

Double the Impact

This past summer the VCF's Sustainable Communities grant round invited nonprofit organizations in Vermont to submit proposals to support the arts, humanities, and cultural heritage; the environment; or economic development. We received 61 proposals requesting \$550,000 in funding.

Our **Giving Together** program, which provides advised fundholders the opportunity to participate in our discretionary grant rounds, continues to make a significant impact in Vermont communities two years after its inception. We were delighted to receive more than \$154,000 in Giving Together funds for this grant round! As a result, the VCF was able to **double** its grantmaking, awarding grants to 36 organizations for a total of \$309,082.

A list of the grants follows, including the amount awarded, a brief summary of the work, and which advised funds supported the grant. The funds that participated in Giving Together are marked with (GT) after the fund name. Many thanks to everyone who partnered with us, and congratulations to the organizations that received grant awards.

As part of our efforts to help philanthropists learn, lead, and grow we are expanding the grantee highlights in this report — we hope you enjoy reading about these innovative programs. Please feel free to call or email with questions or comments.

Wise on Weeds! at the Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy of Vermont received a \$10,000 grant for its new Wise on Weeds (WOW!) program, which is already having an impact in reducing the persistent spread of invasive plant species. Non-native, invasive plants present a huge threat to the diversity of life, but few Vermonters are either aware of the problem, or know how they can help reduce it.

WOW! is working to explain how the seeds of many imported plants escape into the wild, get established, and over time crowd out our native species. As habitats change, a rippling and long-lasting effect is felt throughout the environment.

The Conservancy's Communications Director Emily Boedecker says the program has three goals. "We want to raise awareness of the public so they make informed decisions, stimulate action throughout the horticultural industry to remove invasive species from

their inventory, and expand understanding so private landowners, government agencies, and homeowners know what to watch for and how to control it." WOW! is using a multi-pronged approach, including recruiting highly visible demonstration sites, hosting workshops for targeted audiences, producing brochures and a website, and conducting media outreach.



Grade 4 at Clarendon Elementary school with bags of garlic mustard and WOW! certificates.

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By the Numbers

61

applications received requesting \$550,000

36

organizations that received a grant

\$154,550

Giving Together contributions

\$309,082

total amount awarded in grants

Thank You!

We gratefully acknowledge everyone who participated in the Giving Together program:

- Admiral Fund
- Anonymous
- Cashdan/Stein Great Grandmother Fund
- David and Eleanor Ignat Fund
- Johnson Family Foundation Fund
- Lady Elaine's Fund
- Landmann Family Fund
- Nowak Family Fund
- Octot Fund
- Pillard-Gonzalez Family Charitable Fund
- Wallace A. Rogers
- Saunders-Wise Fund
- R. Day Surlles Fund
- Sustainable Future Fund
- Takoradi Fund

Addison County

Forest Guild — \$10,000 to support a pilot project of the Vermont Community Wood Energy Project at Mt. Abraham Union High School. The project focuses on identifying and providing a sustainably produced, secure, and local wood supply for heating municipal facilities.

Funded by the VCF Sustainable Communities Fund, the Saunders-Wise Fund (GT), and the Johnson Family Foundation Fund (GT)

Town of Shoreham — \$5,000 to replace the roof and implement structural repairs to the 1810 Newton Academy building, an historic building on the town green.

Funded by the David and Eleanor Ignat Fund (GT)

Caledonia County

Peacham Community Housing — \$10,000 to provide the necessary resources for phase one of a project that will restore an historic building in Peacham to its original purpose as a general store with a café.

Funded by the Marjorie A. Pierce Fund

Chittenden County

Catamount Trail Association — \$9,500 to support the Catamount Trail Protection Project in Huntington, an effort to purchase a trail easement in an area at great risk of private development.

Funded by an anonymous VCF advised fund (GT)

Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity — \$9,000 to pilot its Growing Income Project, an effort to help entrepreneurs increase income through intensified and practical post start-up marketing assistance.

