



VEGETABLE GARDEN BUILT IN PLACE OF OLD GREENHOUSE

In the Spring 2011 newsletter we updated everyone on our greenhouse demolition project. The greenhouse, once attached to our building, was taken down due to structural issues. Once the greenhouse was taken down we planned to create five vegetable beds in the space. This past April, Alternative Property Management, a local company who we rely on when there are any issues with our building, came to us with some ideas. We told them our goals and ideal plans for the garden and they were on board with helping us make our dreams of creating vegetable beds a reality. They exceeded all of our expectations and were able to turn five vegetable beds into 10! They finished the garden within three days and left us in awe. We were thrilled with the finished product and cannot wait to start programming with our participants.

The 15-LOVE staff feel that these gardens will be a great way to teach our participants about the importance of growing healthy foods and how easy it can be. These beds will be cared for by our participants, many of whom live in apartments with little to no land of their own. Having vegetable beds at their “second home” will give them a sense of pride and ownership. We plan to partner with local gardening clubs to come in and teach the participants about the care of the vegetable beds and educate them on the seasons that vegetables can be grown. The participants will have the opportunity to choose the vegetables that are grown in each of the beds and the goal is to use some of the food that is grown at our healthy cooking classes, the rest for our participants to take home.

BEFORE



DURING

We encourage you to stop by the 15-LOVE office and see the new garden. You can also continue to check 15-LOVE's Facebook page with updates on the gardening programming and see pictures of the participants working hard at planting and caring for all the yummy fruits and vegetables we plan to start growing.

If you have any gardening tools that you no longer need, we are always in need of tools and supplies. Just contact the 15-LOVE office at 438-2039 and ask for Amber Marino, *Executive Director*, or Katie Genovese, *Development Director*.



AFTER

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15-LOVE GRADUATES CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2012!

Guilderland High School

Abhishek Paul will be attending SUNY Binghamton where he plans to major in Bio Engineering.

Columbia High School

Ian Castle will be attending Clarkson University where he plans to major in Engineering and Management.

Siena College

Jasmine Horton is graduating Magna Cum Laude with a degree in Accounting. Jasmine will be heading back to Siena this Fall to earn her Masters in Accounting.

Temple University

Jacob Kuhne is graduating with a degree in Film and Media Arts. Jacob plans to move to Los Angeles where he will be interviewing with Stereo d LLC, a company that converts film into 3D.

West Point Academy

Rumeal Lewis is graduating with a dual degree in Chinese and Defense and Strategic Studies. Rumeal will be reporting to Fort Rucker in Alabama to begin Flight School. Rumeal will be an Aviation Second Lieutenant flying helicopters for the Army.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



My mother has a knack for finding pennies. I don't know why or how, but she finds pennies wherever she goes.

My grandmother (father's mother) had an affinity for pennies and saved them in every kind of container she could find (my favorite was a huge pig painted black with flowers). She owned a little corner store in my small hometown that was next door to my house and she ran it until her late 80's when we had to force her to close it down after she fell and broke her hip. She had been legally blind for years and we have no idea how she could tell the difference between a one dollar bill and a twenty, but never doubted her ability to count pennies. I spent countless hours counting and rolling pennies with her in the back of that store. When Cabbage Patch dolls became the thing every little girl wanted, she gave me a Cabbage Patch doll bank where I could save the spare change she gave me for helping out at her store. Once I earned half the cost of a doll, I could get one. It took a while, but eventually I earned the \$20 I needed to get that doll and she is still on a shelf at my parent's house, well worn from years of play.

