

Telementor

MAXIMIZING YOUTH POTENTIAL™

FROM THE FOUNDER

Informed, Connected, Engaged

See page 2

Raising The Bar on Science Education

See page 6

EXCITING RESEARCH ...

Hear from Merck's Karla Childers

See page 7

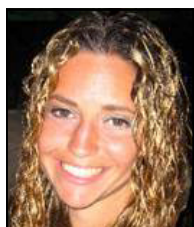
MENTORING GEMS

Looking Forward: The Right Direction

See page 11



(l-r) Laura, Stephanie, Lindsay, Rachel, and Kayla.



**MORE MENTORS,
PLEASE!** Thomson
Financial's Corrin Silver
tells others about how
easy it is to mentor.

See page 8

Endangered Species: Extinct?

When a U.S. student wanted to know more about animals, her Australian mentor had a very relevant, real and hot topic to discuss—the Australian bushfires. See page 9

Informed, Connected, Engaged!

Mentors can dramatically increase the chances of a student pursuing his or her interests successfully by guiding the student in three primary areas, each area including a driving question:

1. **Informed: What do I need to know?**
2. **Connected: Who do I need to know?**
3. **Engaged: How do I make a difference now?**

Let's use an example from our program to illustrate how mentors are helping youth in these three critical areas:

Connor, a sophomore from Airline High School in Bossier City, Louisiana is getting the help he needs to understand the connection between his interests and environmental engineering. As part of Elaine Bradford's and Barbara McKenzie's Career Exploration and Education Planning project, he is broadening his view of the field while creating a professional network that will guide him as he moves forward.

Tracy Johnson, one of our mentors from Merck, responded to a survey Connor put together with the help of his mentor. Tracy's survey responses came back within 24 hours and includes a goldmine of information that Connor can leverage immediately. Note how each of these areas are addressed by Connor's questions and Tracy's answers.

Connor asks: What type of work are you currently doing, and how long have you been doing it?

Tracy responds: For about a year I have been in a newly created department (at a chemical plant that makes the bulk active ingredients for pharmaceuticals) that focuses on how to improve our business processes so we can save money and be more competitive. Over the past 10 years developing nations such as India and China have become significantly more proficient at making the same kinds of compounds we make, and their costs are lower.

What would you recommend that I focus on as a high school student to become a successful engineer?

Math and sciences, of course. Don't neglect writing skills and reading comprehension. The best engineers can explain their ideas to anyone, even if they aren't another engineer.

What are the best post-secondary schools for your field, and what criteria should I use to rank them?

I honestly don't know who is considered the best in environmental engineering right at this time. If I were you I would be more concerned about picking a school that met my overall needs because there is a good chance you might change your major after you are there for a while! It's important to have choices once you get there. Some things to think about when looking at universities:

- Do the average GPA and test scores match yours?
- How comfortable are you going away to school versus staying closer to home?
- How big is the university and how does that match your comfort level? There's a big difference in a freshman class of 100 versus 1,000, versus 10,000.
- What other kinds of activities and programs does the university offer?
- How does the school do with placing their graduates in jobs?

What type of work could I expect to be performing right out of school with a bachelor's degree?

First, it's important to understand that there is more than one degree that can get you into this field. Environmental engineers may have the most options with a bachelor's degree, but biologists, chemists, environmental science majors, geologists and others all have roles in the environmental field. In some of the pure science areas I mention, you don't get as much opportunity unless you go to graduate school for at least a master's degree. Determining how much you'll get paid and how many hours you'll be expected to work weekly, or how much travel you might do. It varies significantly depending on the kind of job you take.

What are the top three or four things employers are looking for from new employees?

- Ability and willingness to learn rapidly and apply that learning.
- Desire and ability to work independently, but check in with others when it's appropriate.
- Organization - Can you figure out before you miss a deadline and alert your supervisor that you either need to drop another task or adjust the deadline?
- Integrity and honesty - If a person doesn't have the basics of good ethics, principles and honesty by the time they get their first job, there's going to be trouble down the road.



A message from Conner to his mentor:

This project has truly been a unique experience. I can not thank you enough for all the time and effort you have put into this project so far. I am learning so much, not just about engineering but about myself and what I would like to do with my future. I hope that one day I will be able to do for someone else what you have done for me.

Even if I decide not to go into environmental engineering, I now have the tools to research whatever career I am interested to see if it fits me and my ambitions.

What do you think the main focus will be in your area of study in 10 years?