Funded by the VCF Sustainable Communities Fund

Cochran's Ski Area — \$10,000 to install modern, energy-efficient snowmaking equipment. The equipment will help the nonprofit community ski area achieve its mission to make skiing accessible and affordable for all families.

Funded by Lady Elaine's Fund (GT)

First Night Burlington — \$700 for general support of the substance-free New Year's Eve festival.

Funded by the Admiral Fund (GT)

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Local Motion — \$10,000 to support the Close the Gaps campaign, a collaborative effort to develop a regional bike and pedestrian network.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund, the Admiral Fund (GT), and an anonymous VCF advised fund (GT)

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps — \$10,000 to construct an on-site greenhouse and garden as part of its new Youth in Agriculture and Natural Resources Program.

Funded by Lady Elaine's Fund (GT) and the Saunders-Wise Fund (GT)

Winooski Valley Park District — \$6,400 to train additional eco-stewards to expand the invasive species control program and to develop further relationships with local teachers doing service learning projects.

Funded by the McClure Motivation Fund and the Fayerweather Fund

Lamoille County

River Arts of Morrisville, Inc. — \$10,000 to support renovations to the historic Lamoille Grange building, which will be used for classes, performances, meetings, and office space.

Funded by an anonymous VCF advised fund (GT)

Orange County

Randolph Area Community Development Corporation — \$10,000 to fund operating and capacity-building at a critical time in the organization's development.

Funded by the Upper Valley Fund and the Takoradi Fund (GT)

Orleans County

Center for a Biobased Economy — \$8,500 to develop a sustainable agriculture incubator in the village of Hardwick, modeled after Burlington's Intervale Center. (see page 6)

Funded by an anonymous VCF advised fund (GT)

Memphremagog Arts Collaborative, Inc. — \$10,000 to secure space to begin operating the MAC Center for the Arts in Newport.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund

Vermont's North Country Chamber of Commerce — \$8,814 to support the establishment of the North Country Chamber of Commerce Welcome Center.

Funded by the Marjorie A. Pierce Fund

Rutland County

Rutland Area Farm and Food Link — \$10,000 to support the Farm to Institution Local Purchasing Project. This effort brings locally grown food to institutional markets such as regional schools and hospitals by working closely with local farmers.

Funded by the Vermont Health & Nutrition Fund, the Saunders-Wise Fund (GT), and the Sustainable Future Fund (GT)

Washington County

Cross Vermont Trail Association — \$10,000 to create engineering plans, complete all required permitting, and help acquire easements for one mile of the trail, including a shared-use path and a 140-foot-long span bridge.

Funded by the Octot Fund (GT)

Montpelier Winter Farmers' Market — \$10,000 to support the startup of a self-sustaining winter farmers' market in the City of Montpelier. (see page 6)

Funded by the Vermont Health & Nutrition Fund and an anonymous VCF advised fund (GT)

Open Hearth Community Center — \$9,950 to engage in a collaborative community process that will plan the development and implementation of a wetlands restoration and education project in the Mad River Valley.

Funded by the Marjorie A. Pierce Fund

Friends of the Winooski River — \$6,220 to support the Winooski River Watershed Partnership, a community-based effort to implement watershed projects from the Kingsbury Branch to the Dog River.

Funded by the VCF Sustainable Communities Fund

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Windham County

Jamaica Town Hall Restoration Committee — \$8,423 to upgrade the curtain and lighting facilities of the Town Hall stage to support music and theater by various groups in the region.

Funded by the Marjorie A. Pierce Fund and the Nowak Family Fund (GT)

Rockingham Arts and Museum Project — \$10,000 to support projects related to the Exner Block.

Funded by the Edward and Elinor Janeway Fund

Windsor County

Audubon Vermont — \$10,000 to implement a pilot conservation program in the Upper Valley region of Vermont. The program will engage landowners and local communities in creating sustainable forest habitat for the protection of birds and wildlife and for community benefit.

