

## Your Partnership Increases Our Impact

January 2008 was the deadline for the first Community Fund grant round of this year, and grants were awarded at the end of April to Vermont nonprofits that promote civic engagement, diversity and equity, and education. This year our Successful Communities grant round received 51 applications requesting a total of \$434,223.

Funds were requested for a wide array of projects, including increasing the number of community gardens in the state through a grassroots organizing model; providing support for Camp Kaleidoscope, a retreat for families living with Autism Spectrum Disorder; supporting a literacy program that does outreach through pediatric practices; and helping Special Olympics Vermont to shift its structure and expand its year-round offerings.

Grants were awarded to 31 organizations totaling \$241,959. Nineteen **Giving Together** participants partnered with the VCF and contributed \$98,000, almost 41% of the total grant dollars.

A list of the grant awards follows, including the amount awarded, a brief summary of the work, and which funds supported the grant. A brown icon with the **Understanding Vermont (UV)** publication page number(s) indicates which UV issue(s) is related to the grant award. The advised funds that participated in Giving Together are marked with (GT) after the fund name.

Congratulations to the organizations that received grant awards, and thanks to all who partnered with us to increase the impact of the VCF's Community Fund grantmaking. The grant descriptions and spotlight articles included in this report are just a tiny window to the good work being done at the grantee organizations - we invite you to call or email us to learn more.

### A Jump-Start on Success for Pownal Preschoolers

As Pownal's only full-day, full-year child-care and early education provider, **Oak Hill Children's Center** is raising program quality to meet top national standards. In Vermont's southwesternmost town, one in six children live in poverty — and a **\$5,500 VCF Successful Communities grant** will help Oak Hill's staff give local kids a better shot at success in the years ahead.

"Tons of research says that this investment early in life is the one that makes the biggest difference," says executive director Cinda Morse. "The families we serve are working families. It's really important that the time their children spend with us gives them the best start we can possibly provide."

To earn the highly valued accreditation of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Oak Hill is working through a research-based program for enhancing curriculum and record keeping on each

child's development. This grant will help keep the process going, and free up the whole staff for well-chosen learning opportunities.

"Our children are our future," Morse says. "The higher quality our program is, the better job we can do."



Children participating in a program at  
Oak Hill Children's Center.

## 2008 Successful Communities Grant Awards

### *By the Numbers*

51

applications requesting \$434,223

31

organizations that received a grant

\$98,000

Giving Together contributions

\$241,959

total amount of grants awarded

### *Thank You To Our Giving Together Participants!*

- Anonymous
- Albert G. and Gretchen R. Besser Fund
- Ann C. Livingston Fund
- Blue Ridge Fund
- Cashdan/Stein Great Grandmother Fund
- Flying Birch Fund
- Harriet and Harry Mitiguy Fund
- Honey Pot Fund
- Knuth-Otto Fund
- Kokoro Fund
- Lady Elaine's Fund
- Landmann Family Fund
- New Castle Fund
- Nowak Family Fund
- Octot Fund
- Rainbow Fund
- Rhubarb Hill Fund

*In addition, Giving Together gifts were made to the Successful Communities Shell Fund by the Albert G. and Gretchen R. Besser Fund, the David and Eleanor Ignat Fund, and the Kokoro Fund.*

### Statewide

#### **UV-12,24** Brattleboro Community Justice

##### Center

**\$6,200** to support the Returning Prisoner Simulation workshop, which helps increase community understanding of realities facing returning offenders. The workshop is part of the Restorative Reentry Program, and its goal is to engage the community in repairing the relationships damaged by criminal behavior.

*Funded by the Octot Fund (GT) and the McClure Motivation Fund*

#### **UV-28,30** Chittenden Community Television

**\$10,000** to support the Center for Media & Democracy's skill-building workshops and events for nonprofits. Topics include the use of storytelling, project management, branding, video/media uploading, podcasting, social networking, and content management systems.

*Funded by the McClure Motivation Fund*

#### **UV-6,23** Common Ground Center

**\$3,750** to host the second annual Camp Kaleidoscope, a retreat for families living with Autism Spectrum Disorder. At the four-day camp, medical students will provide volunteer support for families and will be exposed to non-traditional models for working with this population.

