

Making a Difference - Together

In early September the VCF awarded grants to Vermont nonprofits supporting the arts, humanities, and cultural heritage; the environment; and economic development. This year our Sustainable Communities grant round received 94 applications requesting a total of \$840,000.

Funds were requested for a wide array of projects, including an ethnic women's photography project in Burlington's North End; development of a Wildlife Habitat Map and Inventory for Jericho; and support for renovations for the Townshend Town Hall.

Grants were awarded to 46 organizations totaling \$283,050. Eighteen **Giving Together** participants partnered with the VCF and contributed \$113,050, almost 40% 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. The advised funds that participated in Giving Together are marked with (GT) after the fund name.

Understanding Vermont (UV) issue(s) related to each grant award are noted in blue brackets. We encourage you to visit www.understandingvt.org to read the most up-to-date information regarding these issues. You can request the corresponding UV publication online or contact us and we'll send you one.

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. We invite you to call or email us to learn more.

Working Toward a Sustainable Food System

In looking at a range of issues in southeastern Vermont, **Post Oil Solutions (POS)** identified regional food self-sufficiency as a major concern. It created the Windham Regional Education and Agriculture Project (WREAP) a year ago to develop the infrastructure needed to help this corner of the state feed itself year-round.

"This is a long-term project," says POS Executive Director Tim Stevenson, "and there are a lot of moving parts to consider in a food system. Ultimately we'd like to see increased availability of local foods for all income levels, as well as better awareness of what we can grow and the benefits this provides for our economy, health, and environment. More farmers' markets and multi-generational involvement in community gardening projects are also key parts of our vision."



POS participates in the White River Junction farmers' market. The organization received a \$10,000 VCF Sustainable Communities grant.

WREAP is already looking to the farming community to guide its effort and to graduate students at local colleges to help develop a business plan that will assure sustainability.

2008 Sustainable Communities Grant Awards

By the Numbers

94

applications requesting \$840,000

46

organizations that received a grant

\$113,050

Giving Together contributions

\$283,050

total amount of grants awarded

Thank You To Our Giving Together Participants!

- Anonymous (3)
- Admiral Fund
- Albert G. and Gretchen R. Besser Fund
- Avada Fund
- Brianne E. Chase Fund
- Gillette-French Fund
- David and Eleanor Ignat Fund
- Lady Elaine's Fund
- Landmann Family Fund
- Nowak Family Fund
- Rainbow Fund
- Rhubarb Hill Fund
- Sustainable Future Fund
- Stuart and Jill Tane Charitable Fund
- Trumasu Fund
- Withington Fund

Statewide

Composting Association of Vermont

[Economic Strengths, Natural Resources Protection]

\$7,000 to begin to address the gap between Vermont's current regulations for handling compostable materials and the needs of our communities and the environment.

Funded by an anonymous advised fund (GT)

Cross Vermont Trail Association

[Natural Resources Protection]

\$6,000 to create a *Guide to the Cross Vermont Trail*, which will be available in print and on the website.

Funded by the Trumasu Fund (GT) and an anonymous advised fund (GT)

Local First Vermont

[Economic Strengths, Business Climate]

\$3,500 for organizational development; specifically to help pay for a part-time executive director, so that the board is able to focus on strategic issues and fundraising.

Funded by the Sustainable Future Fund (GT) and the Trumasu Fund (GT)

Opportunities Credit Union

[Costs of Living, Infrastructure Limitations]

\$10,000 to train and certify counselors who provide services that help struggling low-wealth Vermonters move forward as they face the challenges of mounting debt, higher living costs, and stagnant incomes.

Funded by the McClure Motivation Fund

2008 Sustainable Communities Grant Awards

(list continued from previous page)

Public Assets Institute

[Business Climate]

\$10,000 to develop a new report template that the Public Assets Institute will use to publish regular reports. The template will draw on government data released monthly to more effectively update policy makers, the press, and the public about Vermont's labor market.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund

Rural Vermont

[Economic Strengths, Natural Resources Protection]

\$10,000 to bring together a small, diverse group of farmers to explore possibilities for generating solutions to address concerns regarding Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).

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

Smart Growth Vermont

[Infrastructure Limitations, Land Use]

\$10,000 to develop indicators of downtown health as a holistic framework for assessing the health of our downtowns and village centers. This will make a significant contribution to the long-range success of efforts to preserve Vermont's traditional landscape.

