

Youth Leadership, March 2012

"The program "taught me to appreciate my mother and how much things cost."

"I didn't realize how many things people have to consider."

These are some of the comments from the students that participated in the Life Unplugged program, sponsored by Schenectady Business and Professional Women, on March 24th at Schenectady County Community College. The event was aimed at teaching youth ages 14 to 19 financial planning skills, goal setting and career planning. Students participated in exercises to determine their most important values, identified their ideal careers, living within a monthly budget and work through critical life choices.

Volunteers manned each station simulating a month in the life of the students who were each transformed into a "25 year old" for the program. All choices and decisions had to accommodate their family, career and lifestyle as they "spent" their monthly paycheck. For the first hour and a half students made visits to the bank deposited their paychecks and started making decisions about their monthly expenses. Students quickly realized that their earnings could not support the lifestyles they anticipated. Students' comment included "I didn't know it cost so much".

During the luncheon students heard from Supreme Court Justice Ann Crowell. She spoke about her choices that lead her through many different careers and ultimately running for public office and she became the first female Supreme Court Justice in New York State. . Students heard also from Dr. Bullock, President of SCCC. The President welcomed them and encouraged them to seek careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). These careers have low unemployment rates, and the fact that ALL of the NANO Tech students left his college with job commitments. Jane Osterhout, our Schenectady BPW President, spoke about our club and its level of professionalism and commitment to our community and its youths, not only through scholarships but programs like Life-Unplugged.

Our entire team of volunteers did a fantastic job. The students were very appreciative of the reception they received from everyone especially their adult guides. The program was a complete success and BPW has once again presented to the community an effective and relevant program.

Thank you to our sponsors, the students that participated, the parents, the schools and most of all our volunteers.

Miriam and Kim

To preview the newest version of "The Reality Store" go to www.life-unplugged.org/about.php

Visit our resource tab to see the information about the original version of "[The Reality Store](#)".

Miriam Cajuste and Jane Osterhout appeared on The Schenectady Today Show with Ann Parillo today, February 28th, 2012 to talk about this program. [View the video.](#)