

ISI Items



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BEOC MEANS BUSINESS TOO!!!

By Kenrick Lucas, Brooklyn EOC ATTAIN Lab Manager

In a novel move to promote long-term economic development, the Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center has partnered with the Emmanuel Community Economic Development Corporation in an initiative designed to inculcate Brooklyn teens with the spirit of entrepreneurship. In the summer of 2005, the ATTAIN Lab hosted 20 students who were participating in a seven-week training program tagged “Teens That Mean Business (TTMB): The Summer Experience.”



‘Teens That Mean Business’ Summer Program Participants

Photo by Tony Ponds

TTMB is a stipend-based apprenticeship that gives teens, ages 15 to 19, direct access to the decision makers/owner-operators of thriving businesses. Among participating businesses are real estate development/management companies, day spas, eateries, art galleries, landscapers, book stores, and even cable TV’s “The Employment Channel”. Yes, through TTMB/BEOC, Brooklyn-based entrepreneurs have stepped in to close the gaps that often times exist between labor, management and business ownership.

The primary goals of the program are to unmask the true nature of community development, to broaden each teen’s ‘perceived’ spectrum of future options to include business management and ownership, to facilitate work experiences that enhance their resumes and enable them to stand out in today’s competitive environment, and to provide apprenticeship training that is practical, and that builds skills that are useful for many areas of personal growth and development. In addition to participating in a one-week training intensive, each week, program participants gather to receive additional training, and to unpack the lessons learned as they work closely with their assigned business owner/mentor. Moreover, each teen conducts structured, weekly interviews of their hosts, the results of which will inform the preparation of individualized case studies that outline their experiences, their impressions, and most importantly, any newfound dreams, hopes, and aspirations.

As part of their training, each teen completes assigned lessons in ISI’s Customer Service Representative, Working With People, and Workplace Reading courseware. Using Microsoft Interactive Training, each is given the opportunity to enhance his/her computer skills. The teens use their assigned SUNY email accounts for business communications and for time management and, as a group, they complete those online activities that are integral parts of the National Endowment for Financial Education’s (NEFE) widely acclaimed High School Financial Planning Program (HSFPP). Additionally, TTMB teens hold weekly office hours at BEOC’S ATTAIN Lab.

Recognizing the importance of finding innovative, motivational ways to prepare our youth for tomorrow, it is hoped that the TTMB concept can, in time, be duplicated throughout the borough of Brooklyn and beyond.

* * * *

Items to Remember

Please remember to keep CPUs on at all times. This is required for the transmission of software enhancements and for providing technical support.

Each ATTAIN Lab has a site calendar accessible via the ATTAIN website. Please update it regularly with lab activities.

The more you keep dirt and dust away from your computers, the better they will run. For on-line computer cleaning tips, go to www.computerhope.com/cleaning.htm

For the PDF Version of ISIItems newsletters, please see ATTAIN Lab websites or go to www.sunyeoc.org.

To submit articles, ideas or suggestions for upcoming editions of ISIItems, please contact Sonya@isinj.com.

Correction

The success story printed in our April 2005 edition about Mikel Murray was written by Kathy Hart.

ISI SOFTWARE ENHANCEMENTS AND UPDATES

ISI Curriculum Updates

ISI Developmental Reading's lower level reading passages now contain slower paced audio readback to facilitate learning at a less rapid pace.

ISI Certified Nursing Assistant Test Preparation (Beta) is now available in the ATTAIN Labs, addressing more than twenty subject areas covered by the Certified Nursing Assistant exam.

ISI Health Care series is being reviewed by a medical doctor for content accuracy. New custom artwork has also been added in several subject areas.

ISI Office Skills series' content has been refreshed and images have been updated.

In addition to Milady's, Mavis Beacon, ELLIS and other local third party software, ISI developers have added launchers for **Steck-Vaughn GED** and **Internet Explorer**. In doing so, the ISI LAN Manager now tracks usage hours by student for these courses and the Internet. Please remember, this requires students to enter third party software and the Internet via the ISI Courseware icon.

ISI Management System Enhancements

Completion Report by Group is now functional, offering a "report card" for each student, with the added time-saving benefit of running the report by group(s).

Executive reports now show a total number of students at the bottom of each report.

Enrollment lists can now be filtered by account type, allowing you to separate students from staff, guests, and others.

Station Preferences tab contains a new feature which allows users to have control over which courses are displayed in the course lists of the LAN Manager reports.

All reports now have a "Stop" button to save you time in the event of incorrect date and filter selections.

LIEOC - HEMPSTEAD'S FIRST YOUTH REGENTS PREPARATION PROGRAM

Submitted by Cheree Mason, Long Island EOC, Hempstead, ATTAIN Lab Manager

Beginning in April 2005, the Hempstead ATTAIN Lab provided its first English and Math Regents Prep program with Hempstead High School's 9th grade ESL students.

