

BELIEVE *in the* **DIFFERENCE** **VtSHARES**

Impact to Various Nonprofit Organizations Serving Vermont

Table of Contents

Age Well	4
Aids Project Of Southern Vermont	5
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Vermont.....	5
Amy's Armoire, Inc.....	6
Barre Area Senior Center	7
Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center (BEEC)	7
BROC Community Action	7
Capstone Community Action	8
Cathedral Square	9
Center for an Agricultural Economy	9
Central Vermont Council on Aging.....	9
Central Vermont Habitat for Humanity, Inc.....	10
Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice.....	11
Central Vermont Humane Society	12
Champlain Community Services, Inc.....	13
Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources (C.I.D.E.R)	14
Chill Foundation	14
Circle (formerly Battered Women's services and Shelter).....	14
Clarina Howard Nichols Center, Inc.	14

Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association Chapter 26-1.....	15
Committee on Temporary Shelter	15
Community Asylum Seekers Project	15
Community Asylum Seekers Project	16
Community Harvest of Central Vermont	16
Dismas of Vermont, INC.....	16
Downstreet Housing & Community Development	17
EarthShare.....	18
ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain	19
Elevate Youth Services (formerly Washington County Youth Service Bureau)	20
Fellowship of the Wheel	20
Friends of Dog Mountain, Inc.	21
Friends of the Winooski River	21
Good Beginnings of Central Vermont	22
Good Samaritan Haven	22
Greater Burlington YMCA	23
Green Mountain Club	23
Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity	24
Green Mountain Mobile Therapy-Mobile Mental Health	24
Green Mountain United Way.....	24
Groundworks Collaborative, Inc.	25
Hardwick Area Food Pantry	26
HomeShare Vermont	26
Housing Trust of Rutland County, Inc.	27
Howard Center Inc.	28
Janet S. Munt Family Room	28
Josh Pallotta Fund, Inc. & Josh's House	28
Kellogg-Hubbard Library	29
Kingdom Animal Shelter	29
Kurn Hattin Homes for Children	30
Lamoille Community Food Share	30
Local Motion	30
Machia Wilderness Camp	30

Maquam Bay of Missisquoi (Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi)	31
Meals on Wheels of Lamoille County	31
MENTOR Vermont.....	31
Michael Zemanek Memorial Foundation.....	32
Milk with Dignity Standards Council	33
Mosaic, VT.....	34
Mountain Communities Supporting Education Inc. dba The Collaborative	34
Mountain View Farm Animal Sanctuary	34
North Branch Nature Center	35
Northeast Kingdom Human Services	36
Northeast Kingdom Learning Services, Inc.	36
Northeast Wilderness Trust	37
Northern Counties Health Care, Inc.....	37
NorthWoods Stewardship Center.....	38
One Tree Planted, Inc.....	39
OUR House of Central VT, INC	39
Outright Vermont.....	39
Pathways Vermont.....	40
Pope Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter, Inc.	40
Reinbow Riding Center	40
Renita Marshall Helping Hands Foundation, Inc.....	40
Rural Community Transportation	41
Rutland County Free Clinic.....	41
Rutland United Methodist Church dba Companions In Wholeness	42
SafeArt, Inc.....	42
Safeline, Inc.....	43
Southern Vermont Arts Center	43
Special Olympics Vermont	44
Spectrum Youth & Family Services	44
The University of Vermont Health Network – Home Health & Hospice.....	44
Turtle Island Children's Center.....	45
Twin Pines Housing	46
Twin Valley Senior Center	47

United Way of Lamoille County	47
United Way of Rutland County	48
Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports	48
Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired	49
Vermont CARES.....	49
Vermont Catholic Charities, Inc.	49
Vermont Farmers Food Center	49
Vermont Foundation of Recovery.....	51
Vermont Interfaith Action.....	51
Vermont Mountain Bike Association	52
Vermont Natural Resources Council.....	52
Vermont Parks Forever	52
Vermont River Conservancy.....	53
Vermont Symphony Orchestra	53
Vermont Works for Women	54
Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC)	54
Visiting Nurse and Hospice for VT & NH	55
Washington County Family Center, d/b/a Family Center of Washington County.....	55
Waterbury Common Market (formerly known as Waterbury Area Food Shelf)	55
Youth First Mentoring.....	56
Youth Services.....	57

Age Well

When someone asks me about Age Well’s work in the community, hundreds of stories come to mind. Too many of our older neighbors are isolated, living alone and struggling to juggle the high cost of food, medications, and manage their care.

Agnes’ story below really encapsulates so much of our mission and its impact:

“It’s been a lot harder than I thought getting older, it’s challenging to cook for myself and buy healthy foods with rising prices. I really am eating much better since I joined Meals on Wheels. My doctor is even impressed with how I’ve been able to maintain a healthier weight. I live alone so it can be pretty quiet, but it has been neat to get to know the Meals on Wheels volunteers. I like knowing someone is coming by every day to say ‘Hello’ and check in on me.”

Age Well's Meals on Wheels, case management, and other services are offered for free to older Vermonters in Addison, Chittenden, Franklin, and Grand Isle counties. Since 2020, we have seen a steady 25% increase in those needing home-delivered meals. We know that Meals on Wheels serves some of the most at-risk seniors in our community who are struggling with isolation and hunger. Your support means that when individuals like Agnes call for help, within 48 hours a volunteer is at their door knocking with a nutritious meal and friendly visit.

We know how important our services are to you and so many in our community. Your support at any level helps deliver food, safety, and hope to thousands of older Vermonters every day.



Aids Project Of Southern Vermont

Quote from grateful participant: "I can't tell you how much I (and therefore my family) benefit from and appreciate you and all the staff. The work you're all doing makes my life so immeasurably better. I get flashes sometimes of an awareness of what this moment or that situation could and would be like without the safety and kindness that comes from having access to the people and services you provide and I am overcome with gratitude for my privilege as well as total despair for those less fortunate. I can't imagine how much harder my life would be without your support."

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Vermont

Last November, Vermont made history by passing Proposition 5 (Article 22), the Reproductive Liberty Amendment, enshrining the strongest possible protection for reproductive rights in our state constitution. We and our partners at Planned Parenthood were closely involved in this process every step of the way – helping craft the specific language in the amendment and testifying repeatedly over the past four years. In the end, we won a resounding victory and sent a powerful message that Vermonters value reproductive rights and will not tolerate attacks on their fundamental liberties. We have since turned our full attention to enhancing legal protections for anyone who seeks or

provides reproductive healthcare in Vermont, in coordination with our state and national partners.



Amy's Armoire, Inc.

Despite being 100% volunteer run, our non-profit in the last 2 years has expanded 4 times. We have a retail store to create revenue so we could do so and now we have a large donation center as well as a family center.

We have provided all the furniture, kitchen/dining/living room supplies, toys, etc. for a very large birth family who was getting their children back, and months later we still support them for things they need. We provided a visit space to a birth mom living in a hotel until she got her child back. We take volunteers from Corrections, Schools, and anyone who needs a supported employment experience as well as high functioning retirees. We have supplied Christmas gifts to Foster/adopt/kin kids in need. We support foster parents who find out last minute they are getting children placed. We have a digital lock so they can go into our donation center anytime day or night to get what they need. Without clothes kids can't attend school the following day because the family may have been left with a child in just pj's. We have given beds to an adoptive family in Rutland, dressers to a kin family in Island Pond, car seats to foster families in Barre and bunkbeds to a foster family in Newport. We are building a network of families to create natural peer supports. We've been able to offer free yoga to caregivers and DCF staff. We are hoping to expand in the coming year or 2 to be able to create a summer program for foster/adopt/kin teens. We gave a stroller to a birth dad the day he got his son back.

We have a pay it forward program, allow tabs, and accept vouchers and anyone who needs clothes gets them in our store regardless of ability to pay. We also drove to the next town over to give blankets and hand warmers to a homeless DOC volunteer who came in earlier because he lost his housing for using and was freezing the previous night. While we encourage him to get treatment, we support him where he's at. We've helped another volunteer who came to our store looking for support even though she hasn't worked with us in months, but she'd cut her neck open and felt like harming herself more. Our store has become a safe place for so many and these DOC volunteers often have lost their children

already and grew up in the system themselves. We once had someone overdose the day she was supposed to volunteer and ended up in the ER. She told me "it's pretty sad when you and my PO are the only people I can talk to." I've visited volunteers in the hospital and jail so they know they mean enough for someone to go out of their way.

We support DCF by finding them people who can provide transportation or respite or whatever is needed.

A large % of people who end up incarcerated are former foster kids. If we don't find a way to stop moving them from foster home to foster home and support those supporting them, we will continue to fill jails with hurt people, because it's so damaging to continue to do so. Follow us on Facebook and go to our website to see all the acknowledgments we are receiving in such a short time. Thank you for considering our organization.

Barre Area Senior Center

Barre Area Senior Center partners with other community organizations to better serve seniors such as Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice, Central VT Council on Aging, Central Vermont Career Center, Ainsworth Public Library, and AARP.

Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center (BEEC)

This fall, BEEC educators led the kindergartners at Academy School in learning about how gray squirrels, chipmunks, and white-footed mice meet their survival needs. The kindergartners “became” these little rodents and scampered around, building shelter, finding food and water, and caching nuts and seeds to eat later. Afterward, they did their best to find their hidden food and to “eat” it in the manner of their chosen animal. The gray squirrels found a favorite perch, the chipmunks sought out a rock or stump to bring them above ground level, and the little mice snacked in protected places, such as under an overhanging rock or root. Some children couldn’t find their cached food which helped us discover that a forgotten seed might grow into a new tree. We loved thinking about how the actions of tiny rodents can inadvertently make a BIG change in their environment! BEEC believes that each of these kindergartners, tiny as they might be, can make BIG changes if they know and love the world around them.

BROC Community Action

The BROC Community Action Food Shelf distributed over 150 Tons of food in 2022, 226 Winter Coats were distributed over the winter time, along with hats, boots, gloves and

scarves. \$465,000+ was spent in Crisis Fuel keeping Vermonters warm. BROC Community Action also offers Financial education, credit repair, tax return prep, housing assistance and Weatherization. For more information visit www.broc.org.



Capstone Community Action

*Cindy came to Capstone Community Action for help when she just couldn't make ends meet anymore and found far more than a simple, one-time assist. She was connected with a financial coach who gave her resources to help her create lasting change.

"I absolutely love working with my coach," shares Cindy. "Rosie keeps me focused on my goals. Coaching helped me realize where my money was going and where I can do better at saving."

"Rosie helped me realize there are wants, needs, and necessities, and taught me how to prioritize them. I learned that even though I have debt it is fixable. There are ways to pay off that debt and still save. Having a financial coach also helped me realize that even on the smallest of incomes I can still find ways of saving. I can make things work and I can still save, even if it is \$20 everytime I get paid. I was able to reach goals that I never thought I would actually be able to reach, especially when the future is so uncertain."

*Name has been changed to protect the privacy of our participant.



Cathedral Square

Testimonial from a family member of one of our residents: "My mom's happiness level has never been higher in my 49 years. Having a place to call her own and have the grandchildren visit is a game changer for her. When she first came to VT, she lived in a tiny little bedroom in my small home for over 8 years. She stayed in there like a hermit or a ghost. As her health declined, it got worse and it truly affected our relationship, which up until that time I always thought was real tight. [Cathedral Square community] Town Meadow has brought light back into her eyes. I had begun to think that light was going out. Thank you!"

Center for an Agricultural Economy

CAE's work takes place in many spaces and has many shapes. In our most local community, we partner with students at Hazen Union High School to cook a community meal each month for Hardwick area residents. The class "Recipe for Human Connection" grew out of the pandemic and a desire to reconnect as students were returning to school in 2020. Students of this class decide what they will create together through a partnership with each other and their co-instructors.

