

# Lifelong Learning

## *Educational opportunities for all ages* BY LORI GUNN



Photos (L-R): Performing arts are an important part of the educational mix at Hebron Academy; Seal Rossignol helps out a pair of "reading buddies" at the Boxberry School; Hands-on learning in the Construction Technology Program of the Oxford Hills Technical School

A truly sustainable community values the educational opportunities it can provide for its members at any age. With supportive partnerships and a community commitment to lifelong learning, educational opportunities abound in the Oxford Hills.

### Education as Real-World Application

#### OHCHS TECHNICAL SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM

Just off Route 26 in a West Paris neighborhood, you'll find a hard-working group of **Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School (OHCHS)** students building a two-bedroom house for a family in need. Guiding them through it all are Scott McElravy and Dan Daniels, instructors of the **Oxford Hills Technical School's** Construction Technology Program. The project is a collaboration between the Technical School and **Community Concepts'** self-help program. Community Concepts provides all the materials and the students provide the labor after the concrete is poured.

With this partnership, students not only learn basic carpentry skills, they also apply and reinforce knowledge from the traditional classroom, and learn critical thinking and problem-solving skills. For Lyndsey Tripp, a senior at OHCHS and the only young woman currently on the project, the program "has been fun and challenging and has helped me step out of my shell."

McElravy and Daniels say they see the best come out in their students who appreciate the hands-on, real-world learning. Many go on to pursue vocations in construction-related fields. The instructors are as proud of the program they've built and refined over the years as they are of the students who thrive under their tutelage. According to McElravy, "This the best job in the world."

#### HEBRON ACADEMY: CULTIVATING INDIVIDUALITY IN A CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITY

Chartered in 1804, **Hebron Academy** is one of the nation's oldest endowed college preparatory boarding and day schools and the oldest educational institution in the Oxford Hills. The school offers a challenging curriculum, diverse Advanced Placement offerings, and a talented and dedicated faculty. "The faculty is the school's number one resource," explains Joe Hemmings, Director of Admissions at Hebron Academy. "They contribute to a friendly and supportive family-like atmosphere that inspires students to reach their highest potential."

What is a typical student experience at Hebron Academy? Thanks to Hebron's advantage of being a small community, Hemmings points out, a student who attends the Academy can expect "to take positive risks in reaching that next level." Those "positive risks" can be in the form of joining one of the many co-curricular activities offered at the school, tapping into hidden talent through participation in the arts, developing business skills in the Entrepreneurial/Leadership Program, or simply taking advantage of the intimate classroom setting. Students in the community service program at the Academy reach out to area elementary schools, participate in Head Start programs, and help out in nursing homes. Adding a unique dimension to the Academy's student population is the 12% of international students. "If you're in a class with a student from France, Spain, or Brazil, they may ask a question that an American student wouldn't think to ask," Hemmings adds.

As a 200 year-old citizen of the Oxford Hills, Hebron Academy has kept time with tradition while having its eye on the future. Trust. Honor. Respect. These are the guideposts for an institution that values its commitment to the individual and to the community.

#### THE BOXBERRY SCHOOL: A HOMEGROWN INNOVATION

The Boxberry plant, a native, low-lying shrub, bears a bright red berry as its fruit. Like its namesake, the **Boxberry School** bears the fruit of what can come from homegrown efforts. It began as a cooperative home-schooling effort by a group of parents who sought an educational community committed to meeting kids' developmental and individual learning needs while cultivating their interests and abilities. Most are still involved on many levels, from helping in the classroom to shoveling snow.

According to Dareth Law, a founding member and parent, the independent school is designed "for students who benefit socially and emotionally from smaller classrooms or for kids who think outside the box." Seal Rossignol, who teaches nine

students in her 3rd-6th grade classroom, adds, "The advantage of being an independent school allows us to be creative with the curriculum." Teachers can incorporate the best of educational theory and research to guide their teaching practice.

The multi-age classrooms and strong parental involvement allow students to learn, practice and apply their social skills as well as their academic skills within a range of what's best for each child. "We have very few behavioral issues," Law says, "probably because students' needs are met and kids are happy and free to express their individuality," adding warmly, "We have an extended family here."

### Making the Transition: Career and Educational Opportunities for Adults

#### THE MAINE CAREER CENTER

If you're a job seeker looking for training or further education, or if you're a business leader looking for qualified applicants, the **Maine CareerCenter** can help.

