



# The Learning Web

LEARNING BY DOING—YOUTH BECOMING ADULTS

FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER

*focus on*

## Building Community —

### From the Executive Director's Desk

Bricks and mortar, and governmental departments, and human service organizations, and businesses, and news media, and law makers all help to build community. But, probably most important in this construction of community is relationships.

So, what does Esquire magazine have in common with The Learning Web? The answer is a belief in the power of mentoring to build a strong community where young and old come together, where wisdom and support are passed on to the younger generation who in turn will pass it on to future generations. Esquire, the nationally recognized men's magazine, debuted their "Mentoring Project" website in October (check it out at [www.mentoring.esquire.com](http://www.mentoring.esquire.com).) Through print and video, Carmelo Anthony, Tyler Perry, Congressman John Lewis and over 50 accomplished men talk about the mentors who helped shape their lives.

We applaud Esquire's efforts as we at The Learning Web have, for more than 42 years, believed in the power of bringing youth and adults together to grow and learn from each other. We believe that the connections between young people and adults are essential to build a strong community. This newsletter highlights young people and adults who recognize the importance of building community. As you read this issue, we invite you to ask yourself, "Who made me the person I am today?" We also invite you to seek out ways of using your gifts, talents and skills through apprenticing or mentoring to build our community.

Warm Regards,

Dale C. Schumacher



Youth Outreach Dad, Steffan Walker, displays the baby quilt he chose for his child. The quilts were crafted by community members and given to the United Way to distribute to our newest community members.

## Preparing for a Career Helping People Heal—



“As a child I loved to visit the NYC Museum of Natural History’s sections about animals and evolution and the bones and that sort of thing,” said Marisol Salomon, pictured at left, who is now studying health sciences at Boston University.” We caught up with past apprentice, Marisol, when she stopped by our office last summer. Her love of the world of human biology and anatomy led her from just looking at displays of anatomy to taking biology classes and finally getting hands-on experience through a Learning Web apprenticeship while she was in high school. “Biology has always been my favorite subject and the human body aspect and muscles and bones have always been my favorite part. And that’s a big part of rehabilitation!”

Marisol chose to apprentice at Cayuga Medical Center’s Physical Therapy Center at Island Health & Fitness with mentor, Kerry Peters. “Jorge [LW staffer] and I went to visit a couple of physical therapy places,” Marisol said, “and I chose to apprentice at Island because I could see more there. It’s larger and I could have a broader experience. I was also interested in seeing more athletes and Island has a decent amount of athletes that get PT there . . . it has a wide variety of people from the elderly to teenagers in high school or little kids even.” Kerry Peters and Island’s other physical therapists opened up the world of PT for Marisol. “I actually found out that there were a lot of PT areas,” Marisol recalled. “I actually didn’t realize that you can specialize in different things. Island has really great variety in its staff where they have someone specializing in hand PT, lower extremity, upper extremity, spinal stuff and feet stuff. I didn’t realize that I could choose one of those and really deal with a lot of patients specifically on that.” Marisol’s thoughts for her future? “I do love what I’ve learned so far . . . my goal is to go to PT school after college. I’m not sure of what I’ll specialize in. Way in the future, after years of PT under my belt, I would like to open my own PT office. But that would be after working for quite awhile.”

Marisol’s fascination with human anatomy has grown into a passion for helping people. Her mentors fueled that passion and we know that the community will be enriched by the gifts that Marisol will bring as a Physical Therapist.



**Laps for Trees!** The group planned a walkathon where they pledged to run or walk a lap for every dollar raised. By the end of the fund raiser, they raised over \$200 to plant trees and collectively ran farther than a marathon!

## Learning Web Summer Volunteer Community Service Groups Hold Fundraisers to Support Community Causes



Flipping pancakes helped raise funds for the victims of the Simeon’s Restaurant accident. The group put together a brunch for family and friends, selling tickets for \$5 and auctioning off youths’ original drawings. They raised close to \$300, which was all donated directly to the accident fund run by the Downtown Ithaca Alliance.



## Building Community One Sandwich at a Time!—



Al and Cindy Smith are best known for the amazing sandwiches that they sell at their 36-year-old business—Shortstop Deli. But what you may not know about Al and Cindy is their even more amazing philosophy of doing business. A philosophy that benefits everyone who lives in our community and especially the young people whose lives they touch. Through our Youth Outreach Program, we have worked with many young people who have been given a chance to work at Shortstop Deli. Often, these youth are going through tough times and they make mistakes. Al and Cindy, and Shortstop's Manager, Chuck Dong, support them and help them learn and grow from their mistakes.

Al and Chuck took a break recently and spoke with Executive Director Dale Schumacher about business, youth, and our community. Al learned about business through his father and grandfather, who he feels were his most important mentors. "As a teenager, I swept the floors of my father's warehouse. Both were self-employed so the idea of being an entrepreneur wasn't strange to me, Al recalled. What was the inspiration for Shortstop's creation? Al's response reflects more pragmatism than inspiration, "It really started out as a convenience store and the sandwiches were selling so well that it evolved into more of a sandwich shop and less of a convenience store."