*Funded by the Eagleridge Fund*

#### **UV-24,32** Friends of Burlington Gardens, Inc.

**\$10,000** to support a mini-grant outreach and technical assistance program that will help establish 10 new community garden sites across Vermont. This will be achieved using a grassroots organizing model that increases civic engage-

## 2008 Successful Communities Grant Awards

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ment and leadership in local communities.

*Funded by the Vermont Health and Nutrition Fund*

### **UV-23** Outright Vermont

**\$10,000** to support the statewide Vermont Youth StandOUT Campaign to build safe, healthy, and supportive environments for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning youth.

*Funded by the Nowak Family Fund (GT), the New Castle Fund (GT), the Rhubarb Hill Fund (GT), and the McClure Motivation Fund*

### **UV-24** Peace and Justice Center

**\$10,000** to support its initiative that will analyze the intersections between racial bias and economic justice in Vermont. The final report from the project will be used as an educational outreach and advocacy tool.

*Funded by the Rhubarb Hill Fund (GT) and the Eagleridge Fund*

### **UV-6** R.U.1.2.? Community Center

**\$10,000** to support the Vermont Diversity Health Project, which offers training and support for health care providers in better serving gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning patients. The Project also helps these patients identify culturally competent health care providers.

*Funded by the New Castle Fund (GT), the Ann C. Livingston Fund (GT), and the Eagleridge Fund*

### **UV-7,20** Reach Out and Read Vermont

**\$3,000** to support a literacy program that reaches children through pediatric practices, especially those working with a high population of clients who are uninsured or on Medicaid. Books are

given to families at each well-child doctor's appointment and parents are encouraged to read to their children.

*Funded by the Knuth-Otto Fund (GT)*

### **UV-20,21,30** Snelling Center for Government

**\$10,000** to help strengthen the Vermont School Leadership Project (VSLP) at the Snelling Center, which offers intensive professional development for principals, superintendents, teachers, and other educators in leadership positions.

*Funded by the Knuth-Otto Fund (GT) and the Marjorie A. Pierce Fund*

### **UV-6,23** Special Olympics Vermont

**\$10,000** to support the multi-year initiative to shift its statewide structure to a regional, community-based approach. The initiative will also enhance its mission to provide year-round training and competitions in a variety of sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

*Funded by the James E. Gaseau Memorial Fund, the Vermont Children with Disabilities Fund, and the Wynne and Joan Wister Fund*

### **UV-7,23** The DREAM Program, Inc.

**\$8,863** to provide 20 summer DREAM camp scholarships for children of refugee and immigrant families.

*Funded by the Lady Elaine's Fund (GT)*

## 2008 Successful Communities Grant Awards

(list continued from reverse side)

### **UV-24,32** Toxics Action Center

**\$10,000** to support the Building Vibrant Communities Campaign. The Campaign will increase the capacity of three ad-hoc citizens groups to address environmental issues associated with gravel quarries in Moretown, Rochester, and Chester.

*Funded by the Eagleridge Fund*

### **UV-24** Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force

**\$10,000** to support public education activities about the issues surrounding the freedom to marry for all Vermonters. The organization's goal is to support the enactment of a law ensuring marriage equality for all Vermonters by 2009.

*Funded by the Knuth-Otto Fund (GT) and the Marjorie A. Pierce Fund*

### **UV-24,38** Vermont Humanities Council (VHC)

**\$10,000** to purchase books and hire facilitators for six new community book reading and discussion groups that will focus on historical and modern perspectives regarding social and racial equity, community identity, and war. The VHC is dedicated to creating a state in which every individual reads, participates in public affairs, and continues to learn throughout life.

*Funded by the McClure Motivation Fund*

### **UV-21,39** Vermont Women's History Project

**\$1,000** to help meet matching fund requirements for available state funds for completion of its projects, *Women's History Year Round*, *Women and the Lake*, and website biography updates. All of the projects promote awareness and understanding of women in Vermont history.

*Funded by an anonymous advised fund (GT)*

## Bennington County

### **UV-20** Oak Hill Children's Center

**\$5,500** to support professional development for staff leading to full accreditation of the Center, providing full-day early care and education for children 6 weeks through 12 years of age.

