**Students are role models for city teens who help promote literacy in Harlem**

Last summer, when Terry Calhoun read stories to Harlem pre-teens, many of them were surprised to learn he was still in school.

"I took one kid on my lap, and the others asked, 'Is that your son?' They all asked how old I was. They couldn't believe it when I said I was still in school, like them," said the 21-year-old Calhoun.

At the Hans Christian Andersen School, P.S. 144 on 122nd Street, Calhoun found he was the only adult African-American male in sight. "What a difference one role model made to them," he said. "I got down and played with them, I taught them games that had been taught to me. and I practiced in Harlem."

Calhoun was one of four Cornell students who spent last summer working outside the university's Cooperative Extension office in Harlem on a new project aimed at improving family literacy by introducing children to books in the hope they will bring their new interest back to their families.

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When McMillin and Hollander found themselves talking about ways the university might help inner-city residents as part of its mandate as a land-grant institution, Holland suggested a literacy project.

Both men are among those who believe the university should play a more active role in New York's cities through programs such as Cooperative Extension. For a century, Cooperative Extension has helped citizens apply land-grant-university research to everyday problems — from improving crop yields to following sound nutritional practices. In recent years, the programs have moved into cities and are trying to apply the same model to urban needs.

McMillin, who is a faculty adviser at Ujamaa Residence College, a predominantly black dormitory, recruited four students for the project last year.

The students' salaries were paid by the university through work-study funds and by an initial commitment of $4,400 from the President's Fund for Educational Initiatives. A Cornell Foundation administered by the president's office to reward innovative educational ideas.

During the course of the summer, the New York-based Bowes Foundation, which is devoted to promoting literacy, contributed $25,000 to the project. That support enabled the program to be continued year-round with Cooperative Extension counselors doing literacy work as well as nutritional counseling.

At first, the four students tagged along with Cooperative Extension nutritional counselors, whose job includes visiting...