Human beings create a lot of trash - particularly in the US. A lot of work has gone into trying to make us better recyclers, but sometimes it's not financially justified - it just costs less to put it in a landfill. Since we have so much land, we've had the ability to create more landfills, but ultimately we may decide as a society to limit that. If this happens, a lot more attention will be paid to residential composting (they do it in Europe!) and reducing the amount of waste the average person generates.

Alternative fuels are important - for the environment and for our economy. The increase in gas prices over the last few years has generated more interest in alternative fuels and I would

expect growth in that area.

How selective are the top universities?

It depends. A lot of larger state schools are not that selective if you are an in-state candidate, but then you have to compete with out-of-state kids when you get there. You need decent math and verbal scores on standardized tests and decent high school grades - math and science will be considered over other classes. The more math and science you take in high school, the better your chances and it will help you once you get to college.

Getting into a top school does not necessarily mean you get a better education than another school which is still accredited, but isn't as selective. Ultimately, you are going to spend 4-5 years at this place - it needs to fit you and meet your needs, not just be high on a list.

In engineering the most prevalent accreditation body is known as ABET. I would not recommend attending a school for engineering if it's program is not ABET accredited.

As I read Conner's survey and the responses he received from Tracy Johnson and others, I know he is making better decisions. Through this process he is becoming informed about the connection between his interests and career opportunities. He is also becoming connected with real professionals, environmental engineers that know Conner and who will be eager to provide additional support in the future. His mentor will help him take an additional step to become engaged and make a difference in this field. This last step will shed a new bright light on strength and weakness of Conner's decision to pursue this area or any new area in the future.

I'm thrilled that we can offer this level of support to any student, anywhere. We invite you to join us in this effort. There are many ways to contribute. I welcome a phone call or e-mail. 970-206-9352, davidn@telementor.org.

For youth,

David

Telementor

MAXIMIZING YOUTH POTENTIAL™

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The International Telementor Program facilitates electronic mentoring relationships between professional adults and students worldwide, and is recognized as the leader in the field of academic based mentoring.

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Students Can Explore their Future—Now

Career projects get a boost from mentors **BY VICTOR RIVERO**

ITP CAUGHT MY INTEREST because I teach high school gifted and I feel like what the program has to offer is very important for these kids -- to be connected to real-world people and in a real way,” says Joan Turek. She’s obviously excited, and you can hear it in her voice. Get her going and it’s a nonstop ride of enthusiasm and passion. “I have lots of leeway, so talking to Zac Burson, the program coordinator, and looking at the lesson plans, I decided to incorporate it into my curriculum. It has been a wonderful opportunity for my students. I’ve started with four and I’m now up to 20 students. The program has been a great way for these students to explore, to find out if they really wanted to do certain things or to not do certain things. Every day, they’ve been learning. The mentors have been great. The support is great. I’m more and more impressed each time we do it.”

From Blasé to Enthusiastic

As for what exactly mentors have brought to her students, Joan was very specific. “Holly [the student] was working with Krista Madril [a mentor]. I saw her go from being not very enthusiastic to becoming very interested in pursuing the program. She developed an interest in the engineering field and her interactions, research and writing really matured as she had to think through and respond to the challenges of her mentor and the activities they undertook.”

Holly also explored and narrowed down college

choices, corresponded with excellent women engineers, and produced an outstanding career portfolio as a final product.

But the success the ITP fuels doesn’t stop there. “Brittney is working with her mentor, Allan Kennedy. She’s a freshman with an interest in forensics,” says Joan. “They’ve had terrific interaction. She actually decided she may want to switch fields, but only after her mentor’s guidance and her exploration led to this decision. His mentoring was fantastic. She’s still interested in the medical field but maybe in a different area. Just a ninth grader, she’s had a real interest in other fields. It’s been a fantastic experience.”

Another student, Gage, is a freshman. He worked with his mentor exploring the field of engineering. “His mentor actually had to move during the semester,” explains Joan, “but even through this, he continued to send information and was very helpful referring Gage to engineering websites.” In fact, other students in the same class also used these sites “so the mentor often has an effect greater than what they might know,” says Joan. The mentor, John Rasnic, was “someone who was really just so helpful. They worked awfully well together.”

Yet another mentor, Brian Egan, worked with Linda, a senior. “He gave her some wonderful contacts and correspondence even though she’s very busy in her senior year,” says Joan. Through her correspondence with Brian, Linda examined career possibilities in the field of law, discovering that there are many options. In addition, she began working as a clerk in a law office during the semester to further expand her understanding and prepare for the field.