In an effort to provide additional academic preparation for Regent's exams, the ATTAIN lab provided opportunity for students to catch up on remedial math skills. In addition, students were able to use software to improve their English. ESL students attended the program five days a week from 3:00-4:15pm.

With guidance from Cheree Mason, Hempstead ATTAIN Lab Manager, students were given the opportunity to improve remedial skills using the Developmental Math program, which provides step-by-step instructions on how to solve problems. Students were then given the opportunity to practice their lessons using the program's practice component.

ELLIS served as an integral part of the student's English preparation. Other computer programs and ESL Internet sites reinforced their English skills and made learning English fun. In addition, students were encouraged to practice speaking English during class.

The program continued for eight weeks until the end of the school year. We would like to provide an early start for the upcoming school year, as the students enjoyed their time in the lab and are very interested in returning.

OATS ACHIEVEMENT DAY

Submitted by *Denese Mars, PhD, Lab Manager/Coordinator,*
Dr. Betty Shabazz Complex Computer Learning Center & ATTAIN Lab

June 17th, 2005 was graduation day for the first ever intergenerational program at the Dr. Betty Shabazz Complex Computer Learning Center & ATTAIN Lab. The OATS Pilot Intergenerational Program was a tremendous success. OATS, an acronym for Older Adults Technology Services is the brainchild of Thomas Kamber, PhD, a long time community activist in collaboration with Miracle Makers, Community Service Society (CSS), ten high school students, and trainer/instructor, Ms. Lara Cely. The Technology Training and Leadership Institute, (a program of OATS) which recognizes the need for community service that maximizes the benefits to students as well as the community, developed an innovative intergenerational strategy that serves two critical needs: "the need to improve training and access to technology for senior citizens, and the need for young people to find meaningful opportunities for community service where they develop as they provide help to others."

The concept for this intergenerational project is simple; train high school students to teach senior citizens basic computer skills. The youth participants attended an intensive Training for Trainers workshop with Mr. Kamber and Ms. Cely here at the Dr. Betty Shabazz Complex Computer Learning Center and ATTAIN Lab. In the Training for Trainers workshop the youth learned critical skills such as teaching, technology tools, patience, public speaking, classroom techniques, and techniques for working with the elderly. The seniors received ten weeks of free personalized computer training in the ATTAIN Lab with a curriculum tailored to fit their needs, extensive support and practice opportunities.

After spending ten weeks learning how to maneuver a mouse, the basic keys on the keyboard, and eventually the awesome task of signing up for and e-mailing classmates, the seniors were ready to surf the World Wide Web. For some of our seniors the mere task of sitting in front of the computers was overwhelming. However, they overcame their fear with the help of their young instructors, who had their own fears of teaching older people their knowledge of the computer. By in large, both groups walked away having learned something new and different. Here is just a sampling of what our seniors have to say about the program:



OATS Pilot Intergenerational Program Graduates & Trainers

Alene Myatt, age 67, community resident for over 30 years: "I love the ATTAIN Lab...since the Oats Program, I am thinking of getting me a computer. This class inspired me to go get one."

Frankie Garrison, age 68, 30-year resident of the community: *"I never used a computer before... now I know how to e-mail. I even have my own e-mail address, can you believe that?"*

Sindy Brown, age 66: *"I used to type 70 wpm 12 years ago, so I think with the practice and Mavis Beacon I will be able to type fast again."*

Ann Grice, age 64: *"This ATTAIN Lab is what the community needed. It gives us something to do."*

Oria White, age 66, 12-year resident of the community: *"I think the idea of the teenagers helping seniors is a good way of bringing the two generations together."*

Richard Prescott, age 61: *"The program is stimulating... any question I asked was always addressed."*

There is a waiting list of eager seniors who would like to learn how to use the computer, and we are excited to have them.

Baden Street Pays Tribute to a Beloved Co-Worker

On July 6, 2005 Baden Street received news of the passing of their beloved employee and friend, Cynthia Fraiser. Several months prior to her passing, we at ISI asked various ATTAIN sites if there were any success stories that lab managers wanted to submit for publishing in ISItems.



Alicia Ward, Baden Street's ATTAIN lab manager, had immediately suggested that we consider highlighting Cynthia's story — a dedicated mother of 12 children, divorced, whose customer service experience aided in her successful transition from welfare to work within 7 months of ATTAIN Lab and Work Experience Program (WEP) training.

When asked about her ATTAIN Lab experience, Cynthia told Alicia, "The ATTAIN Lab provided knowledge about computer software and typing skills which I am improving now. I was a person that didn't have any computer skills or typing skills before coming to the ATTAIN Lab. Now I can type, access programs, and conduct Internet research."