So, it should come as no surprise that at 15-LOVE we use pennies as prizes and incentives. Pennies don't get you as far today as they did when I was young, but they still get you somewhere, and if you accumulate enough of them, they surprise you. At our Book Clubs, I use pennies quite often and there is always

a kid who says something like "Pennies? That's it?" And I always say "Yes – just wait." It never takes long for that same kid to run up to me with excitement to show me how many pennies they have, then run off just as quickly to earn more. We use pennies for our egg hunt – we put rhyming words on plastic eggs and when the kids find a match, they get to keep the pennies inside. On trivia day, they earn a penny for every question they answer correctly (Do turtles have knees?), and can save their pennies or use them to "buy" school supplies. Only 2 kids (out of 36) saved their pennies this year – up from zero last year. I used to use stickers, little toys, or candy as prizes in place of these pennies, but realized that I didn't want to give them any more candy than they already have (it's a confusing message since we spend a lot of time talking about healthy living), the toys are expensive and stickers are gone by bedtime. More importantly, none of them were teaching much of a lesson.

My mother saves pennies for us to use in our programs, but we are running low. If anyone has pennies that need a good home, I have plenty of good homes for them, traveling in the pockets of second graders, and going to homes that need to watch every penny. I know I could walk into a bank and get all the pennies we need, but at 15-LOVE, we're all about family and in my family we collect them.

With kind regards,

Amber Marino
Amber Marino

HONORS RYAN ARTIS AS A CAPITAL HERO

15-LOVE Board member and alumnus Ryan Artis was recently honored as a Capital Hero selected by Capital Bank and New Channel

10 WTEN. Ryan was featured for his continuous volunteer work with the program and his love for the 15-LOVE Program. Ryan has been an integral part of the 15-LOVE family since he started

attending the program in 1996 at the age of 12.

Ryan is a 2001 graduate of Albany High School and earned his degree in Industrial Economics and Electrical Engineering from Union College in 2005. Ryan went on to law school at Case Western Reserve University and graduated in 2010. Ryan is currently an Intellectual Property Attorney at AngioDynamics in Latham and continues to volunteer his time with 15-LOVE.

TODAY'S TEENS, TOMORROW'S LEADERS

By: 15-LOVE Education Director, Maxine Brisport

The 15-LOVE program continues to provide students with the opportunity to learn leadership skills in an environment that is emotionally supportive and provides practical support. The program continues to meet on Tuesday afternoons for local high school students and on Friday evenings for the members of the 15-LOVE Excellence Program. The Tuesday afternoon group was recently enhanced with the addition of students from a specialized educational environment, St. Anne's Institute in Albany. These students will fully participate in the leadership program with the goal of helping them develop healthier personal relationships; develop a positive and realistic vision for the future and to interact with the community through civic engagement. Both sessions are always provided with many college preparatory activities.

A combination of students from both sessions attended the Leadership Weekend Getaway from April 20-22, 2012 at Camp Fowler. They participated in team building exercises, along with activities that required specific leadership skills. The general purpose of the 'Leadership Retreat' is to provide a comfortable and relaxed environment where the participants practiced and used the skills they were taught throughout the course of the program. The primary goals of the weekend were for students to participate in sessions of leadership development, develop a community project, to improve communication skills, and to get to know each other.

Secondary goals for the retreat were to enthuse, strengthen and empower the participants through individual and group challenges, reflection, and discussion. Specifically, they were given the opportunity to explore effective ways to deal with problems, communicate with each other and to work in teams. The participants were also encouraged to develop an individual leadership skill that they would like to improve.

The *Today's Teens, Tomorrow's Leaders* program was utilized throughout the weekend. An emphasis was placed on the public speaking and presentation skills. Presentation skills are essential to leadership, and during the weekend the students had several opportunities to give extemporaneous speeches while they practiced the persuasive skills of eye contact, movement, and vocal variety. The participants had the pleasure of the visit of Mr. Herb Shultz (Board President of 15-LOVE) for lunch on day two of the retreat. They were excited to practice their presentation skills for Mr. Shultz. A lively discussion was held with Mr. Shultz regarding the qualities of leadership and the importance of community service. It was obvious that all participants overcame their fears/obstacles as they utilized effective communication skills.

Day two of the three day retreat also involved teambuilding exercises at Camp Fowler. The participants had a blast! They particularly enjoyed the scavenger hunt activity, which culminated with a performance (final presentation) that incorporated all the items found during the scavenger hunt. The final presentation reiterated many of the leadership themes that were used throughout the retreat.

