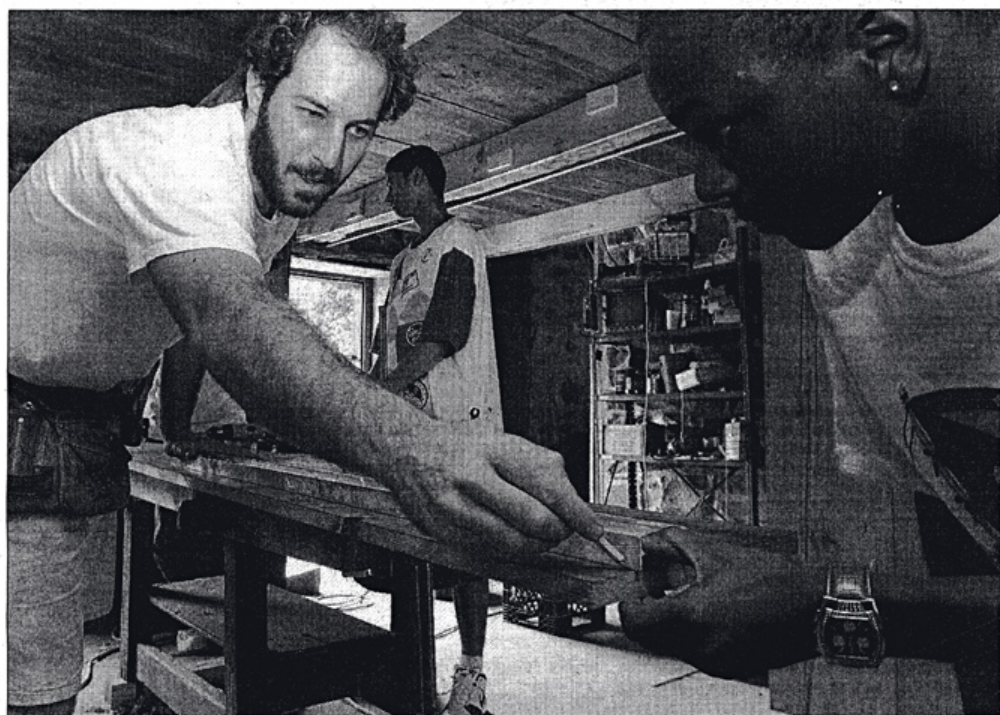


INTERNSHIP HELPS PRESERVE APPRECIATION OF PAST



MICHAEL BERMAN

Larry Vellensky (l.) of Hillsborough, N.J., shares plane truth with Brooklyn High School of the Arts students Elijah Ottley (r.) and Angel Cordero on woodworking project in Christopher House at S.I.'s Historic Richmond Town.

Restoration job helps students craft future

WHILE OTHER KIDS slept late or lounged at the beach this summer, a group of Brooklyn students commuted four hours to Staten Island each day to toil under the hot sun.

And they loved it.

The three students, who will be seniors this fall at Brooklyn High School of the Arts in Boerum Hill, completed a six-week internship this week at Historic Richmond Town.

Four days a week, six hours a day, the 17-year-olds learned to plane wood, add paneling to ceiling joists and transplant shrubbery at a 284-year-old farmhouse at the living museum on Staten Island.

"I liked working here alot," said Winston Prendergast, adding that the carpentry and horticulture skills he learned were worth the two hour trip each way by subway, ferry and bus.

"Any bit of knowledge that you can get that you didn't

BY ELIZABETH HAYS
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have before is progress," added the fine arts major from Canarsie.

Winston and his classmates were among 27 students from the four-year-old school on Dean St. who are specializing in preservation arts. They spent the summer learning hands-on skills in internships at 17 historic projects across the city.

Another Brooklyn student traveled to the Bronx Botanical Garden to help restore the Fountain of Life, and four other students interned at three Brooklyn preservation companies, learning to restore historic lamps, antique woodwork and vintage stained glass.

Kate Ottavino of the New Jersey Institute of Technology, who oversees the program and helped create the school, said the internship program aims to give the students real-life experience in concepts they learn throughout the year.

The internship is mandatory for students in the school's preservation arts major program and is open to those in the four other specializations: fine arts, band, choral and dance.

Although students can choose other majors, the themes of historic preservation and conservation are infused throughout the curriculum, she said.

Ottavino, who directs the New Jersey Institute of Technology's preservation technology program, said the 600-student school aims to expose future generations to the age-old skills needed to preserve historic buildings, monu-

ments, statues and artifacts.

High School of the Arts is the only public secondary school in the country specializing in historic preservation, she said.

"This is the future," said John Abb, a restoration specialist at Historic Richmond Town who worked with the Brooklyn students this summer. "What we know is of no value unless we can pass it on."

Winston's colleagues in the Historic Richmond Town internship — Elijah Ottley from East New York and Angel Cordero from Park Slope — were unsure whether they want to specialize in restoring monuments. But they said they now appreciate the past far more than before.

"Once people know about their past, they get more interested in the past and how it affects the future and the present," said Elijah.

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