Funded by the Rainbow Fund (GT), the Rhubarb Hill Fund (GT), the Nowak Family Fund (GT), and an anonymous advised fund (GT)

Somali Bantu Community Association of Vt.

[Immigrants and Refugees, Workforce Readiness]

\$8,000 to provide adults in Vermont's refugee community career development and basic learning skills training needed for better employment and a healthier life.

Funded by the VCF Sustainable Communities Fund, the Eagleridge Fund, and the Antionetta M. Stafford Fund for Vermont Education

Vermont College of Fine Arts

[Arts]

\$9,300 to support a strategic planning process that will lay the foundation for the future of Vermont College of Fine Arts, a 174-year old Vermont institution.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund

Vermont Environmental Consortium

[Economic Strengths]

\$7,600 to conduct an information gathering and organizational development and planning process.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund

Vermont River Conservancy

[Natural Resources Protection]

\$5,000 for a strategic plan to develop a series of non-motorized camp sites on the Connecticut River, upstream of the confluence with the White River.

Funded by an anonymous advised fund (GT)

2008 Sustainable Communities Grant Awards

(list continued from reverse side)

Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

[Economic Strengths]

\$10,000 to create the *Vermont Certified Wood Guide Specification*, which will serve as a comprehensive source of Vermont certified wood products for architects and designers.

Funded by the Sustainable Future Fund (GT) and the Eagleridge Fund

Vermont Technical College

[Infrastructure Limitations, Land Use]

\$6,000 to support a Geographic Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS) survey and training for municipalities.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund and the VCF Sustainable Communities Fund

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps

[Education, Natural Resources Protection]

\$1,000 for general support.

Funded by the Trumasu Fund (GT)

Addison County

Bristol Recreation Club

[Health Care]

\$10,000 to determine the feasibility of the Deerleap Community Center, a multi-generational facility in central Addison County. The Center would strive to meet the region's demands for recreation, social, and wellness services.

Funded by the David and Eleanor Ignat Fund (GT)

Bennington County

Windham Art Gallery

[Aging Population, Arts]

\$5,000 to participate in a collaboration to create 24 painted panels that will be attached to residents' doors at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington to serve as visual cues for those suffering from dementia.

Funded by the Edward and Elinor Janeway Fund and the Vermont Veterans with Disabilities Fund

Caledonia County

Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium

[Cultural Heritage]

\$1,000 for general support.

Funded by an anonymous advised fund (GT)

Highfields Institute

[Economic Strengths, Natural Resources Protection]

\$10,000 for the community-based Organics Recycling Expansion program to broaden the availability of organics recycling options in Vermont communities, address water pollution issues, build healthy agricultural soils, and develop local, regenerative food systems.

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

2008 Sustainable Communities Grant Awards

Promoting Development In Vermont's Downtowns



Downtown Vergennes



Downtown St. Johnsbury

For the last ten years, Vermont's Downtown Program helped promote development consistent with our traditional pattern of compact settlements surrounded by open landscape. More recently, the state's Growth Centers Program created a way for accommodating significant new growth without turning Vermont into "Anywhere, USA."

However, while communities applying for growth center designation are required to analyze the impacts of new growth on their existing downtowns and surrounding communities, there is no reliable method for performing this study.

Smart Growth Vermont (SGV) received a \$10,000 VCF Sustainable Communities grant to work with UVM's Center for Rural Studies to address this gap. By developing a system of indicators that quantify downtown health from a variety of perspectives (economic, cultural, demographic, social, land use, etc.), a holistic framework for assessing downtowns and village centers will emerge.

"We're providing a tool communities can use to start a more informed discussion," says SGV Executive Director Noelle MacKay. "It will also help downtowns quantify their strengths and weaknesses and prioritize revitalization plans."

2008 Sustainable Communities Grant Awards

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Vermont Natural Resources Council

[Natural Resources Protection, Land Use]

\$10,000 to rethink and retool Act 250 for the 21st century and provide a coordinated approach to confronting the trends that would undermine Vermont's character, local economies, and environmental quality.

Funded by the Rhubarb Hill Fund (GT) and the Gillette-French Fund (GT)

Chittenden County

Burlington City Arts Foundation

[Education, Arts]

\$1,000 for general support.

Funded by the Trumasu Fund (GT)

Burlington College

[Immigrants and Refugees, Arts]

\$10,000 to work with women of varied ethnicity in Burlington's Old North End on a community photography project.