These monthly community meals are a chance for students to create something that they can share with their community, nourish each other through food, and foster intergenerational connection. For many meals, nearly all of the ingredients are donated by local food businesses, including fresh chopped vegetables from CAE's farm-to-institution program, Just Cut. Through CAE's food hub, we work with hundreds of farms and food businesses every year - but this is one area of work where the fruits of those farms' labor is brought to our community in a very tangible and affirming way.

Read a Seven Days article about this project here:

<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/northeast-kingdom-high-schoolers-cook-for-their-community/Content?oid=37798103> Central Vermont Adult basic Education, Inc.

Central Vermont Council on Aging

At age 76, Mavis is caring for her 15-year-old grandson. This unexpected situation brings both joy and challenges. When in need of caregiver support, Mavis reached out to Central Vermont Council on Aging (CVCOA) to help find respite and opportunities for her grandson to have normal teenage experiences. The Kinship Respite Grant improved Mavis' well-being and allowed her grandson to attend summer camp.

Mavis provided this feedback to CVCOA's Director of Family Caregiver Support, Barb Asen: "Engaging in the program and especially with you, has given me opportunities to have space for myself and given my grandson a chance to engage in a program he loves. Brilliant!"

For Mavis, home is a place where she can care for herself while also providing experiences for her grandson. She says, "Having CVCOA available made some things much easier. I have been helped in different circumstances. AGING WELL!!"

Central Vermont Habitat for Humanity, Inc.

CVHFH will be building a side by side townhouse style duplex located at 41 Central St, Randolph, VT 05060. One duplex will have 3 bedrooms the other will have 4 bedrooms. Both units will be for our low income affordable homeownership program. Partner homeowners are in need of housing, they earn between 30% and 80% of the area median income based on their household size and they commit to working at least 250 hours of sweat equity on the home. The homes are primarily built working with volunteers.

We are partnering with a refugee family from Rwanda. She is a single mother with two high school age children and their grandmother. They have been living in Downstreet subsidized housing in Montpelier for the last 8 years. Since their grandmother moved in with them from Rwanda they no longer have enough bedrooms to accommodate their entire family. We are also partnering with a single woman and her two adopted elementary school age grandchildren. They currently live in Randolph, and they also do not have enough bedrooms to accommodate their family. One of the grandchildren sleeps in the hallway.

We will break ground in the duplex in the Spring of 2023 and the project is anticipated to be complete by April 2024. Our goal is to build net zero units. We will build high performance energy standard units each heated by a single high efficiency heat pump and the roof will be solar ready if we or the homeowner decide to install solar energy. We want to maximize the privacy of the homeowners. Each unit has its own separate driveway, entranceway, shed, and yard. Homes will be built to be universally accessible.



Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice

From Juliette Barash of Waterbury Center:

If I had only one wish, it would be for more peace and compassion in the world. I am truly grateful for Central Vermont Home Health & Hospice and for the peace, compassion, and excellent end-of-life care for David and our family when we needed it most – before, during, and after he passed away. David was the love of my life, and he died in February of 2020, at age 64, just before the pandemic shutdowns began. He was happy with the life he'd been given and that he was able to fulfill his wish to die at home with grace and dignity. We couldn't have done it alone.

David and I, like many others, thought Hospice was for the last days of life when death is close. Our experience taught us that Hospice is a holistic service that enhances the last chapter of a person's life and supports them through the transition to death. The opportunity to enroll David in Hospice far in advance of his death provided him and our family a significant amount of comfort. CVHHH's Hospice team delivered exceptional and professional medical care and ushered and supported David and me with kindness, careful observation, and education. When the cancer swept through David's body, his nurse responded quickly and effectively. The Hospice team helped David and me and our family feel a heightened level of comfort, which only enriched the experience.

In mid-winter of 2020, as the pandemic turned the world upside-down, I was adjusting to the impacts of my personal loss and living in isolation. Fortunately, by the spring, I joined a virtual CVHHH bereavement group for people grieving the loss of a loved one. It was a deep and meaningful experience that led to much resilience, healing, and growth. More recently, I

was trained as a CVHHH Hospice volunteer and have enjoyed sitting vigil and providing respite for caregivers, among other tasks. These experiences remind me that I am blessed with priceless, touching moments, witnessing the beauty, strength, and wisdom in others.

I offer my warm and deep appreciation for CVHHH Hospice team members, who are gentle, kind-hearted, and provide outstanding and professional comfort and care. This includes Diana Moore, CVHHH's Bereavement Coordinator, whose compassion and expertise helped me heal.

We are lucky to live in Central Vermont. Transitions in all our lives will keep coming. I invite you to join me in supporting CVHHH to show your appreciation in ways that will positively impact our hearts and community.

Central Vermont Humane Society

CVHS is a vital safety net for our community. The main reason pets come to us is because something happened in their person's life- job loss, homelessness, financial struggles, declining health. We are here when people and their pets need us, like Reggie. Reggie's person loved him very much, but could no longer physically care for him. Heartbroken, he called CVHS for help. Can you imagine how devastated you would feel if a crisis in your life forced you to give up your beloved pet? Luckily, CVHS is there.

We took in Reggie, and our staff showered this endearing gentle dog with love. We provided vital extra-mile medical care including removing seven painful teeth, masses on his eyelid and his leg. We had them tested and luckily, they were benign. He healed quickly, and we adopted him into a lovely family.

Reggie now knows the joy of a second chance, and the comfort of a new home, where he gets plenty of couch time, takes long walks with his family, and goes for car rides that he loves. His former person can have some peace during a difficult time knowing Reggie is healthy, safe and loved.

CVHS is a vital safety net for hundreds of animals a year, here for their humans who are struggling and call us for help.



Champlain Community Services, Inc.

MEET BRANDON a Way2Work success story (Way2Work is an employment support continuum at CCS, including Bridging, School2Work, and Adult Employment components).

Brandon says he was initially nervous about his chances to get a first job, but wanted to try. "I thought working would be fun and keep me busy," he said. "I don't like to be bored." No worries there. In June, with support from School2Work, Brandon landed two jobs – at Subway in Essex, and a seasonal gig at West Bolton Golf Course that he hopes to return to next year.

Brandon's favorite responsibility at Subway is "prep work, keeping things nice and neat," he said. "And I like the free food." The golf course is a good fit for his love of the outdoors. "They had a nice view up there," he said.

A graduate of Bridging at CCS, Brandon said that experience helped him negotiate the challenge of starting two new jobs. "The Bridging program helped me learn and practice life skills and build confidence," he said. He said he still calls on skills developed in Bridging.

Brandon said it took some time for him to understand his tasks at both jobs, but learning his positions further built his confidence. And he credits his employers with helping him succeed. He said he's received solid training and support and, citing occasional memory issues, said he's confident he can find support when he's stuck.

Brandon is not certain about his career goals, or what jobs he might want in the future. But he's developing strong work skills and building a solid resume. We like his chances moving forward.

“Brandon began his experience with a great amount of uncertainty in his potential,” said Liz Underwood, Youth Employment Specialist. “Since then, he’s not only progressed, but flourished at both job sites. Seeing him grow in so many ways and being part of that experience has been an honor. His team and I could not be prouder of how far he’s come these past few months.”

Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources (C.I.D.E.R)

A resident moved to Grand Isle County a decade ago with no family or community connections and pretty quickly found out they had cancer. C.I.D.E.R. provided them the support to get to appointments and meals, as well as community connections. Not only did they make it through, but they are now an integral part of the organization, having served on its board, and a valued member of the community.

Chill Foundation

Chill’s goal is to provide access to boardsports to youth who face significant barriers to entry, including those coming from marginalized communities or encounter other challenging life circumstances. Chill breaks down these barriers by providing everything youth need to participate in our programs at absolutely no cost, including gear, passes, food, transportation, and instruction. This helps us ensure with confidence that for youth and families facing barriers to access, cost is not one of them.

Circle (formerly Battered Women's services and Shelter)

In the previous fiscal year, 2,200 people received direct services from Circle’s trained staff and volunteer advocates. 411 of these had not been in contact with us before.

Clarina Howard Nichols Center, Inc.

Clarina’s Criminal Court Advocate worked with a survivor over the past year who had been in an abusive relationship for several years. The survivor had been hesitant to access the criminal justice system due to fear for her safety. The trusted relationship that the advocate has built with the survivor over the past year has been instrumental in her continued engagement in the criminal justice process. The advocate has connected the survivor to

other resources at Clarina including financial support for emergency needs and temporary shelter when remaining at home was not safe. The advocate assisted with connecting the survivor to an attorney through the VT Network Legal Clinic for representation at her Relief from Abuse Order and child custody proceedings.

Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association

Chapter 26-1

The VA does a lot of great things for Veterans. One thing that is severely lacking however, is providing a Veteran with money, when needed. This is where we step into the picture. Recently, we assisted a WWII veteran by paying to have his fuel tank filled so he could have heat during the winter months. We assisted a struggling veteran by paying an expensive car repair bill so that he could continue to get to and from work to make a living. We assisted an elderly veteran who was unable to pay an expensive property tax bill and was in danger of losing his home, by paying those taxes for him. In an even simpler case, a veteran had recently been placed into housing with the assistance of the VA; however, he had no bed to sleep on and no money to get one. We bought him a bed. We work hand in hand with the Veterans Outreach Center, the Gold Star Mothers, Easter Seals and other similar organizations to help veterans that are in need.

Committee on Temporary Shelter

Emily, a young, single mom of two, worked tirelessly to obtain employment, housing, early enrollment preschool, and childcare. She faced obstacles we see often, like finding an affordable unit even with an approved subsidy/voucher, needing multiple forms of identity for all household members, lack of natural supports, rental history impacts, and lack of permanent address prior to shelter. When these barriers are present upon arrival, the light at the end of the tunnel is indistinguishable. They spent 157 days in shelter after being housed in a motel for 3 months. At last, the family has their own place in Lamoille County to call home and can envisage their future ahead.

Community Asylum Seekers Project

Since its founding in 2016, the Community Asylum Seekers Project has offered housing, legal aid, financial assistance, language learning, job training and placement, and family support to more than 25 people seeking asylum in the United States and living in Southern Vermont. As the number of asylum seekers continues to grow in this country and in this state, due to political instability, war, and related forms of violence in the Global South, the need for accompaniment is continuing to grow. Our network of volunteers works with our

multilingual staff to orient our new neighbors to the community and provide necessary services, and we work with partner organizations throughout the state to ensure the Vermont is able to provide a comprehensive welcome to asylum seekers throughout the state. With our help, asylum seekers are able to build lives of safety and stability in the United States.

Community Asylum Seekers Project

Here in Brattleboro, our accompaniment of asylum seekers is a close and constant relationship. We have been honored to walk beside eighteen of the bravest, strongest, and most resilient people we've ever met, celebrating their victories with them, sharing birthday cakes, anniversaries of release from detention, and everyday accomplishments. We also share tears, as we bump up against the incredible injustice baked into this country's immigration system and the human costs of that injustice that we witness up close and personal every day. We draw hope and inspiration from the asylum seekers who are our neighbors, and invite you to do the same.

Community Harvest of Central Vermont

CHCV is the connector between our area's local for-profit food system and charitable organizations. Our collaboration with 95 local farms, businesses, and organizations is the key to our ability to get nutritious food to those in need and reduce wasted food. We work as a team – our farm partners grow and donate the food; volunteers help us to recover, process, and distribute it; and our recipient site partners provide it to food-insecure neighbors who need essential nutrition.

A recipient site partner shared our impact with one patron, “A client had never had rutabaga before. I told her to cube and roast it. She came back asking for more!” A farmer shared, “CHCV is supporting so many in our community from farmers to local organizations to those needing support with food needs. All while encouraging and supporting local food systems, reducing food inequity, and reducing food waste.”

