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# WhizKids creating web designs

Local firm hires teen talent in exciting area of high tech

By Sarah Bradshaw  
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Behind every great Internet technology company is a team of talented teenagers.

At least that's what Bram Moreinis, founder of Game Face Web Design in Kingston, believes.

The educator-turned-entrepreneur states it's no secret the Internet is "practically hardwired into their DNA." That's why his for-profit company functions a lot like a nonprofit, with youth empowerment at the forefront of its mission.

Enter Adam Atlas. The 17-year-old Poughkeepsie resident is a Web programmer at Game Face Web Design. He's also what Moreinis described as a "whiz kid." Perhaps that's because Atlas started tinkering with computers when he was 5. Or because he entered college at 16.

Then there's Benjamin Kudria, 19. The State University of New York at Stony Brook sophomore, from Columbia County, is the director of technology at Game Face Web Design - and he helped launch the company.

"I like to experiment with technology," said Kudria, who was born in Moscow in 1988. "I guess you can call me a whiz kid."

Jordan DeNitto is the newest addition to Moreinis' teen staff. The 15-year-old Saugerties resident is hoping her first job teaches her skills that lead to a career in graphic design.

"My dad wanted me to work at McDonald's, but when this came up I jumped at it," she said.

Game Face Web Design's business concept is a win-win, Moreinis said, because the company provides clients with the top talent and provides that talent with a medium to grow (minus the constraints of school bells).



Karl Rabe/Poughkeepsie Journal

Game Face Web Design owner Bram Moreinis, third from left, at the company office in Kingston. From left are Benjamin Kudria, 19, of Gallatin, Columbia County, Adam Atlas, 17, of the Town of Poughkeepsie, and Jordan DeNitto, 15, of Saugerties.

## Game Face's S-word test

Is your site:

Smart? (Visitors are able to get what they want fast).

Sexy? (The design gets your immediate interest).

Sticky? (Clients want to stay there forever).

Speedy? (Pages load quickly).

Searchable? (Well-coded, keyword-rich pages).

Spot-on? (Design points clients to get what they want).

For information, visit

**gameface webdesign.com**

and **hvscoouts.com**

One customer, Kellie Murphy, said she wouldn't call the young talent an advantage, but a feel-good perk to doing business with Game Face Web Design.

"[We are] helping them get jobs in the community, and giving them a sense of confidence and respect for working in their field," Murphy said, the managing director of Tina Chaden Direct, a fine art print company in Greene County. "It's good for everyone."

Moreinis has been working with teenagers and computers for more than 20 years, as a teacher and school technology curriculum developer. In 1996, he created Tech Scouts, and brought the program to the City of Poughkeepsie School District in 1998, as well as other schools. Tech Scouts are students who develop computer-related and work-force preparation skills in service to the school community and apply them in real-world environments. Both Atlas and Kudria are Tech Scouts.

In 2005, after two years at Taconic Hills school district (Columbia County) as technology/curriculum coordinator, Moreinis founded Beyond the Box, the precursor to Game Face Web Design. He said he had tired of "the constraints of the institution."

"It's not natural - study, test, study, test," he said. "It's not relevant and does not consider all the possibilities of learning." He took his Tech Scout program and applied it in the information technology business. He deemed it "in-sourcing."

"Why go to India when our brilliant college student subcontractors (Tech Scouts) are right here? They help us stay on top of the latest trends and tools, and provide a flexible work force offering high quality at an affordable price," his Web site reads.

Low prices promised

Price, in fact, is what separates Game Face Web Design from the dozens of companies in the region.

"I'd say we are between 25-50 percent lower in cost than our competition," Moreinis said. "We do that because of our flexible work force and low overhead." Don't think that means the Tech Scouts aren't being paid. They can earn between \$10 and up to \$30 per hour, depending on their skills.

"That's more than I'd make flipping burgers at Wendy's," said Kudria, who will work from his campus dorm when he moves back to Long Island.

For now, Kudria sits in a cubicle in a fourth-floor lofty office space on Wall Street in Kingston's business district. To his left, Atlas writes Web coding on his laptop. To his right, DeNitto learns basic html coding and Moreinis paces the aisle behind them, answering questions and talking on his cell phone.

Atlas said the best part of his job is having a support staff of adults who handle the business aspects, so he can concentrate on programming. He is referring to Laura Covello, a Web and marketing writer; Jody Harvey, an accounts manager; Margaret Ryon, in the creative department and Gregg Osofsky, a graphic designer.

In the future, Moreinis wants to involve youth community programs in his mission to teach youngsters to develop an "entrepreneurial spirit." His message is: "If you can imagine it, you can try it out."

Robert Wright, executive director of Nubian Directions II Inc., a City of Poughkeepsie community technology resource center, said programs such as Tech Scouts would not only benefit "whiz kids," but also inspire students to stay in school.

"The whole idea behind dropout prevention is that young people are disillusioned. They think school is gearing students for college, but not everyone is going to go to college. If they acquire a skill, to put into practice, it may stimulate their desire to want to complete high school."