More Excellent Mentors and Support

Veteran ITP mentor Kendra Yoder worked with Robert, who’s interested in graphic arts and is a sophomore. “She was fantastic! She sent about 45 messages during the semester, pointing him to some wonderful websites and providing information,” Joan says.

What effect has this had on her as a teacher in the classroom in helping to keep her students on track? “The mentors were absolutely great. They all held students accountable for their work, writing and research,” says Joan. But their help actually went much further. “The students all felt that someone was personally interested in them. You just don’t find that with busy professionals who are not teachers. This really helped these students rise up much closer to their true potential, and it’s been very im-



◀ FAMOUS FRENCH CHEF VISITS CLASSROOM?

Guess again! This is Adam Bouillion, a Haughton High School student. With the help of teacher Joan Turek and his mentor, Clara Fong, he interviewed a variety of culinary arts professionals, including chefs, business owners, and other leading figures in the profession. And

former Bossier Parish student Holly Moore, now assistant to the president at the French Culinary Institute, arranged for Adam to interview via email some of their faculty and master chefs, including, Jacques Pepin.

pressive to me.”

One mentor, Nicole Morantz, mentored *two* people. “Every time she got a message from one of the students, she was very quick to get back. She had a freshman and a senior, so she had a brand new high school student and one who was in the midst of college plans — and she handled them both beautifully,” says Joan.

Going the Distance

Mentor Rickey Ono corresponded with Aaron, a student with an interest in drafting. Rickey assisted in getting interviews for Aaron, and actually found a college teacher who taught a drafting class who was willing to communicate with him. The teacher went one further and shared this relationship with the class. “It was a neat way for Aaron to get insight not just from professionals in the field, but from students enrolled in a college course in which he was interested,” Joan says, noting the effect it created on the class as well.

Another mentor helped Nicholas, a student interested in forestry, explore his interests in this area. “There were many others. I am just totally amazed at the fact that these people are so busy at work and I know they are. And that they would take the time to help these kids,” Joan says. Nicholas explored the field of forestry. He developed excellent interview questions and his mentor, Zac Burson, assisted by sending them to top professors at two state universities. As a result, Nicholas was able to correspond directly with those professionals and received an invitation to participate in an ecology project through a nature conservancy program. Those opportunities don’t just happen by themselves; the ITP program helps to provide those types of opportunities.

Changing Faces, Changing Lives

Each week, Joan writes to the mentors with reflections and to thank them for the help they give her students. “Because we appreciate it,” she emphasizes. Her only disappointment is that the mentors are normally not able to see the students. “Just to watch the excitement on a student’s face -- I wish they could see that,” says Joan. “Every one of them did some really great things with my students. Some of the students were not as motivated or serious as the others, but the mentors hung in there and everybody got a positive experience,” she says. “It’s one thing to say you want to be a doctor. But until you do some planning, only then is it much more likely to come to pass. Understanding the area, exploring the field and knowing what they are getting into, students become more aware of the realities involved. If you give students this opportunity, it will change their lives, and could help change their future in a very positive way.” ■

Joan Turek: A Real Gift

AIM Gifted Education Teacher,
Parkway, Haughton, & Benton High Schools, Bossier Parish, La.

“I teach high school gifted education classes at three local schools, and see a real need for students to explore their interests and connect with professionals to begin setting meaningful college and career goals. I first became involved in the International Telementor Program with my students during the spring of 2006.



“Since then, I have found that ITP research and collaborative project design correlates well with our state educational language arts and technology standards and supports our curriculum and educational objectives. Students develop reading, writing,

research, technology, cooperative learning, and collaboration skills as they work with their mentors, their peers, and with their teachers throughout the project.

“The first time I worked with the program, I only had a few students participate but was very impressed with the interaction between students and mentors. This year, I included college and career research through the telementor program as part of the curriculum for all my students. Watching my students develop rapport and draw support from their mentors, and seeing the impact it has on their learning, further confirmed my positive belief in ITP.

“The mentors’ effort in connecting students to other professionals working in various careers is also a great asset. After my students developed interview questions with their mentors, the mentors forwarded them to other professionals and the responses provided a wealth of advice and information for my students’ projects.

“While working with my students and ITP, I have enjoyed watching many of them go from being hesitant to highly confident when speaking about their college and career goals. Their writing, research, and technology skills were strengthened through the activities and correspondence with their mentors. In addition, my students’ communication, both oral and written, has become more direct and meaningful. Each time my students received messages from their mentors, their enthusiasm was contagious in the classroom as they shared information with their peers. I often wished the mentors themselves could see the day-to-day reactions of the students and enjoy them as much as I did.

