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Youth in Focus

Corporate Intern

By Richard A. Ross

MONTICELLO, NY – Commencement, the formal term used to describe one's graduation, implies a new beginning. For Ben Kolansky, a 2005 graduate of Fallsburg High School, the chance to spend the summer between high school and his freshman year at SUNY Albany working as a corporate intern for Jeremy Gorelick – one of Sullivan County's most active real estate developers – is indeed a great beginning to his studies in business and public administration. Business or politics is what Kolansky has in mind for his future, and the chance to work with Gorelick offers a hands-on experience not only to shadow a corporate go-getter who has a number of exciting projects in the works, but also to act as a liaison between Gorelick's company, Emanon Equities and the Woodbourne Action Committee.

That community-based organization is planning improvement projects that include the revitalization of the Woodbourne Theater, recently purchased by Sullivan Performing Arts, and a 400-plus residential unit that Gorelick is undertaking as part of his quest to provide affordable housing to people in the county. The project calls for 100 single-family homes and 300 multiple-family homes. Amenities will include a 75,000 square foot community clubhouse, a pool and a four-acre pond.

Woodbourne is where Kolansky lives, and his mother Elizabeth's involvement in the hamlet's revitalization via Sullivan First and The Woodbourne Action Committee has been shared with Ben. From the time he began attending the Benjamin Cosor Elementary School at age nine, following the family's move from the city, his mother has gotten him involved in community projects. The Kolanskys have had property in Woodbourne for four generations and have looked forward to seeing the hamlet develop.

And development is exactly what is in store for Woodbourne, thanks in great part to Gorelick's style and vision. "He's intelligent, neat and a thoughtful planner," says Kolansky. "He doesn't rush into things, and though he hasn't been in Sullivan County long, he has made many connections which have led to meetings with key political leaders including Sullivan County Legislator Leni Binder and Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther. I aspire to be a person like Jeremy," notes Kolansky.

Gorelick, the son of Long Island General Contractor Jerry Gorelick, is following in his father's footsteps as he oversees the renovation of the Peachtree Building in Monticello, which now houses his office and the Monticello Travel Agency. Future tenants include Literacy Volunteers, artists in residence and other professionals. Also on Gorelick's agenda is the completion of Schoolbell Townhouses in Liberty, which will feature one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom housing units that will range in price from

\$119,000 to \$146,000. Gorelick is also a prime mover in the acquisition and relocation of the Munson Diner from its former home in Hell's Kitchen to Liberty.

Kolansky approached Gorelick about the internship at a meeting in Woodbourne several months ago, something that impressed Gorelick. "He showed initiative," notes Gorelick. "I wanted someone who knew the area and wanted to go into business. I needed someone who is a self-starter," added Gorelick. Both Kolansky and Gorelick were members of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) in high school and both were first-place finishers in FBLA contests. Kolansky was a winner of this year's award for entrepreneurship. Gorelick won an FBLA award for public speaking. He went on to get his degree in international finance from Johns Hopkins University, worked on Wall Street and has been all over the world before settling in White Sulphur Springs and starting Emanon Equities.

Gorelick, who is only 25, envisions Kolansky's internship thus: "It will give the young entrepreneur a flavor for the real world of real estate development and planning on a large scale by watching the day-to-day local activities of the Monticello-based firm. Chief among his activities will be working with the Woodbourne Action Committee, the county planning department community residents and business owners."

Kolansky notes that he has already spoken with all of the hamlet's business owners, photographed areas of Woodbourne and has sat in on meetings with government officials.

This week's youth in focus is a pro-active young man who is using his energy and his vision to help reshape his hometown and county.