

# The Recorder

August 20, 1999

32 Pages

Greenfield, Massachusetts

Est. 1792

## ristic thinking elps teens to mean business

n't have a shop — or  
yet. Their inventory  
price lists torn from  
stowed inside a black

uggle with return-on-in-  
for a business plan,  
and Stephens envision  
chants, selling boards,  
is to throngs of skate-  
region.

uturistically," confid-  
a high school dropout  
teens in this summer's  
Society. Once they've  
market, Whaland and  
uld start selling in-line  
too.

makes program leader  
happy enough to grab  
p or an ollie himself.

our business manage-  
risk of failing out of  
running away. Statisti-  
cent of those who take  
by the New York City-  
on for Teaching Entre-

preneurship — will actually form a business. Even so, Cohen-Mitchell is dedicated to planting seeds of hope. Along with lectures on the vast market economy and the ins and outs of record-keeping, he takes each group of students on a tour of Wall Street and to a thriving soul-food restaurant in Brooklyn, N.Y., run by a young entrepreneur who got his start the way they are.

The curriculum is geared to the sixth-grade level, to accommodate teens who struggle in school.

"You take a kid who is at risk, academically challenged, and give them a knowledge of the business world. That's something you don't get working at McDonald's," he said. Even those who don't open stores on Main Street become more attractive to employers, he said: "As employees, they can bring a lot more to the job."

Run by the Orange Revitalization Partnership at around \$3,000 per session, the year-old program tries to help youth — the high school dropout rate of 6.4 percent in Orange is twice the state average — as well as the fragile local economy. Only a small fraction of the town's 1,000 teens can hope to find local jobs after school or in the summer, said Cohen-Mitchell.

The program has served three sets of teens so far. Participants typically volunteer for the See THINKING Page 12



Recorder/Peter MacDonald

Chad Stephens and Dave Whaland, front, hope to sell skateboards. "They know their market... They live and breathe skateboarding," says the program director.