Located in the University College building in South Paris, the CareerCenter provides a wealth of services both to the job seeker and to the business community. For the individual seeking employment, the CareerCenter provides computerized job matching and access to websites that offer job opportunities. The Center also assists individuals with resumé writing and interviewing skills, and can help with employment goals for those without a specific career path in mind. When further training is needed to achieve those goals, the Center can assist with educational planning. For the business community, it offers a statewide job-posting service, as well as information on the labor market and labor laws, safety training and training connections.

Jim Trundy, Program Manager for Western Maine Community Action, supervises the South Paris CareerCenter office as well as the managers of the Rumford, Lewiston, and Wilton offices. He says that most job seekers who come into their offices "are out of work or are looking to get a better job." Since many



Photos (L-R): Students and teachers "pow wow" at the Boxberry School; Jim Trundy, Program Manager for Western Maine Community Action, at the South Paris CareerCenter, which he supervises



Three programs share the facilities of the Western Maine University and Community College Center: (L–R) Central Maine Community College, Adult Education, and University College of the University of Maine System.

employers use an on-line application process, Trundy points out, the Center is able to connect those people who do not have access to a computer.

#### OH/BUCKFIELD ADULT EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The **Oxford Hills/Buckfield Adult Education** program offers something for everybody.

Serving the residents of **MSAD #17** and **MSAD #39**, the Adult Education program has offered over 180 courses during the 2007–2008 academic year. “Students who enroll in Adult Education courses range from 17 up through 70,” says Adult Education Director Jane Courcy. Some students are there to earn their GED or diploma. For the college bound, the Adult College Transition program offers courses to help students succeed in a college classroom, even if they’ve been out of school for a while. Others enroll to sharpen their job skills or learn new ones such as truck driving or those needed to become a Certified Nursing Assistant. Some participate to seek a new hobby or skill, meet new people, or join a club or activity. Over a thousand people have enrolled in classes in the recent academic year, the majority for diploma or GED, Enrichment/Community Education, or Job Skills courses.

According to Courcy, after completing their classes “The majority of [GED students] head into jobs, careers, or the military.” Others “use their education and job skills to join employers in the Oxford Hills.” Many also start small businesses in area communities or go on to attend Western Maine University and Community College Center (WMUCC) in South Paris, Central Maine Community College, or University of Maine system campuses.

The Oxford Hills/Buckfield Adult Education program has enjoyed successful community partnerships. These include

local libraries, Community Concepts and Headstart centers, **SCORE**, the Small Business Administration, WMUCC, and the local office of the Maine CareerCenter. Together, they create a community that promotes a culture of opportunity and lifelong learning. Courcy adds, “Adult education is truly a community effort.”

#### WESTERN MAINE UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE CENTER

Beautifully renovated, the Western Maine University and Community College Center (WMUCC) is prominently situated on Main Street in South Paris next to Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School. Part of the University of Maine System, the College makes higher education accessible to those who cannot attend a university campus. It offers 41 degree and certificate programs and more than 200 courses. Courses are available on-site, as well as online and through interactive television (ITV).

WMUCC is a valuable community partner, teaming up with the Maine CareerCenter and the Adult Education program and linking our community to the larger University of Maine system.

#### Investing in the Future

To adapt to a rapidly changing world, a community needs to look to their greatest resource: the people who call it home. When a community invests in the education of its residents, it invests in its future. The sustainability of any community requires a commitment to creative and adaptive educational pursuits. Whether it’s building a home for high school credit, cultivating talents within a private school setting, or exploring college and new career options for the first time, the opportunities to grow and thrive—at any age—live here in the Oxford Hills. ■

#### BOLSTERS MILLS VILLAGE LIBRARY

659 Bolsters Mills Road, Harrison, Maine 04040  
207-583-6421, 207-583-6284  
Head Librarian: Charna Katz  
Wed. 7–9pm, Sat. 2–4pm  
» 2 public use computers  
» Internet access  
» Inter-Library Loan service

#### FREELAND HOLMES LIBRARY

109 Pleasant Street, Oxford, Maine 04270  
207-539-4016  
gdrapeau@freeland-holmes.lib.me.us  
www.freeland-holmes.lib.me.us  
Head Librarian: Glenda Drapeau  
Tues.,Thurs. 1–5pm, Wed. 6–8pm,  
Fri., Sat., 9am–12pm  
» 4 public use computers  
» Internet access  
» Inter-Library Loan service