“The type of personalized attention, interaction, and direction provided by the mentors through the International Telementor Program can help students explore, plan, and meet their goals in ways not provided by most traditional educational programs. The skills and confidence gained from the constant encouragement and activities will continue to help students as they pursue their education and career goals. I look forward to participating in the program in the years ahead and know that it has already made a positive difference in the futures of my students.” ■

Raising the Bar in Science Education

With help from mentors, students take control **BY VICTOR RIVERO**

FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS, Steve Gann had always been looking for effective ways to inspire his students. As a science teacher, he wanted each of them to truly understand the benefits of using the scientific method. Ironically, it was Steve's leap of faith that helped his freshmen class take a quantum leap--and an unexpected sweep of the annual Bossier (La.) High School Science Fair--despite the fact that his students were competing against far more experienced upperclassmen.

How did Steve's students get these stellar results? What *changed*? In a word: "Telementoring," says Steve. "I didn't know exactly what I was getting into, especially with [ITP program coordinator] Zac [Burson]--you never know," he laughs. "But I went in excited about it. In all my years of teaching, these were the best science fair projects I've ever seen. And the students had more knowledge of their subjects than ever before. Telementoring definitely works."

Informed, Connected, Engaged!

Hmmm. Freshmen? Stellar projects? Lots of help from mentors? Must be that the mentors did all the work! Not so, says Steve. "In the beginning, I laid down the basics to the mentors: they were not to do the work. The students had to figure it all out. They could only guide them. We were finally able to find computers to do it. We discussed it with (see page 8)



▲ **THANKFUL.** Gage and Robert are among the many students in and around Bossier City, La., that are extremely thankful to the many mentors that have assisted them and their peers in taking their learning to a higher level. Part of what makes them appreciative is the one-on-one care factor they experience from adults who are professionals in their fields and don't mind helping complete strangers like them.



▲ FLYING HIGH WITH SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY.

Becca wanted to investigate the effects construction and development of residential and commercial areas in northwest Bossier City, La., have on bird population, variety and habitat. With help from her mentor, she was able to gain a clear focus and proceed with certainty in gathering helpful information. This, in turn, made it easier to focus on communicating her findings to others with competence and skill.

In all my years of teaching, these were the best science fair projects I've ever seen. Steve Gann, Airline High Teacher

▼ OLYMPIC PLANNER?

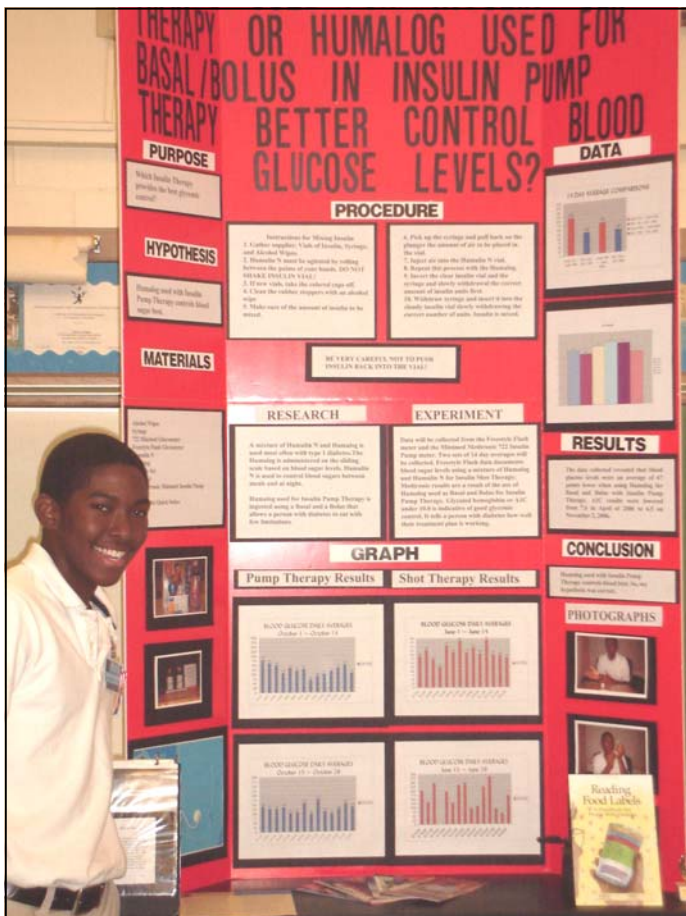
Stephanie took up an issue commonly experienced by gymnasts working on the uneven bars—chaffing of hands—and put it to the test. What's a better solution, and why? If she doesn't go to the Olympics herself, she may have a career in sports medicine or as an entrepreneur of improved and more workable athletic equipment.