But that's not all that changed. "There was a time when we sold almost everything under the sun" Al said, "we consciously made a decision not to sell beer, tobacco or lotto tickets. This was in support of the community because Ithaca does not support beer and tobacco in a store where youth go all of the time." Al and Cindy did not want to be a part of poisoning their community. In developing the business over time, Al felt "It was important to be a part of the community and as a part of the community they like to feel that their staff reflects the community." Chuck jumped in to add, "People sometimes underestimate the generosity of spirit that Al and Cindy have and how much they care about youth and helping them to succeed." Chuck's comment speaks volumes about Al and Cindy as human beings and certainly reflects on their generosity to the community. Whether it is through financial support (The Learning Web is able to buy discounted sandwich coupons to feed hungry homeless youth who stop by our Youth Outreach Program) or their commitment to employing youth, staying with them and being a real mentor, Shortstop and Al and Cindy truly are building community!



Al Smith co-owns the Shortstop Deli with wife Cindy. Al, left, is pictured here with Shortstop's awesome Manager, Chuck Dong.

### On Working at Shortstop: a Youth Outreach Young Person's View

We asked a formerly homeless Youth Outreach participant to comment on working at Shortstop:

" Cindy and Al . . . They really are some amazing people. I spent a good eight years of my life with them. They watched me grow into the young adult that I am today. Al was always very caring of my personal well being when things in my life got way hectic and offered many opportunities to chat and confide in him if need be. Ah . . . Cindy . . . We definitely have shared some intense moments together over the years. She was always caring and supportive of me and with everything I was trying to accomplish. I feel my experience at Shortstop really did help me grow, Cindy especially supported my hard work ethic by allowing me to be crazy with school and volunteer work and with everything I was doing while personally correcting my mistakes made at work and being supportive of my flaws and took the time to also listen to my crazy problems. She was always willing to work with my busy schedule and even still tried to maximize my hours because she knew I needed the money.

They are pretty flexible with hours and scheduling which I really needed at that time. I can't tell you how many times I came to work not feeling well and Cindy went out of her way to make sure I was eating and drinking and taking care of myself. Cindy really is a loving person who was like a second mother to me when I was growing up.

I can't tell you how many times I personally witnessed Cindy and Al contributing to the community by handing out free sandwich coupons not only anytime the customer wasn't satisfied but also in many cases where a person was unable to cover the price of their order in full. Ahh . . . she has a good heart THEY BOTH DO! "

**"I feel my experience  
at Shortstop really  
did help me grow."**

# Building Community —

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## Beginnings & Endings— a Summer of Growth

A summer learning about living and dying. Fran Cannon, age 13, was following her Mom's suggestion that she step out of her comfort zone when Fran embarked on a Learning Web apprenticeship in July. Learning to cultivate dahlias or fight pests feasting on squash was only part of her apprenticeship in the Hospicare Gardens with gifted gardener and mentor, Lisa Miller. Fran, in the early stage of her life, joined a community of adults: those in the midst of their lives like Lisa and other Hospicare staff, and also those at the end of their lives—the residents. "This garden," Fran pointed out, "it's not just about plants and stuff, it's about the people here. It's not just a garden—it is a really special place for the people at Hospicare."

When deciding on the interest area she wanted to explore, Fran thought about things she loved doing including baking and gardening. "I always gardened with my mom and dad in my backyard," she said. "I help them do the landscaping around the house. I think of it as both a hobby and possibly a career—I like landscaping but right now I don't know what I want to do when I grow up." Fran and Lisa worked together on the extensive grounds around the Hospicare residence. "It's really fun, I love it!" Fran recounted. "At first I thought I would just garden and walk around but the garden really does have an importance to the people staying here. The residents, I see them walking in the garden. I know my grandma likes to get out and walk. This is really a special place. I think it's really cool that I get to help out and make it beautiful so the residents can get outside and enjoy the gardens."

Mentor, Lisa Miller, thoroughly enjoyed collaborating with Fran in the gardens, "I was so pleased with how the experience evolved," said Lisa. "What a great fit, we've found out we have a lot of similar interests—badminton and a love of zinnias! I was impressed with Fran's abilities, her friendliness and genuine care of all living things. Fran learned about Hospicare and became more comfortable around residents and learned so many things about life and death at Hospicare and in the garden." Fran agreed, "I haven't really experienced anyone dying in my family. I have patience for a person in a wheel chair, it's kind of like some people wouldn't be able to be with them, but I am fine with it." As for the future, Fran said, yes gardening and helping at Hospicare is definitely something I want to keep doing. At first I thought I'd do it for just the summer but I really like it and can't imagine doing it any other place."

Hospicare's tagline—"It's About How You Live"—captures the essence of Fran's apprenticeship experience. Fran learned about beginnings and endings and that she could, indeed, move out of her comfort zone and thrive. Fran became a part of the community at the Hospicare residence, enriching both the residents' surroundings and her own life.



Fran Cannon, left, and mentor Lisa Miller enjoy the beauty their efforts produced in the Hospicare Gardens.

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Saturday, December 6  
11 AM to 6 PM  
First Presbyterian & First Baptist Churches  
In Dewitt Park, downtown Ithaca  
[www.ithacaaltgiftfair.org](http://www.ithacaaltgiftfair.org)