Dismas of Vermont, INC

Sandy's Story

by Sandy

My name is Sandy and I am a forty-six-year-old woman currently living at the Women's Dismas House in Rutland, Vermont. I have lived here for 11 months now. My recovery coach suggested Dismas House to me, fall of 2021 while I was trying to maintain sobriety and

living with a fellow AA member until I could find my own apartment. I didn't think I needed a supportive environment at the time because I thought I knew better than anyone else about what I needed to do. I got my own apartment and was regularly attending AA meetings for about three months before I started to slide back into my old habits and hanging with my old friends at my apartment. After another month I was right back to the beginning and knew I needed to go back to rehab in order to stop using. I went to Serenity House in Wallingford for my fifth go-round. On March 21, 2022 I finally gave in to the idea of living at a sober house because maybe I actually needed more help than I thought, and it was the only thing I never tried. I am so glad I did.

Come to find out, Dismas was the piece of the puzzle that I had been missing. Women's Dismas House provides me with so much that I never expected and more that I never knew I needed. We get supper prepared for us Monday through Friday by volunteers in the community; giving us a chance to meet great, down-to-earth people who help teach us what community is all about. We even get to participate in various activities, events and even volunteer ourselves. Imagine that, I get to be part of society instead of being a part of the problem. Most importantly, I have the support I need, from both the staff and the other ladies I live with. Also, the program fees are affordable, and everything is included. It's such a nice feeling to have a safe place to call home.

Since coming to this house, I've had time to work on me. I'm currently working on boundaries, self-discipline and being held accountable. I go to work every day and AA meetings almost every night, sometimes more depending on my schedule. I also attend a relapse prevention group and counseling to help keep me in check. It sometimes feels like a dream cause I'm doing so well. I was just thinking to myself that this is the first time, ever, that I didn't blow my tax returns on drugs. I am starting to be responsible and living life on life's terms without numbing myself and avoiding everything. I know I am still a work-in-progress, but I have been moving forward and I continue to improve a little each day. I truly owe most of my progress to Dismas House cause if it wasn't for them, I don't want to even think of where I might be. So, thank you to all who have helped me along my journey of sobriety."

Downstreet Housing & Community Development

Debbie is originally from New Hampshire, but during her time at a low residency program at Goddard College, she developed a love for Vermont.

"There's something about Vermont that there's such a sense of peace," she said. "And I would hate the thought of leaving that peace."

But Debbie's career as a university professor took her to Indiana, and she lived there until 2013 before finally relocating to Vermont. She rented a home in Woodbury where she taught

high school English for a few years. Then, in 2018, Debbie retired from the classroom and moved to Barre to be closer to her grandson.

After renting a single-family home for some time, the owners decided to sell, leaving Debbie the choice of purchasing the home or finding a new place to live. When the pandemic started in early 2020, her work teaching online classes slowed down so much that her income was cut in half, making it impossible for her to purchase the house. An older friend with whom Debbie had grown very close, purchased the home so she could rent it to Debbie, but when that friend passed away in September of 2021, Debbie and her beloved mastiff Abby were facing homelessness.

With work picking up and her income getting back to normal, Debbie reached out to Downstreet and connected with Kira Charissakis, who helped her prepare to purchase the homes from her late friend's estate. Two weeks before closing, Debbie was notified by the bank that the underwriters decided not to underwrite the home loan. Debbie was devastated.

"I was in a real panic," she said. "I didn't know what to do. But Kira was a godsend, encouraging me to take a breath and get right back up in the saddle and begin the process all over again with a different lender."

With a renewed determination to find a place of her own, Debbie looked at many other houses and made several offers, but with the competitive home purchase market and soaring prices, none of her offers were accepted.

With just two weeks left before her USDA loan expired, Debbie was starting to lose hope.

"I had a lot of sleepless nights," she said. "I was terrified. I was thinking, 'I'm an educated person, I'm a professor, and I'm going to be in the street.'"

Then, one day, Debbie's mail lady, who she had become friendly with over the years, brought her a note with a phone number, address, and price of a nearby home that was for sale. The postal worker explained that she had spoken with the homeowner, who needed to relocate quickly for her husband's job. The house had recently been under contract, but the buyer pulled out at the last minute because of the rising mortgage interest rates.

"From there, everything just went like it was meant to be. This house is just perfect for me, and my monthly payments are just about the same as what I was paying to rent," she said.

As for her grandson's feelings about Debbie's new home, he said "I love it so much, I can't even put it into words how much I love it!"

EarthShare

The Common Ground Initiative

Nationwide, open space is fast becoming one of our most precious and threatened resources due to overdevelopment, ecological degradation, changing laws and regulations, budget cuts and other factors that take land out of public hands. Along with obvious and sometimes devastating impacts to ecosystems, the loss of open space also means that the physical and mental human benefits of the outdoors are further out of reach for far too many of us.

EarthShare Common Ground is built to catalyze state-wide positive action through collective community efforts to create, conserve, and enhance open space, creating sustainable and accessible natural spaces and abundant outdoor opportunities. From rural to urban landscapes, the initiative supports the intersection of ecological and community health, creating connection to the natural world through equitable action, accessibility, and state-wide community engagement.

ABOUT EARTHSHARE COMMON GROUND

This program supports and contributes to the Connecticut Green Plan, which aims to protect 21 percent of Connecticut's land as open space by 2023. The Green Plan is a comprehensive open space acquisition strategy seeking to protect 673,210 acres of land (roughly 20% of the state) as open space. Working in collaboration with Connecticut-based nonprofits, EarthShare Common Ground curates strategic projects that strive to address equitable access to the benefits of healthy open spaces.

In 2022, donations totaling more than \$14,000 were raised for the program.

OUR PARTNERS

Avalonia Land Conservancy - EarthShare is working with Avalonia to conserve 669 acres of ecologically significant open space in Montville, CT. The project is a significant acquisition for the southeastern part of the state for wildlife protection, forest management, safe drinking water, and public access to outdoor activities and education.

Gather New Haven - New Haven and EarthShare are addressing food insecurity issues and access to open space in five low-income and under-resourced communities throughout New Haven by supporting the development and maintenance of 21 community gardens/farms as well as 10 scholarships for individuals to be part of Gather New Haven's Farm- Based Wellness Program.

ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain

Through our Early Education Outreach program, we partner with 60 teachers and 900 students in a statewide STEM outreach initiative focusing on underserved early childhood classrooms including those located in rural communities and Head Start programs.

Some of the most impactful moments of this program come in the small side conversations Elizabeth has with children. For example, Elizabeth was calling the children "engineers" as

they were building their tools to clean Lake Champlain. One little girl said that she was not an engineer, that she was Lena. Elizabeth answered...right, Lena the engineer! She said no, Lena the mom...that is what I want to be when I grow up. Elizabeth told her she could be all three - Lena, a mom AND an engineer. Her eyes got big like this was a completely new idea for her. This work allows children to see and understand what they are capable of ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain

Elevate Youth Services (formerly Washington County Youth Service Bureau)

“When I was homeless, it was a dark time. I had already been abandoned so many times, but with Elevate Youth Services I wasn’t alone. They helped me to keep going – to fight for what I want to do. When I got my place and my job I knew where I was going to go next.” Elevate Youth Services promotes safety, competence and confidence as youth create their path through adolescence and into adulthood. The support young people receive during this time in their lives will shape who they become and who our society becomes. This is why it's critical for youth to have support from caring providers that understand trauma, positive youth development approaches and adolescent brain science. Our services empower youth to chart their path toward a fulfilling adulthood by developing the skills, awareness and opportunities that positively impact their own lives, for example: 1) 91% of youth we work with demonstrate the skills needed to interact effectively with others, to make difficult decisions and to cope with new situations; 2) 94% of youth demonstrate skills, knowledge and growth related to their personal development; 3) 91% of youth feel they have control over their life, are optimistic about their personal future and have a positive sense of self-worth; and 4) 93% of youth identify their own values, what is important to them and take personal responsibility.

Fellowship of the Wheel

Community is at the heart of all the work we do. Mountain biking has been a historically white, male-dominated sport. FOTW is working to break that mold by creating safe spaces and programming for people from all walks of life to enjoy the outdoors. Our networks include a wide range of sustainably built trails with several networks upgraded to accommodate adaptive cycles. This type of inclusive trail design helps break some of the barriers that prevent people from accessing the great outdoors. Group ride programming intentionally invites female, LGBTQAI+, beginner and youth riders in an effort to modify social environments for a more welcoming and inclusive sport. Events and races are held throughout the summer season to invite children, families, and those with varying ability levels and types of equipment to join in all the network has to offer. We offer a total of 14

riding based events throughout the trail use season with several other trail work or social gathering events to further promote environmental stewardship with the community.

Friends of Dog Mountain, Inc.

Have you experienced the magic of Dog Mountain? The joy that this beloved 150-acre doggie paradise has brought to the community is undeniable. From annual events like Labor of Love, the St. Johnsbury Pet Parade, and the Levitt AMP St. Johnsbury Music Series, to special occasions like the Stephen Huneck birthday celebration and storytime at the Athenaeum, there is something for everyone at Dog Mountain. The three annual Dog Parties, featured among Vermont's top ten autumn events by the VT Chamber of Commerce, are just one more example of the exciting happenings that take place on Dog Mountain.

But it's not just about the events. Upgrades to Dog Mountain, such as the fire pit seating area and Sally's Switchback, a new trail built by Kingdom Trails, have made the space more accessible and enjoyable for all visitors. Thanks to the support of donors and organizations like the Vermont Arts Council, Vermont Community Foundation, PetSafe, USDA, and the Preservation Trust of Vermont, essential upgrades like HVAC and art conservation equipment for the Stephen Huneck Gallery, a Puppy Playpen, and repair of the Dog Chapel's foundation have been possible.

The impact of Dog Mountain on the community extends beyond just physical upgrades. The love and care that the team puts into maintaining the space and hosting events is palpable. With plans to restore the original Huneck outdoor sculpture art and signage throughout the grounds, and the beginning of phased implementation of a new Campus Master Plan, the future of Dog Mountain looks brighter than ever!

Friends of the Winooski River

In 2020, we removed a dam that opened up miles of high-quality, cold-water habitat for Brook trout to have refuge from our warming summers. In 2021, we brought teaching artists into four schools to engage students in learning about the watershed through artistic expression. In the last decade, we have planted more than 40,000 trees, which have multiple benefits for streams and wildlife.



Good Beginnings of Central Vermont

A new mom who was recently matched with a Postpartum Angel describes the impact of our program in her own words: "I didn't realize how challenging my postpartum time would be and how much support I would need. [My volunteer] really helped me. We talked about nutrition, breastfeeding, really anything. I felt comfortable bringing things up with her that I didn't always feel comfortable bringing up with family. It was really amazing to have an advocate cheering me along and checking in regularly."



Good Samaritan Haven

Courage

In October 2022, Courage came to Good Sam while fleeing a traumatic sexual assault incident in her home. The assault on Courage resulted in paralysis. During recovery, Courage decided she needed to make a change. She didn't want to be a burden to her family so figured out how to take care of herself on her own.

Feeling safe in her home was a main concern and it was very difficult for Courage to trust that she would be safe again--anywhere. She called our shelter manager, Hope, for reassurance that if she came to stay she would be okay. Hope told her she would not only be safe, but would feel safe.

"Hope was right!" wrote Courage in a gratitude letter to Good Sam's co-executive directors. She expressed her admiration for Hope: "Any time I've needed to talk, she is there. Any time I need support, Hope is right there. . . She is someone I trust." Courage ended her note by thanking our co-executive directors for the opportunity of having a safe place to live.

Courage has settled in at the shelter and found community through peer support. She has friends, and together they are making plans for the future. While she is still in a wheelchair, her mobility is beginning to return and she is now on a waiting list for permanent housing.