Funded by Lady Elaine's Fund (GT) and the Saunders-Wise Fund (GT)

Sustainability Institute — \$7,000 to support Our Climate Ourselves, a project providing educational opportunities such as workshops, trainings, and demonstration gardens, which help citizens cultivate a society that feeds itself without producing greenhouse gas pollution.

Funded by the David and Eleanor Ignat Fund (GT) and the Sustainable Future Fund (GT)

Statewide

Clean Air Cool Planet, Inc. — \$9,675 to build the capacity of Vermont science centers to inform the public about the current state of climate change, and advise their visitors about what they can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Funded by the Wynne and Joan Wister Fund, the Takoradi Fund (GT), and the Cashdan/Stein Great Grandmother Fund (GT)

Kingdom County Productions — \$700 for general support to produce documentary films rooted in Vermont.

Funded by the Admiral Fund (GT)

Local First Vermont — \$10,000 to hire a part-time executive director to guide, administer, and promote the growth of this new organization. (see page 6)

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund, the Landmann Family Fund (GT), the Saunders-Wise Fund (GT), and an anonymous VCF advised fund (GT)

Middlebury Area Global Warming Action Committee — \$10,000 to establish community-based educational programs for a "cool-based" economy in concert with a coalition of individuals and organizations in sister communities of St. Johnsbury and Springfield.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund

Nature Conservancy, Vermont Chapter — \$10,000 to support Wise on Weeds! (WOW!), a pilot outreach and education initiative that addresses one of Vermont's major environmental threats, the spread of invasive species.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund, the Terry Ehrlich Fund, and the Landmann Family Fund (GT)

Sustainable Energy Resource Group — \$10,000 to improve and expand the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network's efforts to form and consult with town energy and climate action committees across the state.

Funded by the Johnson Family Foundation Fund (GT) and an anonymous VCF advised fund (GT)

Vermont Council on Rural Development — \$10,000 to support the Community Visit Program in Richford and Derby.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund

Vermont Earth Institute — \$9,000 for increased capacity to meet the need and demand for its four-session community reading and discussion course on global warming.

Funded by the Edward and Elinor Janeway Fund and the Global Village Fund

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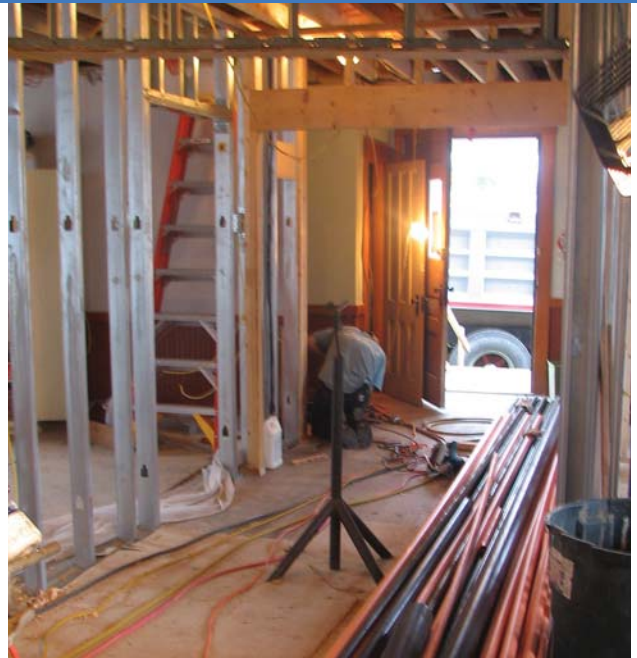
Vermont Forum on Sprawl — \$10,000 to support its community outreach and training, including an online Community Planning Toolbox and long-term assistance for communities that want to encourage growth in appropriate areas or protect surrounding farm and forest land. *Funded by the Eagleridge Fund and the Cashdan/Stein Great Grandmother Fund (GT)*