▲ **WHAT'S IN A SMILE?** Megan cut into a very precise subject area when her investigation into dentistry assisted her in finding out more about something we all love to have and use—our teeth!

▼ **MAYBE A DOCTOR?** Jeremy decided on an in-depth exploration of a specific area of medicine that had much personal meaning—he's diabetic—and posed a hypothesis, created a procedure and graphed the results. Besides knowledge gained in use of scientific methods, his research and communication skills also improved. Working with an ITP mentor, he was held to a higher standard than if he had worked alone—and it was definitely a lot more fun, as you can see from his expression. What's more, "He blew away the judges," says science teacher Steve Gann.



A WORD ON "RESEARCH" from Merck mentor **Karla Childers**

IN NEARLY ANY PROJECT a student embarks upon, not to mention any area of life that anyone would investigate—*research*, however shallow or deep—is a vital component to providing a person with insight into the area. Research—quite literally, a searching again, or taking a second look;



examining closely—is vital to our survival as humans, however simple or complex. Students, teachers and mentors undertake much research over the course of their projects within the ITP. Here, Karla Childers, a Merck mentor who worked with Steve Gann's students, shares her thoughts and professional insights on why helping students with their independent research is so important.

“Research in its most effective form is a collaborative process that takes place in a community of individuals. Ideas are discussed, opinions shared and revisions constantly made based on the feedback one receives from others.

“In my particular workplace, we have an informal culture of mentoring that supports the research process and development of scientists. It's that ability to ask questions in a “safe” place and learn from other's mistakes and successes that allows us to advance as researchers and be more effective in our jobs.

“Similarly, with mentoring students in independent research projects, we help them develop tools that will serve them well, not just in science classes in the future or on individual science projects, but also in other disciplines, as they develop their critical thinking skills and apply what they have learned about the scientific method to other problems they encounter. This makes them more likely to approach science classes in college with less trepidation.

“One could also argue that this makes them more likely to seek independent research projects in science—or other disciplines—because they have been exposed to how the scientific method can be used to solve complex problems.

“Furthermore, allowing these students to interact with business professionals who actively ‘do research’ as a career exposes them to career opportunities they might otherwise have thought too intimidating, not interesting—or simply unattainable.

“That is why I really do believe in this program and what it can do. I think this is a tremendous program and I'm happy to be a part of it.” ■

the principal, who was all for it and the K-12 Curriculum Coordinator who thought it was a good idea. It's been in the works for some time. We just now got into the mentoring part."

Steve has roughly 100 students every year, and is on a block system where he has about 25 students for honors physical science, and four classes over the entire year. "In about a week and a half, we're going to crank it up all over again," he says. "We use the telementor program particularly for the science fair projects."

Part of scientific method is posing hypotheses, doing a lot of preliminary research, evaluating data and drawing conclusions. "When they get through their projects, they always present them to the class, and I grade them. My student's knowledge of the subjects and presentations this year were much better than I've seen in 15 years of teaching. They knew their subject very well. The mentor was really able to help them out, give them suggestions and raise their knowledge level."

A Science Fair Like No Other

One of the biggest indicators of student success, say Steve, is how well they do at the annual high school science fair. This year, Steve's class had a whopping 11 first-place projects. "Out of those, 7 went to my freshmen. That's 64 percent of the first places that went to us! And they were going up against physics and biology and AP chemistry students." In fact, two of the projects took home top honors--both students out of Steve's classes. "And we also took 57 percent of the second-place projects," he says. "That's not too bad."

Steve believes that going to the library and getting in touch with their mentors at least twice per week kept them "more in tune and focused" on their projects. Using mentors, "the quality was much higher than normal. Yes, I was there to push them, to say, 'No, you can't do this or that' but the mentors were there to push them up to ninth-grade level and higher."

For many of the students, it was their first time working on

science fair projects. For others who were somewhat familiar with the process, they had a tendency to want to do something very similar to last year's project, or easy, overdone, mindless experiments. "So I set down the basics, but the mentors took it from there. They definitely helped my students achieve higher than what I would have ever expected. The mentors upped their level of understanding of what they were doing. With telementoring, we've raised the bar."