*Funded by the Nowak Family Fund (GT) and the Flying Birch Fund (GT)*

## Chittenden County

### **UV-24** Center for Community and Neighborhoods

**\$10,000** to support its new Inclusive Community Initiative, which will build awareness of how the invisible barriers of race and class keep people in poverty and then develop an action plan to reduce these barriers.

*Funded by the Marjorie A. Pierce Fund*

### **UV-7,20** Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF)

**\$4,750** to provide new, high-quality books to the library at the Burlington King Street Youth Center. It will also provide books directly to children in the library's programs. As the number of refugee and immigrant children grows, CLiF is working to reach and inspire reading among this underserved population.

*Funded by the VCF Successful Communities Fund*

## 2008 Successful Communities Grant Awards

### Families Grow, Cook, and Eat Food Together

Childhood nutrition. Hands-on learning. Food security. The well-being of single-parent families. Building community in housing projects. All these and more are addressed through a program that Joseph Kiefer, co-director of the Montpelier nonprofit **Food Works at Two Rivers Center**, calls “profoundly simple” — shared learning about how to grow, cook, and enjoy good food.

Mainly involving single parents and their kids, the effort starts with gardening, builds to hands-on cooking classes, and ends with a shared fresh and healthy meal. After two start-up years involving two housing complexes in Barre and Montpelier, a **\$10,000 VCF Successful Communities** grant will help involve its veterans as mentors to new families. The program is expanding to a third housing complex that has never had a garden before.

“There’s a huge desire to learn how to do this,” says Kiefer. “Our vision is that in ten years, we will be able to use the community room in a place like Highgate Apartments in Barre as a food-processing center and a teaching kitchen. We’re working with other groups and building networks, through the lens of food.”



## 2008 Successful Communities Grant Awards

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### **UV-20,23 Fletcher Free Library**

**\$4,000** to support the establishment of two teen-requested book clubs that will include speakers and the purchase of books specific to the age levels of each club.

*Funded by the VCF Fund*

### **UV-24 Joseph's House**

**\$2,800** to bring together new refugees and immigrants with their neighbors through meetings, field trips, and other activities that help bridge communication barriers and ease tensions raised by their differences.

*Funded by the Kokoro Fund (GT)*

### **UV-20,23 Mobius, The Mentoring Movement**

**\$9,000** to start community-based mentoring programs at the Sara Holbrook Center and the Boys and Girls Club in Burlington's Old North End.

*Funded by the Honey Pot Fund (GT) and the Kokoro Fund (GT)*

## Lamoille County

### **UV-8,20,23 Lamoille Area Recreation Center**

**\$6,000** to help create a new learning lab with computers and tutoring services, which will provide multi-generational recreational and educational opportunities.

*Funded by an anonymous advised fund (GT) and the Albert G. and Gretchen R. Besser Fund (GT)*

## Orange County

### **UV-21,38 White River Craft Center**

**\$10,000** to hire a part-time program and community outreach coordinator who will increase craft education opportunities for underprivileged populations, particularly youth.

*Funded by the Harriet and Harry Mitiguy Fund (GT), the Rainbow Fund (GT), the Landmann Family Fund (GT), and the VCF Successful Communities Fund*

## Rutland County

### **UV-20 Kids on the Move**

**\$6,096** to offer a summer camp-style program with intense physical, occupational, and speech therapy to five special needs children ages four to five who do not qualify for Special Education summer school.

*Funded by the Blue Ridge Fund (GT) and the Flying Birch Fund (GT)*

### **UV-7,20,23 The Mentor Connector**

**\$10,000** to support its mission to increase adult-youth mentoring matches by supporting the salary of a new assistant director who will help expand the program and increase the number of mentors, matches, and participating schools.

*Funded by the Blue Ridge Fund (GT), the Flying Birch Fund (GT), and the Eagleridge Fund*

## 2008 Successful Communities Grant Awards

*(list continued from previous page)*

### Washington County

**UV-24,32** Center for Whole Communities

**\$10,000** to build healthier communities by encouraging stronger connections to the land through ValleyFutures.net, a program in Vermont's Mad River Valley. The program offers opportunities for dialogue and solution-building to people with competing interests on land issues.

*Funded by the Marjorie A. Pierce Fund*

**UV-15,30** Central Vermont Adult Basic Education

**\$10,000** to provide basic education and literacy instruction to adults in Washington, Orange, and Lamoille Counties. Additionally, the funds will support the coordination of computer literacy classes at the Barre Learning Center and six other sites.