Pam Jackson, the Director of the Activities Department and Cynthia's supervisor said, "Cynthia came to us as a WEP worker and was helping in the office. She had little computer skills, so each morning she would spend time in the ATTAIN lab." Given her strong work ethic and improved computer skills, Baden Street hired Cynthia in April 2004 to be their receptionist in the Activities Department. Pam commented on the value of the ATTAIN lab in providing the support systems necessary for individuals in need "to become self-sustaining and marketable". She praised Cynthia for her tenacity and tremendous sense of responsibility, "she was a single mom of twelve kids who did everything she was asked to do," said Pam Jackson.

Cynthia's final words in her interview with Alicia was that of rejoicing, "family life has improved as a result of working at Baden Street because my children are now involved in the community." Two of her children, 13-year old Sydnee and 14-year old Elicia, volunteer at Baden and receive a stipend for tutoring at Rochester After-School Academy.

Given her positive experience in the ATTAIN Lab, Cynthia was moved to buy a computer of her own, which she now leaves behind for her family, in her legacy of commitment to self-improvement and education.

Thank you, Alicia and Pam for sharing Cynthia's story. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and all of Cynthia's loved ones.



New York & Georgia Discuss Best Practices

On May 5, 2005, representatives from Instructional Systems Inc. and SUNY University Center for Academic and Workforce Development traveled to Augusta, Georgia to join the statewide coordinators from Georgia's Department of Technical and Adult Education's New Connections to Work program. The aim of the gathering was to exchange ideas and discuss best practices related to the two state organizations' common program goal of providing adults with access to education and comprehensive training, leading to job placement.

The SUNY-sponsored ATAIN project currently consists of twenty-seven labs and the New Connections to Work program spans across thirty-seven colleges. Representatives from both initiatives discussed the various approaches and successes in delivering training, including orientation, assessment, life skills/job readiness workshops, and occupational skills training leading to employment.

As a result of the discussion forum, New Connections to Work has selected ISI as a partner in providing comprehensive occupational and life skills training to their clients. Beginning in the fall of 2005, ISI courseware and services will be available in numerous program locations throughout Georgia.

MONTICELLO LAB RECEIVES COMMUNITY-BASED GRANT FROM LOCAL FOUNDATION

By Sonya E Maxwell, ISI Senior Trainer and Program Developer

In a tremendous act of charity, The Gerry Foundation¹ of Liberty, NY has awarded the Sullivan County Community Consortium ATAIN Lab a generous gift of \$7,500. Recognizing the value inherent in providing underserved communities access to computer-based training and the Internet, with this donation, Jonathan Drapkin, Executive Director of the Foundation, has established a marketing fund for the project, joining in on efforts to get the word out. In doing so, the Gerry Foundation continues to demonstrate its dedication to preserving the quality of life and general welfare of Sullivan County and the surrounding area. Having as its backdrop, the goal to facilitate continued economic and community development, this marketing fund will help ensure that community residents countywide benefit from the investment in human capital that underpins the Advanced Technology Training and Information Networking (ATAIN) Lab project.

As stated by Ann Benson², ATAIN Lab Manager, "The support received from the community has been overwhelming. That support comes in the form of participation, not only from all local human services agencies, but from the business community as well." At present, Ann is working very closely with each member of the consortium—Sullivan County BOCES, the Workforce Investment Board, the Chamber of Commerce, and Sullivan County Community College. To be sure this blending union of respected organiza-



Ann Benson, ATAIN Lab Manager, assisting lab participants.

tions represents the true meaning of a community-based partnership; their efforts now strengthened by the involvement of the Gerry Foundation. And news about the lab gets out – people who have been in the lab are telling their colleagues and friends about their positive experiences there – the ability to place advertisements in newspapers, to do radio promotions and the like, will have a mushrooming effect. According to Ann, "Lab usage increases daily. Users see the value of participating in structured programs that not only help them become computer literate, but quality programs that provide opportunities for self-improvement. Stronger families build a stronger community."

¹ The foundation was established in 1996 by Alan Gerry, a long time community resident and pioneer in the cable industry.

² Ann is also a founding member of the Sullivan County Partnership for Economic Development. She is a strong community advocate and is involved on the boards of many community-based organizations.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS EARN CREDIT VIA ISI COURSES

Submitted By Linda Thompson, W.E.B. Du Bois ATAIN Lab Manager



W.E.B. Du Bois High School students, assisted by Linda Thompson, Lab Manager

On Friday, April 22, 2005, eighty-five certificates of completion were awarded to thirty-eight students from W.E.B. Du Bois High School students. Students are required to maintain an average of 80% or higher and complete assigned ISI vocational programs such as Introduction to Office Technology, Customer Service Representative, Office Skills, Working With People, Child Care Series, Building Maintenance Carpentry, Electrical and Plumbing.

W.E.B. Du Bois students worked in the ISI Vocational computer-based programs and earned either an extra credit or elective credit toward their high school diploma. Many of the students exceeded the bar, scoring an overall average of 91% for all programs completed.

Congratulations to all W.E.B. Du Bois ISI program certificate recipients for Spring 2005!