Our caring and compassionate staff have an enormous impact on our guests through their capacity to be welcoming, listen in confidence, and provide emotional support and critical resources—like Hope does every day.

Greater Burlington YMCA

The Y will provide more than \$335,000 in financial assistance this year to provide access to childcare, summer camps, wellness, and water safety programs. As one member said, "The Y has been a haven of so many good things over the past 2 years. Continuity + stability... a safe space for all people... a combination of inclusivity and diversity... a place where we can be healthy in body, mind, and spirit."

Green Mountain Club

Our experienced trail crew was able to take this eroded widened section of trail and transform it into a clearly defined staircase, making this section of trail safer and the only route available for hikers, which protects the surrounding vegetation.



Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity

Sara, Habitat homeowner: “Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity has changed my family’s life in a way words can only begin to explain. We are no longer stuck both financially and literally, in a too small and unsafe apartment. I feel beyond fortunate for this life changing opportunity to be able to model to my children and grandchildren that hard works pays off and dreams and goals are obtainable, even when they seem impossible.”

Green Mountain Mobile Therapy-Mobile Mental Health

We meet youth where they are located and provide a safe, consistent and fun environment for desperately needed mental health services.

Green Mountain United Way

M. came to us at the end of her rope. She was several months into a nursing certification program with her employer, and the pay while she was enrolled in the program was only \$17 per hour. Despite working full time, while also being enrolled in an educational program that was meant to advance her career, she couldn’t afford her basic needs. She was behind on rent and facing eviction; behind on school loan payments; and living with a lot of anxiety because, as a single mother, she often struggled to feed her young son and herself. She felt she had exhausted all of her options, and none of it was working.

Thankfully, M.'s employer was partnered with Green Mountain United Way's Working Bridges program, so she was able to be connected to assistance programs and receive financial counseling and support services during and after work. Resource coordinator Blaire met with M., and after hearing her story, told her, "It sounds like you're doing all the right things." To which M., who was frustrated by all the dead ends she had encountered on her own, responded, "I'm so sick of hearing that."

Blaire understood M.'s frustration and worked with her to make a plan. First, Blaire used Green Mountain United Way's 185 Fund to provide M. with weekly grocery and gas cards, to help her afford food and gas, while also freeing up money in her budget to tackle other problems. Next, with Blaire's support, M. was able to make one small payment to bring her school loans current, and then they put her school loans into deferment for a 6-month period, so that M. could get caught up without the stress of that bill hanging over her head. Next, they found a housing assistance program that paid a portion of M.'s overdue rent, and worked together to make a plan to pay a little extra each month to get her caught up; M. presented the plan to her landlord, and they made an agreement. Once M.'s immediate needs were taken care of, Blaire and M. worked together to make a weekly budget that would keep M. on track.

Now, M. has a plan and feels much better about things. She and her son are able to afford regular meals, her living situation feels stable, and she can see a path forward. Thanks to Green Mountain United Way's Working Bridges program, she faced financial crisis head on, and was able to achieve financial mobility.



Groundworks Collaborative, Inc.

"Claudia" is one of 4,000 neighbors using one or more of Groundworks' services this year.

She is staying at Morningside House, having previously stayed for two months in the overnight shelter at Groundworks Drop-In Center. Claudia has been prioritized through the

Coordinated Entry process for housing at The Chalet—a permanent supportive housing community. She is working with her Case Manager to ensure she has all of the necessary documents in place to move toward signing a lease. Claudia both shops and volunteers at Foodworks. She meets with Healthworks providers to help manage her medications and support her mental health and substance use recovery. She recently started working with the Representative Payee at Groundworks, who helps Claudia manage her disability income and save for move-in expenses.

Hardwick Area Food Pantry

“[I] was trying to find some support for my mother-in-law for November knowing her income was being cut drastically. Took her to the Food Shelf in Hardwick. It was a fabulous experience. No questions asked about why you need help, just help given, and given in a very kind and respectful manner.... She had the biggest smile while shopping there. I haven’t seen her this happy since the day we moved her up here. After all the trouble we have had advocating for her the past few months, this was a very refreshing turn of events for us.”



HomeShare Vermont

This is a story of one of our matches from a couple of years ago but it's one of my favorites!

Sometimes It Takes a Team

Years ago, Thelma, a feisty 91-year-old, made her daughter Marie promise that she would remain in her home for as long as possible. But when Thelma began suffering memory loss, Marie knew it would take a team to fulfill that promise, especially with her living more than an hour away.

Four days a week, home health aides come in to make sure Thelma exercises and eats her lunch. Marie helps out and spends quality time with Thelma Tuesday several afternoons a week. Thelma’s son and daughter-in-law live next door so they can regularly check-in and

watch out for any deviation from Thelma's daily routines. But they aren't in Thelma's house at night, so Marie turned to HomeShare Vermont in order for the family to achieve some peace of mind.

"We've surrounded mom with enough helpers now that I don't feel so stressed being an hour away because they can let me know if there's something wrong. We're all communicating with each other in order to keep Mom's quality of life the best that it can be," Marie said.

When Anna interviewed with HomeShare Vermont, it was clear right away what a compassionate and warm companion she would be. Anna, a 24-year-old licensed nursing assistant and med tech, moved into Thelma's upstairs living space that Marie renovated specifically so Thelma could homeshare. Anna, a self-described homebody, feels the match is perfect because Thelma is also quiet but with a spunky flair, and Thelma's family has been extremely supportive.

In return for a private living area and an affordable rent, each morning Anna makes sure Thelma has her hearing aids, eats breakfast, and is safe. Anna also provides a safety presence at night when she returns home from work. She usually does a cooking project with Thelma once a week and likes to work on knitting projects while she visits with her. They always sit on the sun porch and "watch the world go by" as Thelma says.

Housing Trust of Rutland County, Inc.

Sherlyn Anderson. A Grateful Woman. A Proud Mom. A New American.

Sherlyn is a grateful "40-something" year-old woman of Nicaraguan and Scottish descent. A single mom raising two boys, she treasures her home and the opportunity she has been given in Vermont.

Home means a lot more to Sherlyn than the average Vermonter. When asked about her Housing Trust of Rutland County apartment of 11 years, she emphatically proclaims, "It is my castle. It is our HOME."

Sherlyn initially moved to Proctor, VT from Nicaragua with her now ex-husband and their older son. A few years later their second son was born and eventually a divorce happened, and things got tougher for Sherlyn and her sons. Sherlyn found her new home with HTRC, she learned to drive, found a job, officially became a US Citizen and started a new life as a single mom.

Sherlyn takes nothing for granted. She reflects on the luxuries she has in her home and her life - though her definition of luxuries might sound strange to many Vermonters. "Poland Springs bottled water. Faucets that have clean hot and cold running water free of deadly parasites. Dependable electricity that almost never fails. Fresh fish. Meat. Healthcare where they have medicine always available. And even automatic doors that open for you at Price Chopper!" She exclaims. "We have so much here. The OPPORTUNITY to get an education

and become whatever you want to make of yourself is incredible. My boys are very busy and I think that is best for them. In Nicaragua they could never have had so much opportunity, so I want them to enjoy it.” She continued “We are so blessed to be living here! Everybody should KNOW it.”

This is just one of the real people, our friends, our neighbors, our co-workers that live with Housing Trust of Rutland County.

Howard Center Inc.

Adam was referred from his home school district to the Baird School when he was in the third grade. His behavioral challenges made it difficult for him to focus on learning, and he was struggling with learning to read. At Baird School, he received the individualized attention he needed, and he learned how to control his behavior—in school and at home. When he returned to his home school district in the fifth grade, he was reading at grade level and had gained new skills to help him succeed in school. To protect client confidentiality, the descriptions included here represent a composite of clients.

Janet S. Munt Family Room

We believe in nurturing a strong sense of belonging; the importance of community; in celebrating each other; and in treating each other with love and dignity. We create a space where everyone belongs and knows they are an important member of the community. Connections and relationships are built over time.

"It wasn't until I visited The Family Room that I truly felt welcomed and that I belonged in my community. The sense of celebration and connection I experienced there extended beyond its walls and keep inspiring me to give back the same kindness and support that I received."
-Family Room Parent

Josh Pallotta Fund, Inc. & Josh's House

We have seen numerous relationships develop between local Veterans that otherwise would have never met. These relationships help with their mental health, it allows Veterans to share life events and struggles with those that understand where they're at. We've received a number of thank yous from Veterans that expressed the comfort they feel being here and that having a place like Josh's House provides a feeling of safety and belonging they don't otherwise feel.

One story that sticks out is that of a younger, post 9/11 Iraq Veteran that came in one day. It was obvious that he was struggling, he'd been crying. When asked if he was ok, he just

stated that he was having a bad day. He didn't know why, nothing specific happened to make the day worse than any other, but was just feeling bad. We gave him some food and sat with him, not really talking about much. He ended up staying for a few hours, having conversations with other Veterans than came and left, and when he left he said that he was grateful that we were here, that he knew he could come in, feeling awful, and that it would be ok; that he wouldn't feel judged or that he was being observed and diagnosed. A week later he brought in a thank you card and has been coming back to Josh's House at least 3 times a week since.

Kellogg-Hubbard Library

The Kellogg-Hubbard Library is a 501c3 nonprofit that serves as the public library for six communities in central Vermont including the City of Montpelier and the Towns of Berlin, Calais, East Montpelier, Middlesex and Worcester; a population over 17,000. Our vision is to be a resilient, inclusive and innovative library that continually learns and adapts to meet the changing needs of our community. We believe public libraries belong to everyone and aim to ensure that every person who comes into the library feels welcomed by our staff and represented in our collections, our building and our programs.



Kingdom Animal Shelter

Vincent and Austen are two handsome tabby boys Kingdom Animal Shelter took in that were part of a large group of young, semi-feral cats who were abandoned in a ramshackle house in the middle of last winter.

Vincent was a love, always underfoot wanting to be petted and purring non-stop. Austen took a little longer to relax around his foster mom. But he knew how it felt to be hungry and cold and never wanted to feel like that again, so he said it loud and clear on a daily basis. Food was the way to his heart!

Vincent and Austen found a wonderful home in Williston, VT.

Kurn Hattin Homes for Children

Kurn Hattin Homes provided a stable, caring home and in-person educational services for our children during all but the first 3 months of the Covid pandemic (when children were off campus and academics were on-line). The families of our children were also provided with increased food and transportation support in their time of need as well. Our families expressed deep appreciation for helping them during these trying times.

Lamoille Community Food Share

Every month, Lamoille Community Food Share serves over 1,000 households. We frequently hear from clients how thankful they are for what we do. We strive to offer healthy food options, including locally grown and produced items. We also offer personal care items and pet food. Thank you for helping to feed neighbors in need.

Local Motion

Local Motion was founded in 1999 with the goal to get people across the Winooski River, where the Burlington Bike Path then ended. We accomplished that goal, and later established the Island Line Bike Ferry, bringing over 17,000 passengers to the Champlain Islands every year.

Since that time, Local Motion has become Vermont's statewide advocate for walking and biking. We help communities build their own local culture of biking and walking—providing classes for all ages, technical assistance on infrastructure, bike-friendly resources for businesses and communities, guidance and resources for advocacy and community organizing, and more.

Local Motion's work makes Vermont's communities more resilient and livable, brings affordable transportation within reach for all residents, and builds cohesion within communities by returning streets to a human scale that fosters interaction rather than isolation, increases the safety, health, and wellness of Vermonters through active transportation, and decreases Vermont's carbon footprint by enabling cleaner modes of transportation.

Machia Wilderness Camp

A youth hated to read until Machia Wilderness Camp. His mother told us he would keep her up at night reading the material suggested by camp for further knowledge of what he was

learning. She took that information to his school. They developed a reading list for him based on this new interest. He became an avid reader.