At the very beginning, Steve was uncertain how to approach mentoring. "So the first thing I told the mentors was that the student had to do the work. Not the mentor. And the student couldn't just follow the mentor's steps. The student had to do their part. In no way or form did the mentors tell them how to do it. They just gave them ideas."

Parental Involvement Spikes

The parents of my students are also thrilled with the results. "I've never heard the parents get so excited or talk this much about science fair projects," says Steve. As part of his regular duties, he calls at least five parents a week to keep parish communication channels open. "That's how I found out. All of them were talking about the telementor program--they really liked it. They felt that their child was doing well and understood what was going on a lot better than they had been doing before."

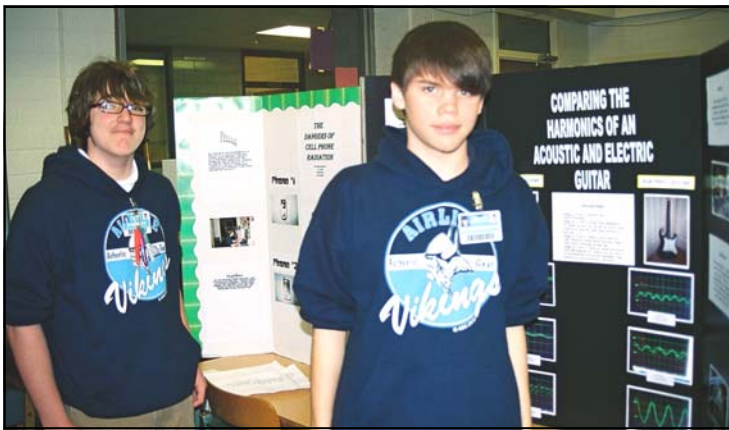
For example, one student, Jeremy, came in with about a 6-foot tall board. "He has a type of diabetes that he needs to check daily. He does his own injections; his project was really a personal experience for him," says Steve. "He really learned a lot and did a tremendous job. It was interesting to him and something he was going through. Shots were not exciting to him, but having this device he explored in his project was a workable alternative. And he just blew the judges away," says Steve. "Before he got going on his project, he was not a bad student, but wasn't one of the top students. Even the students not making hundred percents on tests got tremendous results."

It wasn't just the experimental part of the project where mentors were a big help--it also had to do with research papers. Mentors directed students to excellent resources and useful websites. "And that students could e-mail their papers to their mentors and get them corrected before my grading of them was great!" says Steve. Some of the mentors had thought that the paper came after the students did the project. "But our research paper is done first in order for the student to familiarize themselves with the subject matter. The second step of scientific method is to gather information on what you are doing so you can have an educational guess or hypothesis on what you can do about the problem," explains Steve.

Using the telementoring program, the students' level of research "went sky high," he says. "Mentors were instrumental in guiding them along--saying, 'Maybe

◀ **CONNECTED.** These high school students are checking in on messages from their mentors and considering what steps they might next take in their projects. Mentors play a vital role in guiding a student forward, showing them that there is life beyond high school, and thereby raising their standard of production.





that didn't work, but maybe you can try this...' The mentors helped the students to really bring everything to a whole different level," Steve says. "Again, I didn't know exactly how it was going to work. But after it was all over with, it was fantastic!"

Rejuvenating a Teacher

Looking back, Steve didn't start teaching until he was 38. "I had a degree, but couldn't get a job in the field. The bottom was falling out of the forestry industry. That was in 1974. So I got into banking and finances and told my wife, 'If this doesn't work out I'm going back to school. Working in finance wasn't what I really wanted to do with my life, and because within finance I had done some teaching, I knew that I enjoyed teaching others, so I went back, enrolled, decided on science (not too far off from my

◀ **OUR WORLD.** These high school students took every day objects—a cell phone and a guitar—and turned them inside out. With a little help from their mentors, they planned, researched and presented their findings and expanded their knowledge from merely topical to something deeper, that could lead to careers in their chosen subject areas.

interest in forestry), and here I am. I love it. And with one-on-one telementoring available to my students, my teaching has moved to a different level. I can see the excitement in the students. I'm sold on telementoring. It's great. Now we're just focused on keeping it going, finding the equipment that we need to expand it. And I'm truly excited about this coming semester. We've been writing grants for laptop computers. If we had them in our classrooms, it would make it all flow even smoother. With 80 teachers using the library, it's hard. Having laptops in our classrooms would help with that."

