

# Community Partners

## IPEI Grant Supports 4-H Urban Outreach Summer



For five weeks this summer, youth from the SIFE (Students with Interrupted Formal Education, mostly Burmese refugees) and West Village afterschool programs have joined together for Cornell Cooperative Extension's 4-H Urban Outreach program. Supported by an Ithaca Public Education Initiative (IPEI) Community Collaboration Grant, the program focuses on literacy, multiculturalism and special interest activities.

"We're really helping students avoid that learning loss that happens over the summer," said 4-H Urban Outreach Coordinator Suzie Schlough.

The enrichment program is an extension of the 4-H Urban Outreach afterschool program that takes place at Belle Sherman Elementary School and West Village Apartments during the academic year. The summer activities are based downtown at the First Presbyterian Church and follow morning classes at Beverly J. Martin Elementary School. Participating students attend kindergarten through fifth grade at Belle Sherman and Cayuga Heights Elementary Schools.

"The cultural immersion is wonderful," said Program Manager Jamila Simon.

A key component of the program is literacy education, as many of the participants are English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students. Each day begins with an hour of reading and writing, followed by an activity based on weekly themes including friendship, multiculturalism, science and technology, emotional intelligence and performing arts. Students also participate in "clubs" focused on acting, science and adventure, health and wellness, and music and culture.

"Our program emanates from the needs of our youth," Simon said. "We use a life skills development model so we always provide options."