Maquam Bay of Missisquoi (Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi)

The Food Pantry (open three days a week to the public) recently added a free diaper bank to its offerings, now making diapers and wipes available to low-income families and removing the choice between providing food or their child's health and hygiene.

Meals on Wheels of Lamoille County

In 2022 Meals on Wheels Lamoille of County has prepared and serve 50,304 nutritious meals. Volunteers and staff have delivered 48,685 of those meals to homes in Lamoille County and Worcester while providing well-checks and socialization with each one. More than 65 loyal volunteers have driven over 69,000 miles to deliver hot meals, petfood, food shelf bags, and most importantly, well checks that may very likely be the only one they receive that day. The need for home delivery has increased by 12% in the last ten years.

MENTOR Vermont

When young people feel like they matter, they thrive. A caring and committed mentor can help a young person ignite their curiosities, solidify their passions, and leverage their talents. These meaningful relationships can change the course of someone's life.

With your gift, MENTOR Vermont is able to ensure youth mentoring programs across the state have the support, training, and resources they need to foster life-changing relationships.

Meet 15-year-old Kamea and her mentor, Julia. Kamea and Julia were matched in May of 2021 through Spectrum Youth and Family Services' Mentoring Program. They were the first pair Spectrum matched since the onset of the pandemic. Reflecting back to when they were first matched, Kamea shares why she wanted a mentor, "I didn't have anything to do besides school. I wanted to go out and do things, but my mom was always working." – Kamea

When Kamea and Julia first met, they were introduced outside on a porch, socially distanced, with masks. Kamea says her initial worries were put at ease quickly, "It was nerve wracking because I never had a mentor before. After our first meeting, I didn't feel nervous anymore." –Kamea

Kamea and Julia have found comfort in spending time together. Julia reflects on the impact of their relationship, “I moved to Burlington a few months before Covid hit, and when it did, I started a new job working from home. Our relationship has been so helpful throughout the pandemic! Meeting with Kamea is always a highlight of my week. Our mentoring relationship has provided me with a valuable sense of connection, with Kamea and with the Burlington community.” –Julia

Spectrum works hard to support matches like Kamea and Julia every day. Rebecca Majoya, mentoring program manager at Spectrum has seen firsthand the increased need for young people to have more supportive adults in their lives. Prior to the pandemic, Rebecca heard from mentors, youth, and their families less often. Now, she says, they are reaching out all the time.

“Our workload has doubled. With the intensity of the anxiety that our youth are experiencing, it’s just so much higher. We are doing so much more now to support each match than before the pandemic. ” –Rebecca

And Spectrum is not alone. Young people need mentors in their lives more than ever. All mentoring programs are feeling the impacts of the last few years. MENTOR Vermont is committed to supporting programs like Spectrum so that we can collaboratively meet the needs of Vermont’s youth. The support MENTOR Vermont provides enables dedicated staff like Rebecca to spend more time with young people and mentors.

Rebecca shares, “MENTOR Vermont provides clear, concise, applicable training and resources and serves as a conduit between national research and resources. We have greater access because of MENTOR Vermont. The funding, training, and support enables us to be more supportive to our mentees and mentors.”

MENTOR Vermont is committed to enriching the lives of youth and mentors through the collaborative work of resilient and experienced program coordinators—like Rebecca, dedicated volunteer mentors—like Julia, passionate young people—like Kamea, and generous donors who help catalyze the Vermont mentoring field—like you.

We can’t do this important work without your help.

Please consider making a gift to MENTOR Vermont today. Your support will help advance the Vermont mentoring field and ensure young Vermonters have the supportive relationships they need to thrive.

Michael Zemanek Memorial Foundation

The Michael Zemanek Memorial Foundation has a program called "Remembering Our Children" in which every December we donate money from our general funds as well as money that was donated specifically for children of Law Enforcement officers in need by a private citizen. These funds are distributed to the children of the fallen officers in Vermont regardless of whether it was a line of duty death or off duty death.

This last year we had a Police Officer in Winooski battling cancer and going to the Dana Farber Cancer Institute and having to stay in a nearby hotel during his treatment. We helped him out financially to help lessen the burden. Another officer in Northfield whose daughter was also battling cancer and again for all their expenses with travel and medical stay we donated to lessen their financial burden. We give every year to the half-orphaned children of fallen VT LEO's at the Holiday time and send money so the remaining parent can afford to buy them new clothes and toys.

Milk with Dignity Standards Council

When the dairy farm where Luisa works joined the Milk with Dignity Program, Luisa was pregnant with her second child. She expressed concern that she would have to stop working after her daughter's birth. Thanks to the Program's anti-discrimination policies, paid leave provisions, and guaranteed time off, she has been able to continue working while caring for her growing family.

We spoke with Luisa in 2022 to hear her reflections after five years of Milk with Dignity. "So much has changed," Luisa says. She began by speaking about pay. "We had a fixed wage for many years: \$9.50 per hour. There weren't any raises. But under Milk with Dignity, the pay increases every year. And now I'm making \$12.55. It makes a huge difference. With my husband's and my salary together, we can save for the future."

While her salary has increased significantly, her expenses have gone down in at least one key area. Milk with Dignity's assurance that all employers maintain workers' compensation policies, as well as support to navigate the complicated claims process, takes the burden off of workers. "We used to spend a lot on medical bills," she says. "But since the farm came into the Program, if we get sick or injured because of work, the bills are covered."

Luisa is making more, even as she has more free time. One of Milk with Dignity's most important provisions is a guarantee of one day off per week. While Luisa used to work every day, now "we have a day to go out, to spend time with my girls, to eat together. I can actually rest." Luisa's daughter chimed in: "If mom was still working seven days a week, it'd be much harder. I'd just be home alone. But she gets time off now and we can spend it together as a family."

Over time, Luisa's active participation in Milk with Dignity has resulted in markedly improved communication with her employers, leading to transformed living and working conditions. Regarding her housing, Luisa shares: "Everything works. If there are holes in the wall, they get repaired. If there are cockroaches, they fumigate the house. If the heating goes out, they fix it. We just have to let them know and they'll make it happen."

On the topic of workplace health and safety, Luisa continues: "Anything we ask for, all the necessary stuff, is there. Before they just had latex gloves for milking. Now there's everything, including face masks for when we're spreading lime. If you cut yourself while working, they have the first aid kit right there." This experience is remarkable, given that

outside of Milk with Dignity, over four in five dairy workers report harm from chemical and biological exposure, while just a third have access to first aid on the job.

When asked where she imagines the Milk with Dignity Program in five years' time, she responds enthusiastically: "It should grow! Right now, not everyone has the good fortune to work on a Milk with Dignity farm. I want the Program to cover every farm so that my whole community has the same opportunities and benefits that I have now."

Mosaic, VT

Recently, in an event that was open to the public, a panel of young people who led student groups in their schools spoke about the work they had done to bring attention to the sexual violence and harm that youth, particularly young women, in their communities are facing. These young people, supported by Mosaic employees, led student research groups that gathered data to present to administrators and give recommendations on how this epidemic could be addressed through social and policy change. The impact of these groups has been widespread—many of the students who led these groups have continued to do work beyond high school in violence prevention, but they have also generated: policy changes, administrative and community action, and school-wide education about their findings. Despite often facing reluctance and deterrence from adults, these young people understand that sexual violence and gender-based harm are contributing factors to the youth mental health crisis that the U.S. Surgeon General has declared a top priority for public health.

Mountain Communities Supporting Education Inc. dba The Collaborative

I'm so grateful to know that my child is being well cared for while I'm at work. The Extended Day Program at Flood Brook has always been a great environment for the kids to learn and play after school. ~ EDP Flood Brook Parent

Mountain View Farm Animal Sanctuary

Since 2003, we have rescued scores of farm animals, including goats, cows, sheep, pigs and equines from situations of abuse or neglect. Some of our most memorable cases, however, have involved local families who for various reasons could no longer provide adequate care. Some of our most gratifying rescue actions have provided comfort to local owners who were distraught at the prospect of putting animals down rather than see them suffer for lack of good care or nutrition. In those situations, we have taken over their

responsibilities and encouraged them to visit their beloved animals (usually elderly horses) in their new home at the sanctuary.

North Branch Nature Center

The following story comes from a public-school teacher working with one of NBNC's most far-reaching programs, ECO (Educating Children Outdoors). This standards-based nature immersion program works in collaboration with a dozen area public schools to help classroom teachers meet Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards outdoors while introducing children to the natural communities right outside their classrooms.

“‘Maggie’ (not her real name) is an at-risk child. One thing that is clear to me as an educator is that being in nature, among all the living creatures and plants, somehow brings Maggie to a stress-free level in her mind. This enables her to reach some core levels of building trusting relationships in a safe and positive way. I recommended her for North Branch Nature Center's Summer Camp scholarship program because I quickly noticed how Maggie, through ECO, became more available for learning – in both the outdoors and in the classroom. For example, being in nature gave her a reason to want to learn how to spell, so that she could write stories about all the little creatures she met in the forest. It prompts great inquiry, and she developed a love of researching all the things that she learns while being outdoors. Lastly, the continuity of having her ECO teachers through to the summer provided her with a strong sense of a relationship that centered on a mutual love for the natural world. Being at camp this summer gave Maggie an enriching experience that she will always remember. One thing I've noticed is that Maggie names her stuffed animals after people she trusts and has a deep connection to... She renamed her big stuffed dog after one of her ECO/Summer Camp leaders.”

Your support of NBNC helps kids like Maggie and helps NBNC nurture a generation of Vermonter children who know and love the local natural environment, who have had personal, powerful experiences in nature, and who have experienced the emotional, mental, and physical benefits of learning outdoors. Thank you!



Northeast Kingdom Human Services

Norman's Story

Norman is super excited about recently getting his dream job, working at the Star Theater in St. Johnsbury, a job he obtained with support from the NKHS Employment Team. Norman recalls how he loved coming to the theater with friends and now takes immense pride in helping to keep one of his favorite places clean and comfortable for fellow moviegoers.

While not so shy now, Norman used to have a much harder time communicating as he was often very nervous. His Direct Support Provider couldn't say enough about how much change she's seen in Norman, particularly his ability to communicate with others and his gain in self-confidence. In addition to his work responsibilities, Norman is learning to manage his time and budget his money while becoming more self-assured.

Norman loves going to work, and being able to make his own money seemed more of an afterthought compared to the pride he feels being part of something important to him. However, Norman did mention that one of the first things he did with his first paycheck was purchase a Netflix subscription so he could watch movies whenever he wanted.

Northeast Kingdom Learning Services, Inc.

Meet Michelle Falconer - Chasing my Dream.

My name is Michelle Falconer. My senior year of high school, 2015, I hit a rough patch in my life, which resulted in me choosing to drop out of high school. After dropping out of high school, I realized how big of a mistake that choice was as I had now messed up my whole future. When I decided that I needed to get my diploma, there was no way I was going to catch up by going back to school, I needed more help than that.

I was referred to NEKLS and specifically worked with Tricia. From the moment I walked into those doors, I knew I was where I needed to be. I had the resources I needed to succeed, I had the one-on-one help I desperately needed, and Tricia took every second she could to make sure I succeeded. Because of NEKLS and Tricia, I was able to graduate on time, with my class and I received my diploma; something that would have never happened if I would not have been able to work with NEKLS.

NEKLS is something that so many students need. Some may be afraid to ask for that kind of help, but that was by far one of the best decisions I could have made for my future.

I have now overcome addiction and have the best job I could ask for. I have been at my current job for almost 5 years. I am also engaged and a mom of a 7-month-old baby boy.

I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to go to NEKLS, or else this may have never become my life.

