to be named and classified so they can be used as indicators for pollution. . .” And Melcolm thinks research will be as rewarding as field work: “Even though you don’t get results from the data instantly, just knowing that what you’re doing can help answer bigger questions...”

For Learning Web staff, learning about Malcolm’s post-high school efforts is what makes our day: a fulfilling career and work for a better world—all sparked by a Learning Web apprenticeship.

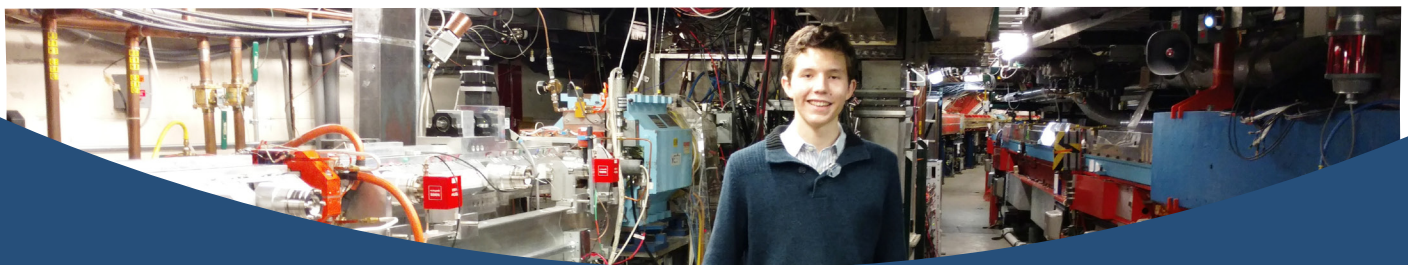


Arthur Campello— High Energy Exploration!

Sometimes veteran mentors turn to the Web when a promising youth approaches and expresses interest in ‘getting involved.’ When the Cornell High Energy Synchrotron Source (CHESS) was approached by Ithaca High student Arthur Campello, the staff at CHESS was impressed, and they suggested that Campello work with the Web to establish an internship. The result, says Campello, was “amazing.”

Campello’s interests were a strong match with the work of CHESS. Campello had taught himself 3-D computer modeling and was ‘hoping to gain some experience’ by interning at CHESS. Working with Professor Aaron Lyndaker as his mentor, he got that experience and much more. The apprenticeship at CHESS, “was different from what I thought it would be,” said Campello. “Originally . . . I thought that I’d be behind a desk 3-D modeling.” But real-time immersion in real CHESS projects meant that Campello’s activities and learning evolved as project needs evolved. While there was plenty of 3-D modeling, Campello plowed new ground: “Sometimes I actually built things with my hands— I didn’t expect to do that— things I didn’t even think I could do.” Not surprisingly, project immersion had academic dividends: “I was able to learn a lot about very advanced fields.”

While Campello brought unique talents and experience to CHESS, the results of his apprenticeship exemplify a key Learning Web goal for all apprenticeships: “You’re going there to learn about what you could do in the future,” says Campello, “you look around at other people and think, maybe that could be me someday.”



Program

formerly known as the Community & Career Exploration & Apprenticeship Program, CCEAP) help youth step out into the adult world; exploring their interests, gaining new skills, and contributing to our community through apprenticeships, community/career exploration tours, community service projects and life skills training based on their exciting experiences.

Checking Things Out

"I don't really know what I want to do for a job but I have a lot of things I want to check out." Most of the young people in the Youth Exploration Program feel this way when they first meet with our staff. It is the perfect time to see what's out there, talk to experts who are working in fields that interest a youth.

The Exploration Program taps into a rich resource in our community: people who make room in their day to welcome a young person into their place of work. The Web's Exploration Coordinators design hour-long work-site tours that enable youth to move beyond a hazy knowledge about the jobs that peak their interest. The 'hosts' provide an on-the-ground perspective on their work: discussing the day-to-day activities, why they like their work, how they got there, and the best way to get into the field.



Exploration activities top to bottom: Dr. Jamie Loehr at Cayuga Family Medicine; Covance Inc (nutritional chemistry & food safety firm); Dryden Fire & Ambulance; Life Skills Culinary class; Dr. Tim Boniwell of Finger Lakes Oral Surgery.

Finding the Spark



“

I liked how much information he gave me and how he made me think about what I want to do. He helped me 100%.

-Exploration tour participant

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The Youth Outreach Program serves young people ages 16-24 who are living independently (i.e. separate from a parent or guardian) and are having difficulty obtaining stable and safe housing. Youth Outreach staff provide daily support, independent living skills, training and employment-related apprenticeships to those young people— a powerful combination allowing these youth to better focus their energies on setting goals and moving towards self-sufficiency. For some youth, there is another boost towards self-sufficiency: the Youth Outreach Program's Housing Scholarship Program, a transitional housing program that enables youth to work towards educational and employment goals without the burden of finding a place to sleep at night. Our Youth Outreach participants are strong and resilient young adults who work hard to create a good life for themselves.

A collage of various posters and advertisements. The posters include:

- "The Art of You" with the text "MAKING MONEY" and "QUALITY TIME".
- "help Forward" with "Your School" and "LETTERS".
- "DON'T STRESS IT" with "THE MORE OF LIFE YOU LIVE THE MORE OF LIFE THERE IS ALWAYS ANOTHER CHANCE".
- "Life is Better" with "Take a STAND".
- "philosophy: the best is yet to come".
- "notice energy".
- "Every Woman Has a Story" with "The Best of Me".
- "FOOD" with "BUSINESS".
- "PERFECTION".

Since I started this program I have really started thinking about my future. . . I mean I never would have started my GED on my own. I can't wait to go to my own apartment, make something to eat, take a long hot shower and sleep in my own bed.

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