#### HAMLIN MEMORIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM

Hannibal Hamlin Drive, Paris, Maine 04271  
207-743-2980  
hamlinstaff@hamlin.lib.me.us  
www.hamlin.lib.me.us  
Head Librarian: Jennifer Lewis  
Open April 1st through November 1st  
Tues., Thurs. 12pm–6pm, Sat. 10am–3pm  
» Wireless internet access

#### HARRISON VILLAGE LIBRARY

4 Front Street, Harrison, Maine 04040  
207-583-2970  
djackson@harrison.lib.me.us  
www.harrison.lib.me.us  
Head Librarian: Dianne Jackson  
Mon., Wed. 1pm–7pm, Thurs. 11am–5pm  
Sat. 10am–2pm  
» Children’s Story Time, Thursdays, 10am  
» 5 public use computers  
» Internet access  
» Wireless internet access  
» Inter-Library Loan service

#### NORWAY MEMORIAL LIBRARY

258 Main Street, Norway, Maine 04268  
207-743-5309, Children’s Room, 207-743-5308  
norlib@norway.lib.me.us  
www.norway.lib.me.us  
Head Librarian: Ann Siekman  
Mon., Tues., Fri. 10am–5pm, Wed. 10am–8pm,  
Thurs., 12pm–5pm, Sat. 10am–3pm  
(10am–1pm in summer)  
» 12 public use computers  
» Internet access  
» Inter-Library Loan service  
» Minerva statewide online catalogue  
» Adult book discussion group  
» Computer tutorials  
» Lecture series  
» Rotating art exhibits and topical book displays  
» Baby Boosters Story Time (to age 2), Fri., 10:30am  
» Preschool Story Time (ages 2–5), Wed., 10:30am  
» Summer reading program for children of all ages



A Halloween display greets visitors to the Norway Memorial Library

#### PARIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

37 Market Square, South Paris, Maine 04281  
207-743-6994  
paris.public.library@MSLN.net  
www.paris.lib.me.us  
Head Librarian: Michael Dignan

Mon., Fri. 9am–6pm, Tues. through Thurs.  
9am–8pm, Sat. 9am–4pm  
» 9 public use computers  
» Internet access  
» Wireless internet access  
» Inter-Library Loan service  
» Preschool Story Time, Thursdays, 10am  
» Children’s Story Time, Thursdays, 3pm (School year only)  
» Summer reading program for children of all ages  
» Computer tutorials

#### WATERFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

663 Waterford Road, Waterford, Maine 04088  
207-583-2050  
wla@waterford.lib.me.us  
http://wdb.sad17.k12.me.us/libraries/waterford.htm  
Head Librarian: Dorthie Hillquist  
Mon. 2pm–6pm, Wed. 3–8pm, Fri., Sat. 10am–2pm,  
Sun. 10am–2pm (summer only)  
» 2 public use computers  
» Internet access  
» Inter-Library Loan service  
» Adult book discussion group  
» Annual lecture on gardening  
» Pre-K summer reading program

#### WEST PARIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

226 Main Street, West Paris, Maine 04289  
207-674-2004  
wparislib@raodrunner.com  
http://wdb.sad17.k12.me.us/libraries/wparis.htm  
Head Librarian: Patricia Makley  
Mon., Fri. 1:30pm–6pm, Wed. 1:30pm–7pm,  
Sat. 10am–2pm

- » 2 public use computer
- » Internet access
- » Wireless internet access
- » Inter-Library Loan service
- » Summer children’s reading program
- » Preschool Story Time, Wed. 10:30

#### ZADOC LONG FREE LIBRARY

5 Turner Street, Buckfield, Maine 04220  
207-336-2171  
zadoc@zadoc.lib.me.us  
www.zadoc.lib.me.us  
Librarian: Everett Tilton  
Mon., Wed. 2pm–8pm, Tues., 9am–3pm,  
Sat. 9am–5pm  
» 4 public use computers  
» Internet access  
» Inter-Library Loan service

#### OTHER LOCAL LIBRARY RESOURCES

**Hebron Academy Library**  
Librarian: Cilla Potter, 207-966-2100

**Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School Library**  
Librarian: Melissa St. John, 207-743-8914

**Stephens Memorial Hospital Health Services Library**  
Librarian: Deborah Clark, 207-743-1562

**Oxford County Courthouse Law Library**  
207-743-6359  
Open for public use Mon.–Fri., 8am–4pm

**McLaughlin Garden**  
Extensive horticultural and gardening collection with borrowing rights available to members.  
207-743-8820