

# CS<sup>2</sup> PILOT SITES:

## Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School | Upton, Massachusetts



Entrepreneur: Betty Castiglioni

As an entrepreneur, one of my most professionally fulfilling experiences was witnessing the impact of the interactions between students and professionals provided by our working relationship with the New England Laborers Training Center. Once BVT students reported their experiences to their classmates, the demand for additional visits to the training center and contact with professionals in non-traditional careers escalated where previously there was little interest on the part of the students.

### SUPPORTING EDUCATION, INSPIRING CAREERS

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Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School (Valley Tech) joined the CS<sup>2</sup> network as a pilot site in 2006 through a grant from Commonwealth Corporation. In partnership with local colleges, businesses, and economic development agencies, Valley Tech provides a state-of-the-art learning facility to educate young people and connect them to careers and higher education. The CS<sup>2</sup> Entrepreneur works with the school so that more students leave Valley Tech, with not only a diploma in hand, but with a compelling vision and plan for their future. Accomplishments for 2006-07 included:

#### Employability Prep Program

CS<sup>2</sup> designed, implemented, and taught a program to increase employability for ten seniors with significant learning and social needs.

#### Student Multicultural Leadership Council

The Entrepreneur developed and facilitated a multicultural council of students who led after-school programs for students of all ethnic backgrounds with the goal of increasing vocational and academic success. Students also worked to increase cultural awareness in the school through creative practices developed by the leadership team.

### ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

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#### Apprenticeships

CS<sup>2</sup> established a working relationship with the New England Laborers Training Center, a nonprofit training facility that provided hands-on experiences for Valley Tech students in the general construction and labor industry. Through the center, seniors had the opportunity to become apprentices and continue training in their chosen field upon graduation.

#### South East Equity Leaders (SEEL) Program

The Entrepreneur represented Valley Tech within a group of vocational teachers and support staff who worked together to deliver programming for students in nontraditional vocations.

#### Community Resource Brochure

The Entrepreneur developed a brochure that gives students and their families easy access to community resources and services. In a large geographic area (13 towns), it consolidates vital information. In addition, a business card with key addresses and phone numbers was issued to students. These tools help students communicate readily with local agencies to meet their needs.

### LEVERAGING RESOURCES

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#### Grants

The Entrepreneur assisted in grant writing for a Perkins grant by developing an action plan for Core Indicator IV-A: Nontraditional Enrollment.

## LEADING SYSTEM-WIDE INITIATIVES FOR CHANGE

During this second year of activity, CS<sup>2</sup> worked on several systemic initiatives that identified gaps in services for students placed at risk, and then developed and implemented a strategic plan to address those needs. The Entrepreneur, in collaboration with school administration and staff, is charged with developing programs and services that are based on a district-wide collection and review of student data. Focus areas this year included:

### Transitional Planning

The Entrepreneur was active in a monthly study group of school staff members, which identified student needs and available resources to assist with transitional planning activities.

### Research and Analysis

CS<sup>2</sup> conducted research and analyzed data about nontraditional student dropouts, then provided recommendations for program development to the district.

## Pittsfield/Berkshire Community Action Council YouthBuild Program | Pittsfield, Massachusetts

## SUPPORTING EDUCATION, INSPIRING CAREERS

The Pittsfield CS<sup>2</sup> site was initially established in 2003 in response to issues about disengaged youth, raised during a Youth Roundtable Summit sponsored by the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, the Pittsfield Public Schools, and other community partners. In May 2004, Commonwealth Corporation and collaborating partners agreed to fund and establish an off-site, alternative learning program for youth who were placed at risk of dropping out, or had already dropped out of high school. The program enabled seniors to complete their academic requirements, as well as to participate in work-based learning experiences with links to careers and higher learning opportunities. In 2006, Berkshire Community Action Council became part of the Pittsfield CS<sup>2</sup> network as the lead agency for the implementation of the YouthBuild Program for disengaged students. In October 2006, a CS<sup>2</sup> Entrepreneur was added to the site, serving as the Director for YouthBuild during 2006-2007. Accomplishments during this year include:

### YouthBuild Program

- Implemented a community-wide summit that identified programs and funding to support alternative learning options at the high-school level
- Developed an academic curriculum that empowers youth to complete their high school graduation requirements
- Implemented the YouthBuild Program and recruited ten students (and placed five) into a pilot YouthBuild Program for a full calendar year
- Tracked progress of students in the pilot program using the Adult Learning Center's SMART system
- Coordinated multiple funding sources for YouthBuild

## LEVERAGING RESOURCES

### Grants for the YouthBuild Program

- Federal Department of Labor YouthBuild Grant
- Rotary Club of Pittsfield donation
- United Way Venture Grant

## Results Data (2006-07)

- β Member of CS<sup>2</sup> network since 2006
- β 1 school involved in CS<sup>2</sup>: Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School
- β 1 Entrepreneur
- β 45 students participated in CS<sup>2</sup> programming

Entrepreneur: Dennis Turner (not pictured)

## Results Data (2006-07)

- β Member of CS<sup>2</sup> network since 2003
- β 1 school involved in CS<sup>2</sup>: Taconic High School
- β 1 Entrepreneur involved with YouthBuild site, since 2006
- β 5 students participated in CS<sup>2</sup> programming