Overall, two of the most important lessons learned during the course were self-confidence, and goal setting. All participants completed an evaluation that measured specific skills before and after the retreat. The evaluation results indicated a significant increase in all the skills that were targeted by the retreat.

If you are interested in volunteering with the Leadership Training Program or 15-LOVE's College Prep Program run by Maxine, please contact the 15-LOVE office at 438-2039.



'LIKE' 15-LOVE ON FACEBOOK!



See the happenings of 15-LOVE, check up on upcoming events and enjoy pictures from participant outings and so much more!

It's simple, simply type in *15-Love* in the search box and look for the one that says Non-Profit Organization. Once you double click on that link, our page will appear. At the top of the page you'll see the like button and just click on it!

MY SOUTH AMERICAN JOURNEY



Andrea Carrillo started participating with 15-LOVE when she moved to the United States at the age of 9. Andrea is currently earning her BFA in Graphic Design at SUNY New Paltz and plans to graduate in December 2013. Andrea continues to work summers at 15-LOVE and looks forward to telling the kids about her journey.

I was always interested in studying abroad, and once I got to college and realized all the options I had available, I was even more intrigued by this opportunity. I always knew I wanted to go to South America, even

though each country is different, they all share a culture similar to my own. Since I had never lived in a big city, I knew that Buenos Aires, Argentina would be a great, life-changing experience. I applied and got accepted to go abroad Fall 2011.

I lived with a woman and her daughter, along with a girl that attends Binghamton University and one that attends American University in Washington, DC. All three of us attended the Catholic University in Buenos Aires and took classes which were all taught in Spanish with other international students and native Argentines.

Buenos Aires is a city filled with art, music and people from all over the world. Everywhere we went we met people from various countries and backgrounds. Argentina is a country filled with immigrants, you can see this diversity in the food, music and people. It is a country with a passion for soccer, and going to the Boca Juniors and the national team's games were some of my favorite days of the trip. Buenos Aires has various beautiful parks, including the Rosedal, or rose garden, a full park filled with various species of roses. The Recoleta Cemetery is also a beautiful, yet eerie place to visit; this is where Evita Peron's body is kept. There is always something to do, and with the beautiful weather it's hard to sit at home.

During these five months I had the opportunity to travel around to the most amazing places I have ever been. Our first trip was to Argentina in the Province of Misiones to see the Iguazú Falls. We went on an adventure day where we went zip-lining through the jungle and on day two we went to see the beautiful falls. I have never been to Niagara Falls so I have nothing to compare this to, but the beauty of being out in nature and seeing something this grand was amazing. They are practically untouched, you can walk through various trails around the falls and get extremely close to the powerful currents. On our way back we stopped at San Ignacio, a very small town where there are Jesuit ruins. It was a very peaceful town with bright red clay that covered all the streets.

Later into the semester we went to the province of Salta, a twenty hour bus ride to northern Argentina. This province is known for the salt flats and beautiful mountain ranges. We went on three excursions with a tour guide driving for a full day, stopping to enjoy all the various landscapes. We drove through the Parque Nacional de los Cardones, a national reserve made up of 65,520 hectares of cacti and beautiful nature. Being in such a large open space makes you realize how little you are, in such a big world. At one point we reached a height of 4170 meters above sea level, which made my head feel like it was going to explode. We drove to various vineyards and had a wine tasting class; this province is known for their Torrontes wine, a very sweet white wine. On the last day we went to the salt flats, it is difficult to understand such a vast space without experiencing it.

Our next trip was to Uruguay, we went to Colonia and Punta del Este. Punta del Este is a tourist city on the coast. It was a very relaxing weekend on the beach. It was a very safe and peaceful city, where hitchhiking apparently held no danger and everyone was extremely friendly. Colonia is a colonial city also on the coast with cobblestone streets and beautiful homes. It may be a very small country but I recommend it. During one of my last weeks I went to Chile to visit my friend Nathy who was a foreign exchange student my senior year in high school. She lives in Viña del Mar, another city on the beach lined with hills. It was my last week to enjoy myself before having to leave Argentina for good.