Northeast Wilderness Trust

Northeast Wilderness Trust has protected nearly 16,000 acres in Vermont as wildlands; places where Nature has the space and time to evolve, grow, store carbon, provide clean water and air, and provide habitat for wildlife. No trees are ever removed, and people are simply visitors to these places. The Wilderness Trust is currently working to conserve Bear's Nest Wilderness Preserve, approximately 2,612 acres at the center of the binational wildlife movement corridor, "Northern Greens to Canada." If protected as wilderness, this land will serve as a much-needed wild core area embedded within thousands of acres of managed timberlands in northern Vermont. The conservation of wildlands offers myriad benefits to Nature and to residents of Vermont.



Northern Counties Health Care, Inc.

Each year, gifts to Caledonia Home Health Care & Hospice (a division of Northern Counties Health Care) help us to provide home health and hospice services to residents throughout Caledonia & Southern Essex Counties. One of the programs donations help make possible is our Long-Term Care Program—providing dignity, control, and independence to clients and their caregivers.

"I can do what I like and what I want. I couldn't do that in a nursing home." - Ashley, Long Term Care client

At the age of 21, Ashley had a stroke and spent months in the hospital and at a rehabilitation center. She was told the next step would be a nursing home, due to the amount of care she needed. Instead, Ashley and her parents were determined to bring her home.

"In a nursing home, she would not have the same connection, relationships, or family around her. I can't imagine what that would have done to her, especially during the pandemic. Ashley is most comfortable at home. Family is everything."

-Kelly, Parent of Long-Term Care client

Ashley's mom, Kelly, worked with Holly Blair, a Case Manager with Caledonia Home Health Care & Hospice to learn about the Long-Term Care Program. Through that program, Kelly receives funding to help her care for Ashley full-time as a family caregiver.

Holly continues to work with Ashley and Kelly to answer their questions, advocate for their needs, navigate resources, and access support.

"Ashley is an excellent advocate for herself," said Holly. "Each year, some of her funding goes towards the purchase of assistive devices. These devices help Ashley work toward her goals of remaining at home and having more independence."

-Holly, Case Manager

Ashley and her mom are so thankful for the help they receive, and hope by hearing their story, people learn that the Long-Term Care Program is not just for older adults.

Every situation is unique and not all families can provide the same level of care as Kelly. Our Case Managers help individuals identify personal goals and connect them with the right resources at the right time. We guide them through every step of their journey.

"We help our clients stay in their home. It's where they feel safest and the most comfortable, allowing them to live longer and happier lives."

-Holly, Case Manager

We consider it a privilege, to serve everyone who needs us in Caledonia and Southern Essex Counties. From prenatal care to long term care, to supporting the bereavement needs of families, we are here for our community.

Nationwide, home health and hospice agencies are challenged with workforce shortages and funding and regulatory changes. Support from community members, like you, helps provide the resources needed for critical programs not fully covered by state and federal funding.

Please consider making a gift this year to Caledonia Home Health Care & Hospice.

No matter the size, your donation will make a difference for our clients, and help build healthy families and thriving communities.

Thank you in advance for your support. Your donation will give the gifts of choice, dignity, control and independence.

NorthWoods Stewardship Center

Whether folks come to know NorthWoods through a conservation employment experience (we offer more than 100 conservation jobs for young adults and young professionals each year), an environmental education program (we host thousands of school kids and adult workshops), by connecting to our campus in the Northeast Kingdom (our 1,500 acre

conserved demonstration forest is open year-round to the public for non-motorized recreation, hunting, foraging, etc.) or by collaborating with our staff on a project to promote sustainable public access or environmental protection (we implement water quality, conservation forestry, and sustainable trail projects) they will find an invitation to stewardship. In direct action and in long-term planning, NorthWoods is a resource for engaging all ages of people in promoting vibrant human and natural communities.

One Tree Planted, Inc.

In just nine years, we have managed to get over 91 million trees in the ground through new and established relationships with over 463 planting partners. In 2022 alone, we planted over 52 million trees within 327 planting projects in 74 countries across six regions and have potentially sequestered more than 10 million tons of carbon over the next 20 years. Through these projects, we helped to create 2,438 jobs, supported 50,582 farming families, and engaged over 32,000 volunteers to restore 97,769 hectares of land. In 2022, One Tree Planted coordinated 468 tree planting events worldwide and engaged and empowered over 26,254 women in developing countries.

OUR House of Central VT, INC

Without OUR House, all children who experience sexual violence would have to go to the police station to talk about what happened to them. They would need to go to DCF and the courthouse to repeat themselves. With OUR House, they are able to come to ONE place, which is child friendly, and everyone comes to them for a one time meeting and interview.

Outright Vermont

"Outright really saved my family's life. When my son was very young, he knew, and we knew, that his gender identity did not match his biological sex. We really didn't know where to turn. Our pediatrician was fabulous, but we needed more. With some advocacy, Outright stated their first Gender Creative Kids group. Gathering with other non-gender conforming kids was magical for our son. And the support that was shared among the other parents in the group was such a relief. Everything from where to buy clothes, to navigating school and family - we shared the journey together. Over the years, the parents transitioned to the Transparent support group and the kids transitioned to Friday Night Group, Camp Outright, Youth Summit, Queer Prom, Leadership Day....so much positive support. So much - kids being kids. I really can't imagine what our lives would have been like without Outright." -parent of an Outright youth.

Pathways Vermont

You can follow this link to hear Pete's story on our Youtube channel!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cX_9JXEwVUM&t=1s

Pope Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter, Inc.

Our shelter/animal society has been serving northern Vermont since 1993. We have run hundreds of low cost spay/neuter clinics for cats and have found homes for an average of 300 dogs and kitties per year. Many of our intake pets have required major medical procedures from heart issues to broken or lost legs, and we have done everything possible to return these animals to health. There are many, many volunteers who have given their time and compassion to our mission. The shelter is a truly needed asset to our communities, and we have established a large outreach to area schools and other organizations.

Reinbow Riding Center

Since 2008, we have provided over 1,000 horsemanship lessons at no cost to those in our community. These lessons improve physical abilities, spatial reasoning, and can have a major impact on those with developmental disabilities. A rider who was considered non-verbal began shouting "horse" and "ride" during lessons.

Individuals with anxiety, trauma, or other social emotional challenges find the physical regulation and mirroring that accompany their time with a horse creates a healing bond that allows for connections they are often struggling to make in other areas of their lives. This bonding can then often transfer to other people at lessons, or others in the community.

Renita Marshall Helping Hands Foundation, Inc.

As a mom was diagnosed with terminal cancer, she knew she'd be spending one last Christmas with her children. We stepped in and covered both children's complete wish list - we spent more than we have ever including purchasing a gaming computer, Nike Jordans, and concert tickets in Boston to see Billie Eilish. It ended up sadly being the mother's last Christmas, but she was so appreciative that while they were going through so much, we were able to put smiles on her children's faces.

Rural Community Transportation

"As the leading provider of affordable housing in the Northeast Kingdom, RuralEdge relies on community partners to provide necessary services for our residents so that they can live meaningful and prosperous lives in their housing. The role of transportation, especially for our older population, cannot be understated. RCT has done an exceptional job of transporting our residents and SASH (Support and Services at Home) participants to and from medical appointments, enrichment centers and meal sites. The drivers are always helpful with assisting passengers with mobility issues, and buses along the designated routes are easily accessible and are on time. These services are often the difference between receiving necessary health services or not. RuralEdge thanks RCT for their commitment to enhancing the lives of Northeast Kingdom residents every day, and we look forward to more years of serving Northeast Kingdom communities together."--Patrick Shattuck, Exec. Director

Rutland County Free Clinic

Oral health is now recognized as an integral piece of a person's overall health condition when an organ transplant is required. In 2022 the RC Free Clinic assisted 2 individuals in obtaining the dental care they required in order to be medically cleared for a heart and liver transplant.

Both individuals are enrolled in Medicare, have no dental insurance and did not have a primary dental provider. Their last dental health visit was 3 years or more. Both patients phoned many dental offices throughout Rutland, Addison and Chittenden counties but were informed that the practices were not taking new patients or offered an appointment more than 9 months out.

These individuals were initially served through our community-based health screening events and obtained referrals to one of our volunteer community partners where they obtained free dental care services and the necessary assistance to become approved for the organ transplant waiting list.



Rutland United Methodist Church dba Companions In Wholeness

We have approximately 195 different individuals that visit us each month. We have a few of the individuals who volunteer throughout the month. Everyone day someone will tell us how grateful they are for the support we provide to them. Individuals begin to arrive each day at 6:30am when we open our doors, and many will stay throughout the morning. We are building community among the people who come each day.

SafeArt, Inc.

SafeArt is often asked to write about what it is we do. I feel the best way to understand the impact we have on individuals and community is to hear it from folks who participate in our programs. For the past three years our youth summer camps have provided safe spaces for young people to grow, learn, and thrive together. Here is a testimonial from one of our youth co-creators: "I had an amazing experience working at the SafeArt summer camps! I think the biggest takeaway was learning about how one individual felt and thought and how different they interpret situations. I enjoyed being around such supportive people and I liked how easy going everything and everyone was. I think it was helpful for the kids to have options and to be able to choose to participate or not. I liked how it was a very educational camp but engaging and fun at the same time. Overall, I had lots of fun and thought it went really well!"



Safeline, Inc.

BK, a victim experiencing domestic violence, called Safeline's toll-free 24/7 hotline (1-800-639-7233) because their partner was becoming increasingly abusive. Safeline's advocate provided emotional support for the victim who was in crises and suggested options for next steps. The survivor chose to seek a protection order. Safeline's advocate assisted them in filling out the proper forms and attended Court with the survivor. The survivor experienced a great sense of relief when they were granted their protection order and could move forward with increased safety because of Safeline's assistance.

Southern Vermont Arts Center

In 2022, Southern Vermont Arts Center (SVAC) supported over 250 emerging and established artists, provided camps and afterschool programs for close to 1,100 youth and families, and, with its exhibitions and programming, reached out-of-state visitors and local residents from 10 out of 14 counties in Vermont.

Last year, we received the following feedback from visitors and program participants:

"This place is so special, I love everything about it. I can feel the power of the art running through my veins. Every heartbeat feels like flowers are blooming in my chest."

“The SVAC is a wonderful asset to the area. The exhibitions in the houses and the sculpture park are so interesting, diverse and often beautiful. Thank you. We will return each visit to Vermont from London.”

“Thank you so much for the love and care you and SVAC have put into our children. And especially accommodating our needs to help make it work for [my son, who is on the [autism spectrum]]. THANK YOU!”

“We simply would not have considered registering our child for this class without a scholarship to ease the financial burden. We are so grateful that we are now able to expose our children to the creative arts and the various programs and classes at SVAC. We know how important these various skills and lessons are to our children's self-confidence, independence, and their mental, emotional, and physical health. We truly are so appreciative for the financial assistance so generously offered.”



Special Olympics Vermont

Special Olympics Vermont contributes to the physical, social, and psychological development of people with intellectual disabilities. Through successful experiences in sports, our athletes gain confidence and build positive self-images, which follow with them into their homes, classrooms, jobs, and communities.

Spectrum Youth & Family Services

<https://www.spectrumvt.org/revons-story-how-spectrum-changed-his-life>

The University of Vermont Health Network – Home Health & Hospice

Henry tries to hold his head up. Making a series of grunts, the two-year-old squishes up his face as he tries to stand up while clutching a giant foam block. Sitting beside him, with a

hand on his back and his belly, Andrea Buteau, who has a doctorate in physical therapy, makes sure he doesn't fall.

Henry's task might seem simple, but for him it's anything but.

Henry suffers from alternating hemiplegia of childhood (AHC), a one-in-a-million neurological disorder that presented when Henry was just nine weeks old. The disease results in episodes of facial and limb paralysis, muscle weakness and seizures. As a result, Henry isn't yet strong enough to walk on his own. There is no cure for his condition, and it is difficult to go to the doctor's office for appointments, making home health care critical.