Vermont Humanities Council — \$5,700 to support Vermont Reads, a statewide one-book community reading program. This year's selection is *Counting on Grace*, a book about life in New England mills in the early 1900s. *Funded by the VCF Sustainable Communities Fund and the Admiral Fund (GT)*

Vermont Museum & Gallery Alliance — \$7,000 to support Building Accomplished Museums: Collections Stewardship, an effort to provide small cultural institutions with the opportunity to learn standards and best practices for collections care and management. *Funded by the Eagleridge Fund*

Zero Waste, Inc. — \$7,500 to develop the first stage of this new organization's visual identity and website. *Funded by the Eagleridge Fund and an anonymous VCF advised fund (GT)*

River Arts Gives the Lamoille Grange a Makeover



By the end of this year, River Arts of Morrisville, which received a \$10,000 grant from the VCF, hopes to have completed its remarkable two-year effort to convert the historic Lamoille Grange in Morrisville into an intergenerational community arts center. When fully up to speed, they expect to host art and dance classes, small performances, educational programs, theater workshops, and community events. In addition, a kitchen will allow them to offer cooking classes, space for potluck suppers, and preparation space for after-school snacks.

"This project goes right to the heart of our mission, to enrich the community through the arts," explains Development Director Lauren Philie. "We also hope it will continue to spark the renewed spirit in our downtown."

River Arts serves the Lamoille Valley and will continue offering programs in many area communities. The new building will help reduce rental costs and improve efficiency, allowing the organization to broaden its reach.

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A Biobased Economy, Local First Vermont, and a Winter Farmers' Market

With encouragement from all corners of the community, the new **Center for a Biobased Economy (CBE)** is pursuing its goal of developing a sustainable agriculture incubator in Hardwick. The group is poised to purchase the former Woodbury Granite Company, a critical parcel in the town's revitalization efforts. The 18-acre property, known locally as Atkins Field, has enough land for seed trial demonstrations, a community bio-waste project, an organic teaching garden, and a community center for conferences and social gatherings.

There is also ample space to support local producers with important infrastructure. "Our initial job is to highlight that sustainable, value-added agriculture has huge potential for the area's economy," explains Executive Director Hilary Hoffman. "At the same time, we'll find out from producers what marketing and facility-related help they need, so we can create a long-term development plan to match their priorities." CBE was awarded a grant of \$8,500 from the VCF.

Local First Vermont (LFVT) is a new organization that is dedicated to helping locally-owned, independent businesses remain a vibrant and essential part of our communities.

"Our name underscores our approach," says Janice Shade, Executive Director. "We're not "local only," we just want Vermonters to start thinking of whether what is here can serve their needs. And when it does, everyone wins because the money stays here to ripple through our economy."

With the help of a \$10,000 VCF grant, LFVT will be kicking off some high profile campaigns during the next year (such as Independents Week and Shop Local for the Holidays) to raise awareness amongst consumers, businesses, and government. It will also develop brochures, decals, posters, and other materials to help convey the "local first" message to the public.

"Part of our job is to dispel myths," Shade adds. "We want to make sure people know how our communities are affected by their buying decisions."

Farmers' markets are booming throughout Vermont, as is the interest in eating local food. Unfortunately, since most Vermont markets only run from May through October, farmers' income is reduced, contact between buyers and growers is limited, and a valuable opportunity to build a community's social network is cut off.

Things are starting to change, however. **The Montpelier Winter Farmers' Market** is launching this year with a monthly market. A \$10,000 grant from the VCF will help support hiring a manager and developing a strong publicity campaign.

"This is a very new idea in Vermont," explains Pete Johnson, owner of Pete's Greens in Craftsbury and a regular vendor in Montpelier. "I believe the demand is there, but it will take awhile before most growers can gear up for it. We'll also need to educate the public about the variety of fresh items available in our coldest months."

"The most exciting prospect about a winter market for me," he says, "is the idea of setting up my wooden boxes of veggies and watching people smile as they pick out beets, carrots, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, onions, garlic, and Chinese cabbage to eat that night."