



focus on Perseverance

the Learning Web

Learning by doing...youth becoming adults

Breaking Barriers Through Perseverance

How did you develop perseverance? Did someone take the time to listen, understand, and problem solve with you, enabling growth and learning through mistakes? At the Learning Web, we foster perseverance so that youth can overcome the setbacks that life will surely throw at them on the way to achieving their goals.

The Learning Web staff help overcome challenges and inspire youth to pursue their goals. We develop the strengths that each individual possesses and create learning experiences tailored to their unique needs and ambitions. This year the Youth Exploration Program assisted school age youth with the perseverance to explore career interests both in person and virtually, additionally engaging them in our Volunteer Community Service Program. The Life Skills Program focused on the strengths of youth and young adults, supporting them on their journey to adulthood. The Youth Outreach Program continued to build a foundation of stability for dozens of unhoused youth to achieve independence and thrive in our community. The Learning Web motto: Learning by doing...youth becoming adults – exemplifies the need for youth to interact with their community to adapt and learn. Success is often shaped from overcoming obstacles and gaining the confidence to take on new challenges. We celebrate youth when they experience success and remain committed to youth through life's ups and downs to help guide them along their journey.

Since 1972 we have created an interconnected web of mentors, community partners, and supporters like you. We have helped thousands of young people explore their career interests, achieve independence, and realize their dreams. We look to play a part in a thousand more success stories. Please consider supporting the perseverance that our youth and staff show up with every day.

Thank you,

Richard Alwood



United Way
of Tompkins County

FUNDED PARTNER

"I have always wanted to learn from an Artist, this was so fun. I would love more supplies so that I can work on some canvases on my own. I like how he talked about how we are doing the same painting but everyone's will look different based on personal expression."

-- Housing Scholarship participant



Housing Scholarship participants adapted to virtual monthly meetings, enjoying cooking classes, paint nights, and more. Pictured above, Douglas LaFave of DJL Creations leading a painting class over Zoom.

Cover: Volunteer Community Service Program (VCSP) participants cleaning up the Cayuga Lake Waterfront Trail



Building Perseverance

Dedicated to the Future—



"I want my daughter to be proud of me. I also learned things take time and good outcomes might not be overnight. I have become more patient." -- Desiree, Supporting Strong Families participant

The Learning Web introduced the Supporting Strong Families service in partnership with The Advocacy Center two years ago. Since then, young parents in Tompkins County have been supported with education and resources for their little ones.

23-year-old Desiree sought services from the Learning Web as a young mom. She felt like she was running in circles and her Case Manager, Ryan, assisted by transforming goals into action. Desiree is grateful for the support, "I really appreciate having someone who encourages me but also will hold me accountable so that I achieve my goals." One of the biggest changes she experienced was becoming an advocate for herself.

In addition to obtaining life and parenting skills through this service, Desiree also secured a Section 8 voucher and moved into a safe, clean apartment with her new baby.

Another bonus, her daughter is now enrolled in Head Start, giving Desiree peace-of-mind knowing her daughter is well cared for while Desiree is at work.



Home is Where Persistence Lives—

Learning Web staff never give up when working to secure a home for Tompkins County Youth



Sereniti, Learning Web Life Skills participant

According to The Downtown Ithaca Housing Demand Study conducted by the Danter Company, "Downtown Ithaca currently has a low vacancy rate, extremely high rents, and an ability to readily absorb new units in the marketplace." Finding a safe, affordable apartment can be challenging at any age, but especially for youth living on their own for the first time. We're fortunate in Tompkins County to have subsidized housing resources like Family Unification Program vouchers (FUP), Emergency Services Grant (ESG), Solutions to End Homelessness Program (STEHP), Housing Choice vouchers (Section 8), affordable housing, and supportive housing complexes. However, filling out multiple applications and understanding the qualifications can feel overwhelming. Learning Web Case Managers for both the Life Skills and Youth Outreach Programs assist dozens of participants with securing housing annually.