That's where UVM Health Network – Home Health & Hospice's physical therapy for children comes in.

Several times a week, Buteau, a physical therapist with Home Health & Hospice's pediatric rehabilitation program, visits Henry at home to work with him on strength-building exercises that are critical in fending off permanent damage from AHC. The program offers both occupational and physical therapy as well as speech therapy for children in their homes. Eight clinicians, like Buteau, serve roughly 170 kids in Chittenden and Grand Isle counties.

"Henry's home health care team have quickly proven themselves to be his favorites," says Henry's mother, Mary Saladino. "We know he is getting such high-quality physical and occupational therapy without having to leave home. It's one of the few things that makes our life easier."

Thanks to Buteau's physical therapy visits twice a week and weekly visits from her colleague Rebecca Grimm, an occupational therapist and program team manager, Henry is getting care at home that wouldn't be possible otherwise.

To learn more about UVM Health Network – Home Health & Hospice's Pediatric Therapies and Nursing Services, visit: Pediatric Therapies and Nursing – UVM Health Network – Home Health & Hospice (uvmhomehealth.org)

Turtle Island Children's Center

We are currently serving about 70 children year-round and up to 90 over the summer. Despite the staffing challenges that we and so many have experienced– we have a strong team of dedicated educators. By supporting each other with food, housing, childcare, and seeking out resources– we've been able to grow and thrive through the pandemic. We are actively advocating for children, families and teachers so that these experiences and voices are not left out as more and more childcare centers are closing, and parents cannot find or afford care.

This year we launched a pilot program– the adventure preschool– as a response to the increased demand for outdoor preschool education. We have been able to make this program accessible by fully equipping the adventure crew with waterproof and other gear.

They each carry sturdy backpacks with all of their necessary belongings including field guides. Children have become experts in identifying tracks and the various mushroom varieties that grow in the woods surrounding our homebase, and they have been excitedly expanding their literacy skills through map-making, among many things!

Twin Pines Housing

Shanna Belanger has been at TPH's Village at Crafts Hill for four years now. "We really like it here," she says, and her daughter Alexandra agrees, "I love that I there is a big, flat parking lot where I can ride my bike."

Shanna said that life was difficult prior to coming to Crafts Hill. "I was in a bad relationship, and me and my daughter were in a few shelters," she said.

Now, Shanna is a substitute teacher in Hartford (VT) Schools. "It's not steady pay, but Holly at Twin Pines has been very helpful getting me through that. Twin Pines has also connected me with Listen which has been really helpful."

"Twin Pines helps out a lot when we need help," she said. "One time a pipe fell out, and maintenance came over right away to fix it. When I need anything, they come."



Twin Valley Senior Center

Meals on Wheels meals are prepared at our Senior Center, and hot meals are delivered to clients three days a week. In addition to the hot meals, frozen meals are included for days that we do not deliver. Volunteers help with the preparation of the meals, the packaging, the packing up for the volunteer drivers, and cleanup work and assistance. There are approximately 180 meals delivered each week. There are three delivery routes made each day that cover the rural areas of Cabot, Calais, East Montpelier, Plainfield, Marshfield, and Woodbury. Each delivery route takes between two and two and a half hours. We have over 38 volunteers who work with our 2 ½ full-time equivalent staff members. We depend on grant funding and donations to help pay for these meals. Last fiscal year the average cost of each meal was \$13.23. We received a reimbursement from the Council on Aging of \$3.80 per meal. Town appropriations provided \$1.80 towards each meal cost. On average a client paid a donation for \$3.02 for each meal. That left the Center with an amount of \$4.61 to cover each of the approximately 9,400 meals we delivered. We are working hard to obtain the funds to continue this vital program for our community clients.

United Way of Lamoille County

The goal of UWLC's transitional housing program, New Foundations, is to support women and children move from unhoused or housing insecure to stable housing. Located in the heart of Morrisville, this supportive accommodation bridges the gap from homelessness to permanent housing and offers structure, support, life skills education, and training opportunities. Participants can stay for 3-5 years, during which time they create a savings plan to be financially ready to transition into stable housing.

Since 2021 UWLC has supported eight women and 15 children.

This program provides a safe, supportive environment where residents can overcome trauma, begin to address the issues that led to homelessness, and enhance their support network.

The participants who exit the program have achieved numerous successes. One was able to reach her goal of becoming licensed LNA and saved over \$4,000. She secured affordable housing for herself and her young son. Another participant received full custody of her four children who were in DCF custody. One woman just moved into an apartment and will begin classes at CCV and work toward becoming a Pharmacy Technician. In 2022, a parent with a young child with multiple disabilities demonstrated increased self-confidence as a mother. Last November a participant majoring in Addictions Counseling was hired as an admissions counselor at the Lamoille Community House.

This project literally creates new foundations for women and children.

United Way of Rutland County

https://www.dropbox.com/s/rw3ay3umjymxf0z/United%20Way_Campaign%202022.mp4?dl=0



Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports

This is Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports!

<https://youtu.be/KLw5aQ03Hol?si=IDnGJH5WBG5Y29QE>

Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports is a nationally recognized organization that empowers people of all abilities through inclusive sports and recreational programming regardless of ability to pay. In addition to sports, year-round programming options integrate environmental, holistic wellness, and competitive training philosophies for people of all ages with cognitive, developmental, physical and emotional disabilities. Many youth participants come on a regular basis for lessons with school groups for snow sports during the winter and paddling and biking during the summer.

Vermont Adaptive's Veteran Ventures program provides outdoor adventures and recreation for veterans and members of the armed services for more than 30 years. Watch the program in action! <https://youtu.be/9peUG3IQLCo?si=HbupnPDLjb72iM4N>

Vermont Adaptive promotes independence and furthers equality through access and instruction to sports and recreational opportunities including alpine skiing, snowboarding, and other winter sports; kayaking, canoeing, sailing, cycling, hiking, rock climbing, tennis, horseback riding, and more. Nearly 400 volunteers serve clients of all abilities with physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities from all over the world in three winter locations in Vermont – Pico Mountain at Killington; Mt. Ellen at Sugarbush Resort in Warren; and Bolton Valley Resort in Bolton as well as spring/summer/fall locations on the Burlington waterfront, Waterbury Reservoir, Chittenden Reservoir, Silver Lake, Stoughton Pond, and a number of state parks.

Vermont Adaptive provides state-wide trail and lift-access mountain biking for all abilities with a fleet of more than 40 mountain bikes, including 10 adaptive bikes and over 30 two-wheeled bikes. This is the only adaptive program in New England to offer multiple Bowhead adaptive mountain bikes to participants. Vermont Adaptive is actively engaged in advocacy and trail assessments with VMBA, Killington Mountain Bike Club, Slate Valley Trails, Stowe Trails Association, Velomont Trail, Kingdom Trails, Vermont Huts Association, US Forest Service and more.

Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

VABVI has been providing support services to Vermonsters with impaired vision for nearly a century. Over that time, VABVI has become integral to the health & well-being of the Vermont community.

Vermont CARES

An anonymous story shared by a participant of the Syringe Service Program

“This organization, what you do here, is something really special. I have had a hard life, a really hard life in times where the biggest worries people knew to have were extremely limited. But you do something special here. You are a rare sort, who sees the world and the people in it with compassion that is so rare these days, and in a place where fear is usually the number one factor. You’ve treated me with kindness and so much compassion, and I can’t tell you how much I appreciate you. Thank you for being here for me.”

Vermont Catholic Charities, Inc.

Sue called Vermont Catholic Charities with an emergency. She was running out of propane and was afraid that she and her 2 daughters could not stay in their apartment without heat due to the severity of the weather. We contacted the propane company and paid for a delivery of propane. Sue said, “Thank you for helping me in my time of need.”

Vermont Farmers Food Center

The Vermont Farmers Food Center (VFFC) is committed to creating solutions that respond to the needs of our community, especially during challenging times. Our mission is to re-

localize our food system; to create a resilient community by valuing our interconnectedness to the land and to each other.

At VFFC, we are building a community food network that connects more Vermonters to locally grown food. We approach the re-localization of our food system in three ways – by providing the infrastructure growers need to market their products; by offering community education classes on gardening, cooking and nutrition; and by increasing food access through our programs – Farmacy, Online Local Food Market, Wholesale Purchasing, and our latest projects – Rutland County Eats and Eat At Home (in partnership with the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging).

Strategically located in downtown Rutland City, one of the most impoverished urban areas in Vermont, we are easily accessible to engage with our closest neighbors in need. We provide fresh produce and meals to the Rutland Food Shelf, Bennington and Rutland Opportunity Council, Community Cupboard, and StreetGreens, a food truck that serves free meals in Rutland and Addison Counties.

Being located in the center of Rutland County, we are accessible to over 600 farms and currently work with over 25 growers in the region. VFFC provides the infrastructure that local farmers need to expand their markets beyond the farm stand. VFFC food access programs provide an opportunity for beginning farmers to sell their produce in bulk so they can focus on growing instead of marketing.

Our food access programs link the underserved in Rutland County to healthy local food, community programming and education, and pathways to employment in the food sector. By identifying and resolving constriction points in the local food system and access barriers faced by people in our community, VFFC reduces food insecurity and injustice within the Rutland County region.

As the renovation of VFFC's buildings in downtown Rutland is about to get underway, we are planning now for the expansion of services that will be conducted on our campus and in our community. Our founders intentionally chose the site at 251 West Street in downtown Rutland not only to restore the historic buildings but also to restore our relationship with the land, with our food, with our communities, and with each other. Restoration is our goal and community engagement is our methodology.

With your generous support, our staff may: plan and prepare for the increase in capacity of our food access programs and operations; address market limitations faced by local growers to increase food availability, and; listen to and involve our community in our program planning.

Please support VFFC's efforts to build and maintain a responsive, accessible, and resilient community food network that serves everyone!

Vermont Foundation of Recovery

We helped provide safe and reliable housing for over 100 Vermonters suffering from substance use disorder last year.

Vermont Interfaith Action

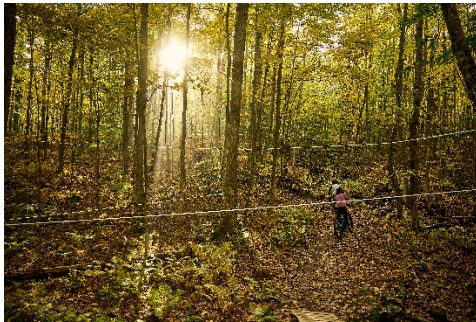
By far our biggest campaign in 2022 was to pass Proposal 2, to amend the Vermont constitution to abolish slavery without exception. It was conducted in partnership with the Vermont Racial Justice Alliance. Lasting over a year and involving 300+ volunteers in every region of the state, the campaign focused on many strategies to persuade voters to vote in favor of the proposal. These strategies included:

- *presenting 24+ educational presentations on slavery and its legacy
- *preaching at worship services in several congregations
- *two launch events, one attended by 200 people in person on Juneteenth, and one attended by 50 people virtually
- *tabling outdoors on Burlington's Church Street and City Arts Market; at farmers' markets in Barre, Montpelier, and Winooski; at Orleans County Fair; as well as Fourth of July celebrations in Williston and Greensboro
- *several voter registration events at St. Michael's College and UVM
- *relational organizing, with trained volunteers methodically reaching out to friends, family, co-workers, and congregation members
- *focus groups to identify the best messaging to persuade the largest possible electorate
- *social media posts and paid ads
- *radio ads
- *earned media on every television station, Seven Days, VT Digger, and Vermont Public Radio
- *opinion pieces in many newspapers throughout the state
- *door-to-door canvassing and phone banking to over 20,000 households
- *widespread distribution of T-shirts and lawn signs

All of this resulted in the passage of Prop 2 with 81.5% of the vote (10% voted no and 8.5% did not cast a vote on the measure). This is the largest and most successful campaign that VIA has conducted in its 18-year history.