My last stop before returning to New York was Bogota, Colombia to visit my family for Christmas. After being stuck at the airport in Buenos Aires for a full twenty-four hours I was on my way to see my parents and my brother after five months of being away. Colombia is always my favorite stop, especially getting to spend Christmas with my family, and visit my grandfather's farm.

I can't believe that I'm home now and that those 5 months were real; I look at pictures and it feels like a dream. I learned so much about myself and met so many amazing people. I hope I get the opportunity to go back soon, or if a job opportunity comes up after graduation I am definitely comfortable going abroad again. The general experience of studying abroad is one that anyone would enjoy. South America is filled with very generous and loving people who all taught me about their culture and were interested to learn about my own. I think it's safe to say that those were the greatest 5 months of my life so far.



Special thanks to Board Member, John Nigro, who treated over 50 15-LOVE participants and family members to delicious pizza from Inferno's and a Siena basketball game at the Times Union Center on February 26. The 15-LOVE participants cheered on the Siena Saints during Senior Night as they beat Canisius 86-75. Mr. Nigro also gave away Siena winter caps to the 15-LOVE families who attended.

15-LOVE ON THE MOVE

LASERRE RESTAURANT HOSTS 15-LOVE COCKTAIL PARTIES



On November 2 and March 7, 15-LOVE held cocktail parties at LaSerre Restaurant in downtown Albany. 15-LOVE Board Member and LaSerre Restaurant Co-Owner, Anne Trimble, welcomed friends of the 15-LOVE program to the restaurant for a night of delicious food, cocktails and great company. 30% of all proceeds raised during the cocktail parties were donated back to support the 15-LOVE program. We thank everyone who was able to attend these events and special thanks to LaSerre Restaurant for welcoming us.

We look forward to holding more events similar to this one to give friends and staff of the 15-LOVE program an opportunity to meet and talk about the happenings of 15-LOVE. Continue to check the 15-LOVE website at www.15love.org or the 15-LOVE Facebook page for upcoming events!



ALBANY DEVILS

Due to the generosity of donor Jim Knox, 15-LOVE participants enjoyed their first Albany Devils hockey game at the Times Union Center on December 16. The participants had an awesome surprise when they had the opportunity to watch the game from KeyBank's Box Suite. After the game, participants were able to get hats and shirts signed by the hockey players as they left the arena. A great night was had by all who attended!

THE DENISE MCCOY LEGACY AWARD COMMITTEE TO HOST 1ST ANNUAL CAPITAL REGION KID'S LITERACY FAIR AT THE COLLEGE OF SAINT ROSE



Join us on Saturday, July 21 from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. on the lawn at The College of Saint Rose for this fantastic event. Although this marks the first year of the Capital Region Kid's Literacy Fair, it is the eighth year of the Denise McCoy Legacy Award, which was created to honor Denise

McCoy and her legacy in promoting literacy to our community's youth. Denise was the former owner of the Bookmark in Latham, a bookstore specializing in children's literature, and an avid supporter of 15-LOVE's literacy efforts. We are excited to add the Capital Region Kid's Literacy Fair to further support our effort to encourage and celebrate children's literacy within our community.

The event will include numerous fun activities, music, refreshments, and readings from the winner of the 2012 Denise McCoy Legacy Award, Tom Angleberger. Mr. Angleberger will also be on hand to meet and greet families and have his award winning book, *The Strange Case of Origami Yoda*, available for purchase and signature. This annual award is given to the author of the most humorous children's book as selected by the Upper Hudson Library Council and the Denise McCoy Legacy Award committee.

A cocktail event honoring Mr. Angleberger will be held the same evening at Albany's downtown Hampton Inn & Suites at 25 Chapel Street from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. catered by Yono's Restaurant. All profits received from the cocktail event will be benefiting the Denise McCoy Scholarship Fund.

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