And looking at the bigger picture? "We see our sophomores and then juniors and seniors using this program. The upper-level teachers couldn't believe our projects were created by freshmen. Some of her students were overheard saying, 'Wow! How did they know how to do all that?' They were jealous of our progress, so in the very near future, we'd definitely like to spread the wealth and raise the bar for everyone." ■

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

About Those Fires in Australia ...

THE INTERNATIONAL TELEMENTOR Program is just that—*international*—and sometimes students here Stateside who are corresponding with mentors as far away as Australia—don't always get what may be happening on the ground, so to speak. But when Kansas student Rachel and Australian mentor Allie began talking about animals for an endangered species project Rachel was working on—Rachel soon realized that millions of acres of Australia were



on fire, or had already recently been burned. The effects on wildlife such as Koalas, wallabies, possums, bats, reptiles and nesting birds were devastating. More than just a news report, Rachel now had a personal link and an on-the-ground look at the impact of one of Australia's worst droughts, and subsequently worst series of bushfires—in

more than a century. Suddenly, an interest in animals became shockingly immediate. More than just a encyclopedic exercise, Rachel's connections put her in touch with a living, real-time person experiencing what "endangered species" means in terms of animals right now, in a situation that had effects on humans, too.

Nonetheless, with liveliness, enthusiasm and a care and sensitivity for her student, mentor Allie's guidance assisted Rachel in understanding the situation. "I was actually holidaying in the very area where some of the fires were the worst in northeast Victoria, where my brother-in-law lives," says Allie. "Thankfully, the weather was quite kind over Christmas, with cooler temperatures, and SNOW! on Christmas Day only an hour away from where we were, and in some of the fire area, and a deluge of rain on New Year's Eve, which helped put the fires out. The problem was, though, that there were some lightning strikes with that storm, and there were some fires that started up again on New Year's Day, but they were put out. The snow, although welcome, also hampered the planned back-burning activities as well--Murphy's Law! It's very sad about how many animals are feared lost to these fires," she shares. Allie continued to correspond with Rachel, sharing pictures and happenings, not a lesson Rachel will soon forget—and one that infuses an even stronger purpose in Rachel, should she decide to pursue a career in endangered animal research or any number of related areas. ■

GET TO KNOW ...

Thomson Financial's Corrin Silver

THEY SAY THAT IF YOU REALLY WANT

TO get to know a person, just have a look at what they do. Well, having a look at what Corrin Silver, a Team Leader in the Capital Markets



Consulting Group at Thomson Financial, does when it comes to volunteering for charitable causes will give you a great deal of understanding into what motivates her. While many people want to give back, she does.

And then some. Even when most people don't seem to have the time—she shows them how truly easy it is to create that time—and how to maximize the effect of what little time they do spend. She does this with other TF employees by working to raise awareness for mentoring through the ITP, through which busy professionals such as herself can participate in at-work volunteer opportunities. Employees can help a student on a class project right from their desk, spending on average less than 15 minutes a day.

Corrin, who has participated as a mentor in numerous student projects over the past few years, has taken her passion about the program and turned it into a special eMentoring Recruitment Drive (a lunch and learn type of session),

held recently in New York City. More than 60 local employees turned out for the event. Corrin and her colleagues Jean Barry, Jim Bode and Yesenia Russo shared their personal experiences with the program and how others can easily participate.

Corrin tells them the program is simple: TF employees sign up to be a mentor on the International Telementor website (www.telementor.org); choose a project and a student to work with; and then communicate electronically over a set time period (usually 4-8 weeks) to complete the assignment. “Depending on the student and also the project,” Corrin says, “students may look to their mentor for research ideas, to review a presentation, or to simply share their expertise in a particular topic.” The experience is extremely rewarding. “You wouldn’t expect that you could have such a positive impact with a virtual connection, but you really can,” says Corrin. “It’s wonderful to see the student learning and improving as you work together on a project, and the teachers and students I’ve worked with have been extremely appreciative.”

Thomson Financial employees have been volunteering through the TF eMentor program for more than six years. More than 130 TF employees have participated in projects with students; many have worked on multiple projects. All told, more than 1,079 students have benefited from TF employees mentoring insights.

Upon seeing the enthusiasm for the eMentor program at the New York City event, Executive Vice President of Human Resources & Organizational Development Sarah Dunn wants Corrin to launch similar Lunch & Learn sessions in other TF locations. “TF is all about performance—helping our clients succeed,” says Corrin. “Through eMentoring, we can help a student succeed, too.” ■



◀ **SIT BACK, RELAX** and learn about how easy it is to do effective volunteer work that your company supports — right from your own desk —and for less than 10 minutes a day.

