

Entrepreneurship Education the PA WAY!

By Ethan Ellenberger

Located in a small liberal arts school in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, Susquehanna University Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) team has been working to address real needs on its campus, in its communities, and around the globe since its inception in 2003. Since then, the organization has blossomed into a group of 70 students from a variety of majors and backgrounds. Led by its faculty advisor Mr. George Cravitz, and with the support of Susquehanna's Sigmund Weis School of Business, SU SIFE operates over 20 projects that focus on the SIFE criteria of success skills, financial literacy, market economics, business ethics, environmental sustainability, and entrepreneurship. In order to meet the guidelines set for entrepreneurship, SU SIFE operates numerous projects to affect many different at-risk demographics.

To date, our strongest projects have been geared towards entrepreneurship. Three of our projects focus on empowering aspiring entrepreneurs with the basic skills needed to jump start their endeavors. For instance, the Marketplace project was established in spring 2008 when only one Amish farmer set up shop each Saturday at the weekly farmers market in downtown

Selinsgrove. By partnering with the Borough Manager and other local business leaders, ten SIFE members had the opportunity to visit four Amish farms and speak with the families about the farmers market. Our initiative began with a promotional campaign of the Farmer's Market to the Selinsgrove community. This year, we have continued our partnership with the Borough Manager as we work to expand the market to more local farmers and promote it to the community. There are tremendous growth opportunities to assist these entrepreneurs in promoting their weekly event and encouraging more participation among the citizens.

SIFE's business consulting project began in the 2004-2005 school year. The following year the project began by working with a company called Algorithmic Identification Systems (AIS) as we conducted

market research about biometric technology then created a business plan for the company. Over the past three years, our consulting project continues to grow and flourish with both local and international companies. We have assisted Chilean Adventures (a company based out of Curico, Chile for study abroad experiences) gain exposure in the United States. Locally, we have consulted with a chiropractic office and a Tae Kwan Do studio to develop marketing and promotional materials. Currently we are working with Dutch Mill Bulbs, a national flower bulb fundraising corporation, to help expand their market presence. Through this project, SIFE is able to help businesses with

market research, industry data, marketing and promotional materials, accounting, OSHA regulations, HR policies and laws, and so much more—all for no fees! We look forward to expanding to new and existing businesses to help them reach their goals.

Project SCI, begun in spring 2006, also promotes the entrepreneurial spirit. Initially, this project, focused on providing inmates with personal success skills such as résumé building and interviewing skills, was made

possible by a partnership with a bilingual educator at the institute. Through feedback from the inmates, Project SCI now provides inmates with the skills necessary to embark on their own entrepreneurial venture upon release from the facility. For example, we are currently in the process of developing stock market lessons to teach prospective entrepreneurs about the workings of the stock market.

Through projects such as these, members of the SU SIFE team have learned that personal connections are essential to any entrepreneurial success. These are just a few ways that SU SIFE is addressing real needs in the community and around the world. For more information please visit our website at www.susqu.edu/SIFE.

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SU SIFE team with Carmen Dawson at the 2008 GEW event in Philadelphia, PA