Funded by the VCF Sustainable Communities Fund

Flynn Center for the Performing Arts

[Civic Engagement, Arts]

\$2,000 for general support.

Funded by the Brianne E. Chase Fund (GT)

Green Across the Pacific

[Education, Habitat Loss]

\$6,600 to support the amphibian-monitoring project by engaging the communities of Richmond and Huntington through student, parent, and volunteer place-based science facilitated by

Camel's Hump Middle School and the Vermont Reptile and Amphibian Atlas project.

Funded by the Fayerweather Fund and the Wynne and Joan Wister Fund

Green Mountain CarShare

[Infrastructure Limitations, Climate Change]

\$10,000 to support outreach activities essential to the successful launch and ongoing development of the organization.

Funded by the Admiral Fund (GT) and the VCF Sustainable Communities Fund

Intervale Center

[Natural Resources Protection, Habitat Loss]

\$2,000 for general support.

Funded by the Admiral Fund (GT) and the Sustainable Future Fund (GT)

Town of Jericho

[Natural Resources Protection, Land Use]

\$3,600 to complete the second module of a multi-year, multi-phase effort to develop a significant Wildlife Habitat Map and Inventory for all of Jericho.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund and Terry Ehrlich Fund

Vermonters for Clean Environment

[Water Pollution]

\$10,000 to find solutions to the public health impacts caused by the use of chloramine by the Champlain Valley Water District.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund

2008 Sustainable Communities Grant Awards

(list continued from previous page)

Grand Isle County

Island Arts

[Arts]

\$10,000 to support the operation of a Grand Isle County Arts Center office and a part-time salaried grant writer/manager, as part of Island Arts New Academy.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund

Lamoille County

River Arts of Morrisville

[Civic Engagement, Arts]

\$4,950 to create Last Night, First Morning, a family friendly New Year's Eve celebration to serve the Lamoille County community.

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

Orange County

Chandler Center for the Arts

[Cultural Heritage]

\$6,000 to support capacity building needed to ensure the success of Chandler's centennial campaign.

Funded by an anonymous advised fund (GT)

Randolph Area Community Development Corporation

[Affordable Housing, Land Use]

\$10,000 to support Salisbury Square, a mixed-income, mixed-use downtown neighborhood development, focused on the goals of great design, green building, and affordability.

Funded by the VCF Sustainable Communities Fund, the Rainbow Fund (GT), and an anonymous discretionary fund

Sustainable Energy Resource Group

[Energy Alternatives, Climate Change]

\$10,000 to educate Vermonters about the importance and benefits of energy audits and weatherization.

Funded by the Wynne and Joan Wister Fund

White Pine Association

[Cultural Heritage]

\$10,000 to support the reservation and promotion of the history of the indigenous people of the Upper Connecticut River Valley and the historic Mission De Loup, built in 1685 in the Koas meadows of Newbury.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund

2008 Sustainable Communities Grant Awards

Preserving Vermont's Past

With a new emphasis on increasing accessibility to its collections, the **Vermont Historical Society (VHS)** is developing ways to reach out to all corners of the state. It launched the initiative, with support from a **\$8,725 VCF Sustainable Communities grant**, through a new traveling exhibit at the Weston Antique Show in October. Vermont pewter, glass, textiles, pottery, books, maps, and broadsides from its collection of southern Vermont native, Harold Goddard Rugg, were on display.

The funds also helped the VHS create a slide show talk and illustrated pamphlet about the collection to commemorate the 50-year anniversary of Rugg's legacy to Vermont history.

"It was a whirlwind weekend," says VHS Development Director Jane Campbell. "People were so excited to see these wonderful items and learn more about our work to preserve the heritage and traditions of Vermont."

With these materials now in hand, the VHS will be visiting more communities, attracting new members, and growing its capacity to serve all of Vermont.



Harold Goddard Rugg Exhibit

Becoming Less Car Dependent

The brand new **Green Mountain CarShare (GMCS)** is setting out with two goals: to reduce car dependence and improve mobility for Vermonters of all income levels. Starting in Chittenden County, CarShare will create "pods" where fuel efficient cars and trucks will be housed. Using GMCS's website, its members will be able to reserve and use these vehicles for a small hourly and mileage fee. This structure encourages members to plan their trips better and drive less.

