

SCIENCE FIRSTHAND PARTNERS IN DISCOVERY



NEWSLETTER

Fall 2009

The **Science Firsthand Collaborative of Buffalo** has been humming along at its sites since school started in September. Last year at this time, the Collaborative was excited to have 3 full-time SF Managers. This year the Collaborative has 9 full-time SF Managers at sites throughout the city of Buffalo.

New Managers

Anthony Orłowski is the program manager for **Science Firsthand** at the **Valley Community Association**. He has his BA in Biology but also has interest and experience in the other sciences, as well as the arts. Travel, exploration, and gaining new knowledge always drive him, and he is constantly searching out his next adventure. Anthony has spent the past few years working with children, but SF marks his first endeavor into science-related mentoring. He considers himself a co-investigator, and always finds time and ways to learn new things from his peers as well as from the youth with whom he works.

Craig Gusmann is a recent graduate of UB's Media Study program. While he has no formal background in science, keeping current with scientific discoveries and trend. Astronomy and technology are areas he finds particularly interesting. He hopes to spark the flame of curiosity in the kids he works with and make them question the things they're told, instead of just accepting things as true with no evidence.

Alexia Palladino is **Science Firsthand's** newest **AmeriCorps ABLÉ** Manager. While her hometown is San Diego, CA, she moved across the nation to work for us in Buffalo. She has had the opportunity to travel abroad and work with children of all cultures. Her favorite excursion was working with children in Russia where, "the kids stole my heart." She is very excited about the upcoming year with SF. She is most looking forward to, "learning about who I am, developing a sense of self, and snow." Alexia divides her time between the **Dulski** and **Polonia** centers.



Canisius Partnership:

This fall, we are working with a Human Anatomy and Physiology Service Learning class at **Canisius College**. **Professor Ann Wright**, asked **First Hand Learning** if her class could complete their service requirement through **Science Firsthand**. Forty students have been placed in seven of our community center partners. They spend ten weeks investigating topics related to sports performance with their middle school partners.

As a part of the course, several **Canisius** students took their mentees to the **Buffalo Museum of Science** to view "**Body Worlds**." The exhibit offered eye-catching, and interactive displays of muscles, bodies and tissues.

The youth involved in SF are very receptive to their mentors. "The kids ... are so happy to see us because we are there specifically for them," said **Douglas Tay**, a mentor at the Valley. Because the relationships that have formed between each team are strong and supportive ones, the partnership with Professor Wright's Service Learning course will continue in the spring semester.

The teams will end the fall sessions with a **Science Symposium** at **Canisius College**, where the youth will display their investigations to the **Canisius College** community, to other teams working in different centers, and to their parents. The event will take place on **Saturday December 5th** at **12pm**.

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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; or call 831-8722. If you are thinking about becoming a mentor, feel free to join us.



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Summer Prime Time Program:

The Science Firsthand Collaborative of Buffalo was launched this summer under the Erie County Prime Time Grant. The grant allowed youth to continue to participate in Science Firsthand during summer vacation and to go on field trips. The destinations ranged from an archeological site at Penn-Dixie to a tour of the FBI's local offices. Seven partnering sites participated in the joint field trips, allowing youth to mingle, explore and investigate together. There were a total of five field trips within five weeks and over 50 kids participated!

And the Winner is...

Brittany Hallman, age 11, took first prize at the Erie County Fair for her poster presentation on Japanese knotweed. Brittany and her mentor, Stephanie Sears, identified three different locations where the weed grew. Coordinates were acquired using GPS and later located on a map that accompanied pictures of the weed on each site. The team observed physical characteristics of the knotweed at each site and described its invasive habits. "As the knotweed grows, it knocks plants out of their habitat, killing them," explains Brittany.

First place came with a framed certificate and a check for \$50.00. Brittany gave half to the Dulski Community Center and is saving the rest. She is still undecided on what she plans to do with the remaining reward but wants to give it to a good cause.

The Valley Community Center was also awarded a Blue Ribbon for a poster presentation on a Track Box. Several youth worked with Jenn Pigeon to create the box, acquire the tracks, and correctly identify the animals that left prints. Jenn hopes to do another track box in the future.

Facts by numbers:

- Science Firsthand served 137 youth over the summer at 8 partnering community centers.
- This fall we are serving 288 youth during after school time. We currently have 13 sites offering Science Firsthand.
- The Science Firsthand Collaborative has 50 mentors who work with youth each week.
- We have 9 Science Firsthand managers running programs at our SF sites.

5 minutes with SF Manager Ashley Hackett at Babcock Street Clubhouse, B & GCB.

What college did you go to and what was your major?

-Houghton College and I majored in Art with a concentration in photography and painting.

What were some of your fondest memories of college?

-Traveling. I went to Eastern Europe to study art and architecture: Hungary, Turkey, and Austria. I would like to continue to travel in the future.

Any special talents?

-Well I play three instruments. I was taught how to play the violin and I taught myself how to play guitar and piano.

Future Aspirations?

-I am in the beginning phases of starting my own photography business. I have photographed several weddings and portraits and really want to have my own studio some day. Currently I make and sell handmade books and journals.

Fun facts?

-I have lived in the same house in Lancaster, NY my whole life, minus the four years at college.