Looking Forward: The Right Direction

JANUS, THE TWO-FACED ROMAN GOD, is always depicted looking backward at what has come before and forward at what lies ahead. The deity's namesake month and this winter season are made for retrospection and prognostication. Our Winter 2007 issue features teachers and young people from my community, Bossier Parish, Louisiana; and tens years have passed since ITP mentors first began working in our schools. As I read these stories of recent accomplishments, I can't help but think about the hundreds of volunteers like Corrin Silver and Karla Childers who have mentored local youth since 1996, and I can't help but be optimistic as I consider expanding the program to help more students like Stephanie and Jeremy and teachers like Steve Gann and Joan Turek.

ZAC
BURSON'S

MENTORING GEMS

Looking Back:

The Efforts of Stellar Mentors

In 1996, as a teacher of gifted students, I had accidentally and fortuitously discovered the electronic mentoring program that David Neils had created. When I first joined the program, I was focused

only on a small number of students in a single community. I wanted to connect my students with professionals who were driving the Information Technology industry and transforming how people worked and communicated. I wanted students in my community to learn what it would take to access the educational and career opportunities that were burgeoning around the world but that just weren't yet available in our part of the country. I had wanted my students to "think big" while they were still in high school, and then I wanted them to make decisions about where they wanted to live and work and raise their families with the knowledge that they could be their best anywhere that they were.

Since that time, through my work as ITP's program coordinator, I have had the great good fortune to work with thousands of mentors, students, and teachers in the communities ITP serves, yet I am still very motivated to have young people in my community collaborate with people who work for world class companies. I have been honored to be a part of ITP's growth with the addition of thousands of mentor volunteers, teachers, and students around the world, but I'm still grateful to have had the chance to bring such bright, altruistic volunteers into the classrooms of my community.

Looking Ahead:

Skilled Teachers, Mentors & Talented Students

The program is dynamic, and David and I like to think that it continues to get better with each new project. When he started the program, David's HP colleagues were the sole volunteers, and the teachers often had to struggle just to secure access to the Internet so their students could participate. However, the future looks bright for telementoring in Bossier Parish and elsewhere as we encounter more teachers and students with access, and most importantly the skills they need to get the most out of the medium. Moreover, the supply of mentor volunteers continues to grow with the recruitment efforts of exceptional volunteers like Corrin Silver. Now mentors from more than a dozen different sponsor organizations represent over a hundred different career fields work with teachers who integrate technology effectively into their teaching.

Joan and Steve, and my other colleagues in the district are outstanding veteran teachers, and they have brought to their projects, students and mentors, an exceptional understanding of what they are trying to teach and how they are going to teach it. Telementoring just supplies them with more tools to use. For them, the goal isn't to just connect students with mentors; it's to impart vital skills that students might not have otherwise learned without the experience. In the same way, mentors use the medium to share their time and talents in order to empower a young person to chart his or her own course.

By making the process of telementoring more efficient for teachers and mentors, we are now able to concentrate on how telementoring can change the ways in which young people view the future. A recent thank you message from one of our local students, gives evidence of the impact ITP mentors and teachers continue to have in my community: "I wanted to take the time to tell you how much I appreciate all that you have done to help me. It means so much to me that you would take time to write to me, some random girl in Louisiana, about my future. You have helped me so much as far as mapping out my plans post-high school, so I guess you could say you changed my life :)! I can honestly say that you are an awesome mentor! God bless you and your family..."

Some historians believe that Janus represented for the Romans, the transition between primitive and civilized society. From the perspective of this cold bright Louisiana January day, some of my early telementoring projects do look a little primitive; we sure did have a lot to learn about electronic collaboration, and we still do. However, as the stories in this issue attest, in Bossier and in other ITP communities, telementoring continues to evolve, moving in the right direction! ■

LASTING IMPACT



BUILDING BLOCKS FOR SUCCESS. Catherine Schwartz from Hewlett-Packard's Industry Standard Servers Division has time to travel the world, do her job, and mentor students in a variety of specific projects. She mentored Becca (see page 6) who was studying the effect of development on bird species in her community. It's no mystery how Schwartz does it. And she can even do it from England. Find out more by visiting www.telementor.org or calling 970-206-9352.

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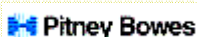
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E-mail: staff@telementor.org or call : (970) 206-9352.

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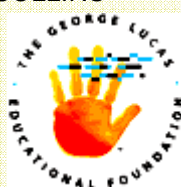


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