The concept is based on a similar plan in California, a program GMCS's Executive Director Annie Bourdon helped get under way. As she explains, "We know that ownership is not possible for everyone, and that those who do own cars would like to drive them less. CarShare offers an affordable option for everyone."

A \$10,000 VCF Sustainable Communities grant will help GMCS with initial outreach activities, including developing a logo, marketing materials, and a website, as well as hiring personnel.

Bourdon adds, "300 people have already shown interest, and we haven't even turned our phones on."

2008 Sustainable Communities Grant Awards

(list continued from page 7)

Orleans County

NorthWoods Stewardship Center

[Infrastructure Limitations, Energy Alternatives]

\$3,000 for general support.

Funded by the Avada Fund (GT)

Rutland County

Poultney Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District (PMNRCD)

[Water Pollution, Natural Resources Protection]

\$9,468 for using the results of water quality assessments. PMNRCD will provide education to town governments and the public with recommendations on individual and community practices that can help to address the issues found.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund

Town of Chittenden

[Civic Engagement, Cultural Heritage]

\$6,750 to support the installation of a concrete floor in the lower level of the North Chittenden Grange Hall, a vital component for the continued renovation of the Hall, which will become a cultural and recreation center for the town.

Funded by the Marjorie A. Pierce Fund

Washington County

Center for Photographic Studies

[Civic Engagement, Cultural Heritage]

\$1,000 for general support.

Funded by the Trumasu Fund (GT)

Fostering Financial Health

Opportunities Credit Union (OCU)

offers the full range of banking services, but it remains a unique financial institution in Vermont. Its customers come primarily from Vermont's 90,000 low-income households and many are overwhelmed by debt. OCU's goal is to put them on the "asset path" by combining counseling with financial products that help customers repay bad debt and improve their credit ratings. These individual action plans are the key, and OCU relies on its HUD certified counselors to help members create budgets, negotiate with creditors, and develop basic savings skills.

It works. Over the past three years alone, over 1,800 people have paid back \$500,000 that circulates within our area.

"If a community is going to remain viable," explains OCU CEO Cheryl Fatnassi, "the financial health of everyone in it is critical."

As another sign of our stressed economy, demand for counselor services has tripled this year. **A \$10,000 VCF Sustainable Communities grant** will help OCU hire and train more counselors to help Air National Guard members, single parents, refugees, Vermonters with disabilities, people moving off public assistance, families facing foreclosure, those contemplating bankruptcy, and others facing unique hardships.

2008 Sustainable Communities Grant Awards

(list continued from reverse side)

Windham County

Art in the Neighborhood

[Education, Arts]

\$3,500 to support a visual arts program, operating in partnership with existing community associations, for economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse children and youth.

Funded by the Lady Elaine's Fund (GT)

Brattleboro Recreation and Parks Dept.

[Natural Resources Protection, Habitat Loss]

\$14,000 to survey the 74-acre Living Memorial Park in order to implement the Town Forest and Trails Management Plan.

Funded by the Withington Fund (GT)

The Landmark Trust USA

[Energy Alternatives, Cultural Heritage]

\$1,000 for general support.

Funded by the Trumasu Fund (GT)

Town of Townshend

[Civic Engagement, Cultural Heritage]

\$5,000 to support renovations for the Townshend Town Hall.

Funded by the Charlotte M. Stetson Fund for Life, the McClure Motivation Fund, and an anonymous advised fund (GT)

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association

[Natural Resources Protection]

\$3,500 to support a multi-step strategic planning process that will clarify Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association's long-term vision and produce an updated Five Year Plan.

Funded by the Edward and Elinor Janeway Fund

Windsor County

Northern Stage Company

[Arts]

\$9,000 to expand the touring component of the Project Playwright program and include entire communities by presenting evening performances at centrally located venues or enhancing presentations at participating schools.

Funded by the Lady Elaine's Fund (GT) and the Landmann Family Fund (GT)

Post Oil Solutions

[Economic Strengths]

\$10,000 to support the Regional Food Sustainability Project, which strives to enhance the self-sufficiency of the Southeastern Vermont region specifically in relation to food.

Funded by the Edward and Elinor Janeway Fund and the Sustainable Future Fund (GT)

Vermont Historical Society

[Arts, Cultural Heritage]

\$8,725 to support the launch of a public outreach event for the 2008 Weston Antiques Show, showcasing a selection of materials from the extensive Harold Goddard Rugg Collection of Vermont documents and museum artifacts.

Funded by the Eagleridge Fund