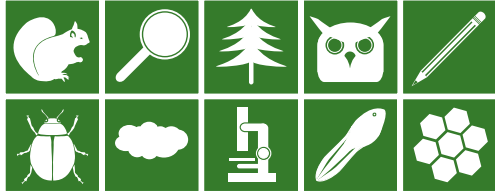


## SCIENCE FIRSTHAND PARTNERS IN DISCOVERY



# NEWSLETTER

## Winter 2010

### Science Symposium:

The advent of shorter days and wintry temperatures marked the completion of the Human Anatomy and Physiology class at **Canisius College**, and the first pilot test of the mentoring partnership there with **Science Firsthand**. To celebrate this rewarding collaboration, a Science Symposium was held in the Student Center at **Canisius College** on December 5th, 2009. Over 60 people attended the symposium, where the youth who had worked with college student mentors presented posters describing their favorite investigations and what they learned. The middle school youth who attended had a wonderful time seeing their mentors again and taking apart the models of human organs that were arranged about the room. Two girls from the **Belle Center** shrieked in unison when told that the bus was outside, "Do we have to leave?!"

This partnership was such a success that **Dr. Ann Wright** wishes to incorporate service learning into the second part of the Human Anatomy and Physiology class. **Science Firsthand** and the community centers are very pleased to have these mentors for another semester.



### Field Trips:

**The Belle Center:** Those involved with the science program at the **Belle Center** were invited to meet staff at the **FBI** center downtown. Youth had an opportunity to speak with professionals about crime scene protocol, how evidence is collected, and what it is like to be an **FBI** agent. Program manager **Chrissy Calixte** was excited to show the visiting youth that science is the basis of numerous professions. She remarked, "the entire time I kept thinking about what a major role science plays in the career of **FBI** agents." **Chrissy** is planning a follow-up demonstration when the agents will come to the center and provide forensic activities to engage **SF** participants.

**Valley Community Association:** Over winter break, program managers **Craig Gusmann** and **Anthony Orlowski** took youth sledding at **Chestnut Ridge Park**. Although **Science Firsthand** did not plan the event, the managers created an investigation for the students to explore. **Anthony** and **Craig** sprayed some silicone on a few of the sleds and had the kids rate the speed of these compared

to sleds without the compound. The overall excitement of sledding prevented the managers from receiving any hard data, but the youth believe the silicone increased the speed of the sled!

**The Valley** also traveled to the **Buffalo Museum of Science** on an early dismissal day during the month of January. About 50 youth and 10 chaperones were in attendance. The kids really enjoyed a new exhibit called "Good Vibrations" as well as the Connections Center, where they could engage in hands-on demonstrations to explore science. A scavenger hunt within the museum concluded this fun-filled field trip.

**Seneca Street United Methodist Church** and **Gloria Parks:** **Chris Scibilia**, program manager at the **Seneca Street United Methodist Church**, arranged to have three **B-Boys** give a presentation at **Gloria J. Parks**. **B-Boys** are break-dancers within the city of Buffalo who educate their community about the sport, the purpose and the physical fitness required.

Youth from the **Church** and from **Gloria Parks** were invited to attend the event and all were awestruck by the performance. The quote of the evening was "Wow, how do they do that?" The **B-Boys** replied that it takes lots of practice and physical fitness but it also takes a basic knowledge of physics too. **Chris** is hoping to examine the physics

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Science Firsthand is an NSF-sponsored project that provides urban community centers with a unique resource for involving middle school youth with science during out-of-school time; opportunities for hands-on, student driven investigation through a mentoring relationship.



Contact Jacqueline Malay at [malay\\_ja@yahoo.com](mailto:malay_ja@yahoo.com); or call 831-8722. If you are thinking about becoming a mentor, feel free to join us.



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in future science sessions to give the youth a better understanding of the sport.

### Awards and Donations:

Erie County Youth Bureau has awarded Science Firsthand a grant of \$12,250 to fund AmeriCorps staff in 2010. Marilyn Sozanski and Becky Roes wrote the request last July with the intention of creating more science programs with additional program managers to facilitate the sessions. The money will pay for two fulltime AmeriCorps staff and two AmeriCorps Recovery staff.

Matt Urban gave the Polonia and Dulski SF labs \$1,400 each to buy science books. Jenn and Alexia have been busy coming up with a list of books that will allow youth to research topics of interest, to use field guides, and to read for pleasure. The lab room at Polonia has been moved upstairs and given a fresh coat of paint, just in time to receive the new donations.

Seneca Street United Methodist Church was awarded \$2,400 to aid the Seneca Street Community Development Co-Ed Basketball League. Chris Scibilia and Cheryl Bird wrote the proposal and are thrilled to have received the funds. The league should begin practice and games at the end of January.

Key Bank Foundation gave Science Firsthand \$10,000 to finance AmeriCorps volunteers. With the growth of the Science Firsthand program, this donation will allow community centers to continue to have a staff member who is in charge of facilitating their science program.

Gloria Parks received an anonymous donation of microscopes, animals and dissection kits. All members of the Collaborative will benefit from these resources.

### Spring 2010:

Spring 2010 is gearing up to be a busy semester with up to five service learning classes running and a new program starting. Students in several classes that partnered with Science Firsthand in the past still want to participate in our program and several professors, having heard of Science Firsthand opportunities, have inquired about forming connections.

Science Firsthand is pleased to begin partnering with an animal dissection program at Medaille College. Youth have shown interest in animals for quite some time and several veterinary tech students have volunteered to mentor them. Science Firsthand hopes to begin this program in the middle of February.

### Good-bye Miss Stephanie:

An Interview with Stephanie Sears, At-Large Program Manager.

*Q: What was your favorite part about working with the Science Firsthand Program?*

A: My favorite part was having complete creative control over programming and working with great kids.

*Q: What was the most valuable lesson you learned this past year?*

A: I learned how to live modestly.

*Q: Did you acquire any new skills through working with SF?*

A: Definitely. I acquired managerial, organizational and conflict resolution skills.

Stephanie worked at St. Monica's, St. Augustine, Polonia, Dulski, Gloria J. Parks, Elmwood Village Charter School and HOPE Refugee services. Stephanie's last day was December 18 and she will truly be missed.