1. **Host Name:** STEPS, Seneca Towns Engaging People in Solutions (with assistance from Seneca County Cornell Cooperative Extension)

2. **Host Background Information:** A group in southern Seneca County has received funding from the Greater Rochester Health Foundation (GRHF) through the S2AY Rural Health Network (6 county public health departments, including Seneca) for a Neighborhood Health Improvement Grant. The premise of the grant is that health is affected by the economy, education levels, employment/income, transportation, and environment/housing. These factors are called the “social determinants” of health. Only about 10% of health status is determined by the availability of health services. In other words, when it comes to health, where you live makes a difference. Lower income communities usually have low levels of education, high levels of poverty, and limited access to services. The GRHF believes that healthy communities lead to healthier residents. If the community is strong and vital the residents are more apt to be healthy. The elements that make people healthy are: personal behavior (not smoking, eating healthy foods, physical activity); social relationships (connections with friends, family, groups); physical environment (quality of housing, air, water, streets, sidewalks, etc.); economics (employment status, level of income, education level); and access to medical care.

The project focuses on the southern area of Seneca County, an economically depressed region which includes the 4 townships of Covert, Lodi, Ovid and Romulus (total population approximately 10,000). The communities are served by the South Seneca and Romulus school districts (with about 775 and 400 students, respectively) and much of the community’s identity and activities revolve around the schools. Its “commercial center” is the village of Ovid, with other “downtowns” found in the villages of Interlaken and Lodi, as well as the hamlets of Romulus and Willard. Agriculture and tourism are the major industries in the area, including a large number of Amish and “English” farms. Award winning wineries also contribute to the local economy. Area residents show a surprising resilience and “can do” attitude, making a concerted effort to look out for and help each other.

The project began on December 1, 2013. The GRHF is funding this project (and the S2AY Rural Health Network is sponsoring STEPS) because they want to show that the health status of residents will, in fact, improve if the social determinants of health in their neighborhoods improve. In short this is not a traditional health improvement grant meant to provide health screenings and nutrition information. Rather it is an untraditional community development grant. It looks to improve the economic, social, and physical environment of the area’s residents with the ultimate goal of improved physical health. Phase I (December 1, 2013- November 30, 2014) of the
The project involves utilizing **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD)** to identify the assets of the residents and the assets of the area. These assets can then be used to make changes in the community that will benefit residents.

**The assets to be examined are:** **Individuals** (skills, knowledge and experience of the people in our community); **Associations** (groups of volunteers, neighbors, friends); **Institutions** (local public, private, non-profit organizations); **Physical** (land, property, buildings, transportation); **Economic** (businesses, jobs, income); and **Cultural** (history, community identity, traditions). These assessments will be completed by conducting focus groups with residents and designing and implementing individual resident surveys, along with other techniques and methodologies. Technical assistance is provided by a professor from Northwestern through the GRHF. Additionally, five, $1,000 Resident Health Promotion Projects will be granted to residents in the “neighborhood” who have proposed ways to make the community a better place to live. A similar grant has been in operation in the Dundee area. Its name is “Our Town Rocks” and the website is [www.ourtownrocks.org](http://www.ourtownrocks.org).

3. **Internship Position Name/Title:** **Assistant for Community Assessment and Outreach.**

4. **Internship Position / Project Context:** With a small staff, the intern will be a key player in the office and the developing assessment and outreach activities of STEPS. S/he will be an active member of the team. Phase I (December 1, 2013 - November 30, 2014) of the project involves utilizing Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) to identify the assets of the residents and the assets of the area. The intern will be an important part of this first phase.

5. **Internship Position Description:** The exact duties of the intern will depend on where the project is in the asset-based community assessment process. It may include assisting in direct assessment/data collection activities such as survey distribution or focus group facilitation. It could also include data analysis and interaction with grantees from the Resident Health Promotion Projects. It will include developing and implementing outreach activities about the program at various community events/festivals/meetings and to individual residents. Exact roles and responsibilities will be based on the intern’s and STEPS’ respective goals, skill sets, and other considerations and will be finalized during the March/April time period when the intern is involved in the 1-credit preparation and orientation course on campus. This position description will be jointly developed and finalized by the student intern and the supervisor at that time.

6. **Basic Qualifications and Preferred Experience:** The intern should be comfortable working/speaking with the public. Experience with data collection and analysis will be a huge plus. S/he should have an interest in rural areas, community development, and well-being. An ability to look at an issue in an interdisciplinary way will be most helpful. We are looking for someone who wants to be an integral member of the team and who is willing to embrace duties assigned them. A background/coursework in community development or community health will be helpful.

7. **Internship Schedule:** We are flexible with scheduling and the intern may need to work some evenings and weekends. The 8 hour community engagement component of the internship position will be included in the total 40 hour work week.
8. **Expected Outcomes (for intern):** Some of this is outlined above. Depending on where the STEPS project is on its timeline, and therefore the specific responsibilities assigned to the intern, it is expected that the intern will have an opportunity to increase their skills in the following areas: data entry and database management, presenting to various community groups, interacting with local media, implementing various survey and other primary data collection methodologies, and contributing to the launching of a major community development project focused on health and well-being. The intern will have the opportunity to be on the ground floor of a community development project that has the potential to be transformational for this area of southern Seneca County. Keeping the intern’s goals in mind, we will strive to shape their role in the project as one that provides valuable experiences and educational benefits.

9. **Location of Assignment:** Main base will be the office on Main Street in Ovid, but the intern will likely be at locations and events throughout the “neighborhood” of the four towns.