When Alice came to the Learning Web two years ago, she was experiencing homelessness and was at a loss for how to begin the process for finding a stable living situation. She received support from her Learning Web Case Manager with navigating financial assistance applications and apartment listings. Her Case Manager was able to leverage Learning Web community partnerships with other organizations that provide assistance with housing subsidies, resulting in finding stable housing. "With the help of The Learning Web, I have been able to live in my own apartment in a great location, find a job within the area, go back to school, and achieved my goal of increasing my savings," recalls Alice.

For 20-year old Sereniti, securing a FUP voucher and an affordable apartment was just the first step, "Now that my housing is stable, I

would say that I am learning how to save and budget and basically be a mature adult. I am still learning, which is why it's nice to continue to have support from [my Case Manager] Rebekah." When reflecting on her time with the Learning Web so far, she shares, "My experience has been positive and uplifting and if you're feeling like no one is on your side, go to the LW. Go because they want to help and they are caring."

One of the most inspiring aspects of the Tompkins County youth we work with is the enthusiasm for helping their peers. When asked if they would recommend the Learning Web to a friend, these were their responses:

"Yes, I have recommended it already to a lot of my friends if they need support." -- Sereniti

"Absolutely. I think there are lots of people my age that would benefit from this program. The Learning Web has given me

tremendous support in gaining security in housing, job searching, education, and health/wellness." -- Alice

With the financial assistance of supporters like you, the Learning Web continues to be the leader in our community for providing safe, stable housing for youth experiencing homelessness.



Learning Web Youth Outreach participant Kelvin moving into his new apartment



Alice, Learning Web Youth Outreach participant



2Eleven Beauty Bar opened its doors to the public this year. Located in the Dewitt Mall, former Transitional Living Program (TLP) participant Simone and her sister Shawana offer clients a wide spectrum of personalized products and services.

Alumni Achievements

Surviving to Thriving—

In 2011, upon graduating from Monroe Community College in Rochester, Simone moved back to Ithaca, her hometown. Due to unforeseen circumstances, Simone had nowhere to live upon her return. She reached out to the Learning Web and we were able to help! Simone was one of our first TLP participants. Fast forward to the present, Simone is a single mom, co-parenting her 3-year old son Brix. She is a business owner with her sister, Shawana, recently opening 2Eleven Beauty Bar. In addition to launching her first business, Simone also graduated from the Continental School of Beauty in Syracuse, NY, all while juggling parenting and a full-time job.

Simone recalls her time with the Learning Web fondly, "You guys helped me budget! I needed that. I saved money so that when I left [the TLP] I was able to stand on my own two feet. I attended the meetings. It was good for me to have the support at that time in my life. My mom had just moved to Florida and I was working as a CNA so having the support helped me in my transition to adulthood."

Learning Web

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The Community Pull—



From pulling weeds, to scrubbing the Floating Classroom deck, participants in our Summer Volunteer Community Service Program (VCSP) worked tirelessly to give back to our community.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused us to cancel last year's VCSP. At the Learning Web, we cautiously teamed up with invaluable local partners such as the Family Reading Partnership, Discover Cayuga Lake Boat Tours, the YMCA, Ithaca Children's Garden, and more -- and together we persevered with a safe and successful program of youth giving back to the community. Our Summer VCSP participants (ages 12-17) cleaned up trash and weeds from local parks, removed invasive plant species from Cayuga Lake and public gardens, helped clear trees from outdoor recreation areas, and bonded with one another over the hard work it takes to keep our community spaces beautiful and clean.



The program culminated in youth participants leading fundraisers. Their creativity and determination resulted in donating over \$300 to both the Ithaca Free Clinic and the SPCA of Tompkins County.

Bright Spot During the Pandemic—

"After a year spent lazily indoors due to the pandemic, VCSP provided lots of time outdoors doing work in a variety of settings. Every day I felt that the team contributed to improving the sites we visited (laying down mulch, clearing weeds, etc.). I like that this was not a summer camp but a true volunteer opportunity with great people." -- James, Summer VCSP participant



VCSP summer participants organized and led community fundraisers.

Serving Tompkins County since 1972

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