Vermont Mountain Bike Association

In 2022, VMBA directed over 22,000 hours of volunteer time to maintain over 900 miles of public-access, multi-purpose trail across Vermont. Our work and the stewardship activities conducted by our 29 Chapters helped enable over 1.5 million rider visits to trails throughout the state, with an estimated 50,000 Vermonters getting out on a trail to mountain bike at least once per week during the riding season. VMBA Chapters also added over 40 miles of new trails in 2022, with a targeted focus on increasing connectivity, access, and making our trail systems more welcoming to new and experienced riders alike.



Vermont Natural Resources Council

VNRC was part of a multi-stakeholder effort in 2019 to address the problem of lead contamination in Vermont schools, resulting in a law requiring testing for lead contamination in drinking water in all Vermont schools and childcare facilities.

The law set a standard for acceptable lead levels (4 parts per billion) that was more protective than the federal EPA, and required remediation of any lead contamination found at or above that level. Importantly, the Legislature also allocated funding to ensure the initial testing and remediation happened quickly and consistently across the state.

According to a progress report released in September 2022, 98% of schools have completed these replacements, prompting state officials to declare the program a success. As of February 2022, the majority of taps tested had lead concentrations of less than 1 part per billion. Learn more: <https://vnrc.org/removing-lead-fixtures-from-schools/>.

Vermont Parks Forever

In 2022, we gave over 57,00 free days in the state parks to Vermonters from all 14 counties. (This is one of several programs Vermont Parks Forever focuses on.) One of the participants said, "several of our youth recently relocated to America and, upon seeing the lake and the mountains for the first time, immediately burst into happy tears. They lost their minds when we invited them to actually play and swim IN the water." Another said, "Holy

cow, kayaking was beyond joy! After not being able to do something I love for the past 15 years, and thinking I would never again do it, it was wonderful.... Such an empowering experience!" Our donors make these experiences with nature a possibility- thank you!

Vermont River Conservancy

When volunteers got together to launch Vermont River Conservancy in 1995, North Branch Cascades was on their minds. The area's older forest, mossy riverbed, cascading pools, and location just north of Vermont's capital city, all added up to a clear place for riverside protection. In 2018, this dream was realized. When E.B. Hyde and Deer Lake timber companies were ready to sell 6,000 acres of its land, Vermont River Conservancy was ready to step up to make sure this forested slice along the North Branch of the Winooski would be protected from timber harvest and open for quiet recreation. Vermont Land Trust bought the E.B. Hyde timber lands, then gave these 78 acres to Vermont River Conservancy.

North Branch Cascades is a remarkable 1-mile stretch along the North Branch of the Winooski River. It has seven stunning waterfalls and numerous deep holes for swimming. A 1-mile nature trail along the river, all of which is now wheelchair accessible, gives people of all abilities the chance to connect with the river. Multiple stone stairways wind down the banks to the river, giving visitors the chance to explore the many cascades. The site offers a unique nature experience in a verdant, moist, and mature hardwood-hemlock-spruce forest along the cold, mountain waters of the North Branch of the Winooski, and is a great place for bird watching, nature study, hiking, fishing, swimming, and picnicking.



Vermont Symphony Orchestra

In the fall of 2022 and spring of 2023, VSO brought "A Night at the Movies" concerts to Derby Line, Middlebury, Castleton, and Johnson featuring an orchestra accompanying short films with Vermont ties. 165 elementary, middle, high school, and college students from Rutland, Lamoille, and Addison Counties attended performances, and had a chance to meet with the conductor and musicians after the concerts. VSO also involved Vermonters from

across the state in two Burlington-based concerts: in September, 2022 six adults and students from St. Albans, Burlington, and Starksboro spoke about gun violence, immigration, discrimination, and empathy as part a piece titled "Riots and Prayers" at the Flynn. In October, 12 middle- and high-school young composers wrote their own music based on the melody of a piece titled "From Despair...Light!" that VSO premiered at the Flynn. These concerts were also attended by visually impaired audience members via VSO partnerships with five statewide agencies for the blind. In these ways, the VSO ensures its mission to foster and encourage the love of music throughout Vermont, and to create meaningful, high quality musical experiences.

Vermont Works for Women

Women Can Do is VWW's signature career exploration conference for 400 high school girls, hosted annually on the campus of Vermont Technical College in Randolph, VT. Through this inspiring full-day event, high school girls from around Vermont have the opportunity to try new technical skills in STEM and the skilled trades, meet industry professionals, and hear directly from women and gender-expansive employees about their careers in fields where their gender is often underrepresented. After a hiatus due to the pandemic, VWW was thrilled to be able to run this program in-person for over 250 youth last October!

Women Can Do is a unique and inspirational experience – something that has been missing from many girls' high school experiences during the pandemic. Through interactive activities in a supportive environment, female students are far more likely to try new and different things that they didn't already know they liked (or didn't like) – leading to a more expanded vision of what is possible for their future career paths. Please watch the video linked below to learn more about how Women Can Do helps to inspire Vermont girls to dream big about their futures!

<https://youtu.be/WYyS6kHqAfQ>

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC)

Pat (2022 Pro Build Crew Member): "I moved to Vermont a couple of years ago after graduating college. I worked at a ski resort for a few seasons but I wanted a change and looked into the VYCC. My time with the Pro Build crew this past season gave me a clearer picture of what kind of career path I want to follow. My carpentry experience at VYCC so clearly led to what I am doing now. It was like taking two semesters of school in carpentry. The emphasis on learning meant that I could get a feel for every part of the building process and enter the workforce as a not-so-green carpenter. I'm doing carpentry for an independent contractor in Waterbury now, and I use what I learned with the pro build crew every day. I don't think I would have ended up in this field, or have found out how much I like it, if it wasn't for my time with the VYCC this past season."

Visiting Nurse and Hospice for VT & NH

Before retiring in his 40's, Frank L. owned a successful business in Nantucket. He was and is service focused and it is from that lens he views customer service and care offered to him. Through his medical journey which included the amputation of his right leg and more surgeries, he was connected to VNH. While receiving services, he reached out to Megan Hawthorne, Director of VNH's Long Term Care program to compliment Emberlynn for her excellence in service. He also experienced support through our home health program after being discharged from the hospital and noted it was top notch as well.

Frank graciously stated, "VNH blew out the doors in the care provided to him. It's rare for me to give five-star ratings, however I don't hesitate to apply it to VNH". Frank never expected to be where he is at today. To any and all who wonder where to donate, Frank highly recommends VNH, "You don't want to lose the best company around. Life happens and you never know when you are going to be on the receiving side of these services. If you are looking to put your money somewhere where there's worth, you'll feel good about making a donation to VNH."

Washington County Family Center, d/b/a Family Center of Washington County

"Erik and Venesha have reminded me what courage and parental resilience look like. For this family to have left their culture and country, family, and friends, to settle in Vermont and to make a life here and raise their daughter is an amazing accomplishment. The Family Center was able to help this family with food, household goods, diapers, wipes, and help finding childcare for Julia and childcare subsidy to help cover the costs. The smiles on their faces every time I visit are contagious! I am so proud of their hard work, determination and their spirit to never give up when things are hard." Jenn Nance, Family Center Staff

Waterbury Common Market (formerly known as Waterbury Area Food Shelf)

We serve about 100 individuals a month who are facing a hardship and are struggling to put food on their table. We distribute canned goods, snacks, toiletries and household items, as well as fresh produce, breads, frozen meat, dairy products, and pet food. Many of the clients we serve are forced to choose between buying food or putting gas in their car or paying the heating bill.

When clients come into the Common Market, they are greeted with fresh produce and plenty of food. One client said that seeing all of this fresh produce gave her hope and let her know that everything was going to be OK. She felt good about coming in that day and left with 8 bags of food to bring home for the week. Another client said "with this food I can focus on searching for a job and not have to worry about buying food for the week." Thank you!



Youth First Mentoring

Maribeth and Gracie: A Mentoring Win-Win

When Maribeth retired from her career as an elementary school teacher, she knew one thing for certain: she wanted to have regular contact with children as part of her life. With her own children and grandchildren living hours away, Maribeth signed up to be a Youth First mentor. That's when she met Gracie, who at the time was six years old. "She was a little girl back then," Maribeth says. "Now she's driving!"

Over nine years as a mentor pair, Maribeth and Gracie have experienced all sorts of fun times together. They've hiked the trails on Hunger Mountain and Stowe Pinnacle. Gracie has improved her swimming skills, and even conquered the highest dive platform at the Montpelier pool. What was Gracie's favorite adventure? "Going on the ferry across Lake Champlain," Gracie says. "On the other side, they had an ice cream shop with all sorts of weird flavors!"

Maribeth and Gracie have also proven that when it comes to mentoring, the benefits are mutual. Gracie loves riding horses, and she's taught Maribeth a lot about their care and unique personalities. And when Maribeth sustained an injury that left her temporarily housebound, Gracie stepped up, with a little help from her dad. He drove Gracie to Maribeth's house so they could spend time together.

The support Gracie gave to Maribeth played an important role in her recovery. And Maribeth helps Gracie navigate tough times, too. “The drama gets to me when I am having a bad day,” Gracie says. “And I will come to Marybeth and I’ll be like ‘Oh I am so mad!’ And we’ll talk it out. It just makes me feel better that I have someone else that I can talk to.”

Recently, Gracie has taken her interest in mentoring up a notch by becoming an ambassador for Mentor Vermont. “People are reaching out to me and asking me to do an interview or speak in front of groups,” Gracie says. “I think it can be a little bit of a different look for the mentoring program.”

And Maribeth stresses that no matter what your interests, mentoring can fit into your life. It’s so open ended,” she says. “We can decide if we want to be in my kitchen cooking or if we want to go to ECHO Museum or walk in the woods. We can chat on the phone or go to Rabble Rouser and have a cup of hot chocolate. It’s such a perfect win-win.”



Youth Services

When you support Youth Services, you are supporting youth like Tyler. Tyler doesn't fit in anywhere. His parents both work full-time just to make ends meet and they are often over stressed. At school he sits quietly in the back since he has difficulty focusing and dreads being called on. He is always on-guard because of the bullies that often target him.

Tyler does okay enough at school, but it comes with a great amount of effort. Tyler doesn't get involved with an extracurricular activity because it often costs money his family doesn't have.

Tyler's friend suggested he join Friends for Change, a free, youth-led/adult -guided afterschool and summer program for 14-20-year-olds operated by Youth Services. Though he is nervous about joining a group, he gives it a try.

After an awkward first couple of days, Tyler begins to relax as he recognizes that this club was designed for, and by, youth like him who have experienced trauma from poverty, discrimination, foster care or family instability.

During a meeting circle, Tyler is encouraged to participate as little or as much as he wants. He is allowed to get up and run around when he finds his focus is waning. And, one day, Tyler decides to talk about the ever-present tensions at home. With his peer's support, he is able to see his resilience and skills.

Friends for Change found new ways to keep Tyler engaged and even intervened when his mom lost her job, and their housing was threatened. This is what justice and equity look like. Tyler is learning self-compassion and empathy which makes him a more confident freshman in high school, who has learned how to be a member of a group while being supported to overcome barriers in his life.

Too many young people like Tyler live in the margins, experiencing repeated trauma with nowhere to turn. With your help, they won't have to struggle alone.

For 50 years, Youth Services' 20 programs have worked with young people and adults to help find their voice, develop as leaders, and build equitable communities.

P.S. Tyler got our help. Other kids are waiting. Please make a tax-deductible gift today to enable Youth Services to work with more young people on the edge.