*Funded by the Marjorie A. Pierce Fund*

**UV-8,10,24** Food Works at Two Rivers Center

**\$10,000** to support its Good Food-Good Medicine program that connects local farms with underserved communities. The program provides year-round education to affordable housing residents on cooking, nutrition, and gardening, using local seasonal foods.

*Funded by an anonymous advised fund (GT), the Kokoro Fund (GT), and the Vermont Health and Nutrition Fund*

### Windham County

**UV-24** Vermont Independent Media

**\$10,000** to support *The Commons*, a monthly community newspaper that engages local residents in writing and production, and the Media Mentoring Project, a participatory journalism program that enables area residents to build writing, journalism, and other media literacy skills.

*Funded by the Eagleridge Fund*

### Windsor County

**UV-24,32** Upper Valley Trails Alliance (UVTA)

**\$10,000** to strengthen and expand community engagement and financial support in the service area between Ryegate and Springfield. UVTA promotes environmental stewardship and active lifestyles through four-season trail use.

*Funded by the Knuth-Otto Fund (GT), the Cashdan/Stein Great Grandmother Fund (GT), the Landmann Family Fund (GT), and the Upper Valley Fund*

**UV-21,22,32** Vermont Institute of Natural Science

**\$1,000** to support 180-220 children and their families at Community Nature Day Camps in Windsor County.

*Funded by the Cashdan/Stein Great Grandmother Fund (GT)*

## 2008 Successful Communities Grant Awards

### *The Commons, a Community Newspaper*

*For a new volunteer nonprofit, starting a community newspaper — a real paper, with in-depth reporting and committed advertisers — is no small challenge. But that’s just what the Brattleboro-area folks who formed **Vermont Independent Media (VIM)** in 2006 have done.*

*Spurred by the 2004 acquisition of *The Brattleboro Reformer* by a Denver-based company, VIM launched *The Commons*, a nonprofit monthly that has grown in two years from 16 to 24-28 pages as it has built coverage and advertising. **A \$10,000 VCF Successful Communities grant** is allowing VIM to hire a talented, experienced editor, improve compensation for community-based freelance writers, and develop sustainable income for a paper that, the volunteers hope, will become a solid weekly before long.*

*“This is wonderful — because we can start looking ahead,” says VIM board member Ellen Kaye of the grant. “We’re devoted to the idea that community media belongs to the community. And it should be a two-way conversation.”*

### **Building Bridges in the Old North End**

In Burlington’s Old North End, the population of new Americans with refugee backgrounds has been growing — as is the whole neighborhood’s need for support and emergency assistance in a tightening economy. To defuse the resulting tensions, outreach center **Joseph’s House** has developed the Unity Project, a weekly group where newcomers improve their English and learn to work with computers, while also connecting with their neighbors.

As they use the center’s computers to learn job skills and/or to tell their stories, about a half-dozen new Americans are paired with longer-term neighbors who have themselves benefited from Joseph’s House’s learning programs for the low-income community. New groups are formed on an ongoing basis. **A \$2,800 VCF Successful Communities grant** is helping the Unity Project to meet expenses and provide childcare.

“We’re building relationships,” says Brian Callanan, director of Joseph’s House.

“My hope is that this will create a ripple effect in the community.”

### **Role-Playing the Hurdles for Released Prisoners**

Invited by notices placed around the community, several dozen Vermonters show up at a local venue for an afternoon program. Each is assigned a set of characteristics and resources to role-play a person recently released from jail.

Around the large room are about 10 volunteer-staffed tables. Each represents a service or responsibility the role player must negotiate — with realistic challenges like the distance between offices, no car, limited bus service, and only so many hours in the day.

“It’s kind of mind-blowing,” observes Larry Hames, executive director of the **Brattleboro Community Justice Center**, which is currently the only New England organization providing this Returning Prisoner Simulation Replication Project. “Afterward people are saying, ‘How is someone supposed to do all this?’”

Developed in Wisconsin, the program builds understanding through realistic experience of the challenges that returning prisoners face. A VCF grant last year enabled the center to purchase the program package. Now, **a \$6,200 VCF Successful Communities grant** is helping it to provide it “wherever there’s a need,” says Hames.