

reach and to stimulate collaboration among UC researchers and between UC and public schools. Others using the website include students and teachers at other schools, as well as pest control operators.

City Bugs, in particular, is designed to introduce students to biodiversity and inspire them to study natural sciences at the college level. The Berkeley team is particularly well suited to inspire McClymonds' diverse population: Lewis is African-American, Dunbar is Japanese and African-American and Suoja is disabled.

Chris Ashley, the Oakland Unified School District project liaison for Interactive University, says the McClymonds 10th-graders "are actually making a picture of insect life in their own neighborhood. That's real research that will be useful to other students, teachers and researchers."

He continues, "I think that connections with educators outside of our school is a very important contact for our students. Especially when working with urban populations, a student's ability to identify with university researchers

and to identify themselves as university material is a powerful and important change in point of view and outlook."

An example is Dunbar himself. A graduate of the Oakland District's Fremont High School, he was inspired to become an entomologist at age 12 after meeting CNR's Dahlsten.

Besides inspiring students, City Bugs can serve as a teaching and learning model for other educational programs using the Internet. The City Bugs website can be found at <http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/explore>. UC's Interactive University web address is <http://iu.berkeley.edu/iu/>  
—Jill Goetz



Peg Skorpinski

**McClymonds student Kedes Befeckadu compares a mounted swallowtail butterfly with a digital image of the same insect in the "City Bugs" website.**

## UC trains welfare recipients

Researchers at UC are supplying homeless shelters with educational videotapes to share with low-income families in Contra Costa County. The Welfare Reform Act requires welfare recipients to take training in life skills, including parenting.

"I believe that we can give parents a little break by providing them the opportunity to learn at their own pace, space and convenience," says Jagjeet Johal, UC Cooperative Extension consumer economist in Contra Costa County. "They can watch the videos at their leisure and call us if they have questions."

Although the video viewers don't receive credit to comply with the reform act, the videos prepare them for independent living, says Merlin Wedepohl, executive director of Shelter Inc. Finding a job is the primary goal for most homeless people so the shelter trains them in subjects such as computers. But they also need life skills, Wedepohl explains, skills that many of us learn from our parents — nutrition, money management, shopping, cooking, parenting and conflict resolution. "We provide ongoing training and educational services and Jeet's videos fit right into our programs at no cost," Wedepohl says. "They provide wonderful training."

The 10 videos promoting parenting skills were produced by Johal and Dorothy Cudaback, UC Berkeley human relations specialist. They give tips on goal setting, money management, instilling values in children by example, discipline techniques, and how to teach children through play.

The videotapes have been broadcast on cable television 146 times in Contra Costa County to a potential viewership of 290,785 households per show.

By testing the parents at the homeless shelter before and after they watch the videos, the researchers hope to find out how people learn parenting skills.

In a previous study conducted with 140 low-income parents in Contra Costa, San Joaquin and Solano counties, the participants said they wished to have class discussion, and additional information from the instructor, Johal said.

At the homeless shelters, people can watch in groups or individually, then discuss with the instructor. They can also call Johal if they have questions. She hopes to follow up to see if any behavioral changes result from watching the informative videos.

—Editor