



# Vermont Afterschool

Partnerships, Advocacy, Training, and Resources for Excellence in Afterschool

## Quarterly Report: December 2016

It is with thoughtfulness and appreciation that we at Vermont Afterschool move into December and prepare for the New Year, new legislative session, new growth, and new initiatives. I cannot fully express how grateful we are for our state and program partners— all those wonderful individuals across Vermont—who bring meaning, energy, and application to our work and who do so much for the children, youth, and families in our state.

These past few weeks many have written and commented about the past election season. It's hard not to call attention to the divisiveness and fear that seems to be growing in our nation. It's also hard not to be concerned about the stories we hear both on the news and from programs in Vermont talking about children being afraid, increased incidences of bullying, and concerns over hateful language being used.

It is important to note that afterschool, summer learning, positive youth development, working families, and prevention are all bipartisan issues, and we appreciate support for this important work from Republicans, Democrats, Progressives, Independents, and others. On our end, Vermont Afterschool continues to work on our advocacy strategies and capacities so that those working in the field can continue to speak up for policies and programs that benefit all of Vermont's children, youth, and families.

We are also making efforts to create fluid and active collaborations across different groups, geographic areas, causes, and fields to protect and advance the voices of the communities that we care about. New partnerships that we are seeking out include those working in juvenile justice, law enforcement, social emotional learning, prevention, and workforce development. Along these same lines, we're working to step up our communications so that we can help to keep people informed and to make sure that our communication efforts goes both ways.

Finally, we seek to be strong in our voice, our quality efforts, and our mission. Your input, participation, contributions, and work are so important in helping us to do that. Thank you!

Holly Morehouse, Executive Director

## Center Operations

- Vermont Afterschool contracts with an accounting firm to do an annual financial review and every three years we do a full audit. This fall Bill Huckabay of Tapia & Huckabay conducted the annual review with no significant findings or corrections needed. In 2017 they will conduct a full audit.
- In September, Holly attended the National Mott Meeting for statewide afterschool network leads in Boston, MA. This annual meeting is a wonderful opportunity to network with and learn from other state leads around the country. Important discussions at the meeting included policy implications of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), STEM policy discussions, the new National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment (NCASE), advocacy during a campaign year, and sustainability.
- Also in September, the Vermont Afterschool Board of Directors took a field trip together to attend the Vermont Community Foundation's Annual Meeting held at Shelburne Museum this year. It was a beautiful evening at the new education center on the museum property and a wonderful opportunity to connect with funders, partners, donors, state and local leaders, and advocates from across Vermont.
- We are excited to be hiring for a new position, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Project Leader. The position is funded in part by a new grant from the Department for Children and Families as part of Vermont's Early Learning Challenge/ Race to the Top federal grant. Once hired, the SEL Project Leader will be responsible for establishing a sustainable initiative at Vermont Afterschool around social emotional learning, working onsite with 10 pilot sites to implement the PATHS® curriculum, and helping to build out our work in related areas including juvenile justice, workforce development, and prevention.

### Board of Directors

**Raquel Aronhime**, Community Impact Manager- Education & Health, United Way of Chittenden County (*Secretary*)

**Ginny Burley**, Founder of Community Connections (*Chair*)

**Jim Fitzpatrick**, Founder of SchoolSpring and Former Principal & Superintendent (*Treasurer*)

**Katie Flanagan Mobley**, Executive Director of Winooski, St. Albans, and Midd Academic Centers, CCV

**Vicki Graf**, Principal, Jericho Elementary School

**Barbara Russ**, Former Director, Winooski 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC (*Vice-Chair*)

**Vicky Smith**, Executive Director, King Street Youth Center

**Rich Tulikangas**, Work-Based Learning Director, National Academy Foundation

**Lauren Wooden**, Executive Director, Champlain Valley Educator Development Center

### Partner Advisory Council

**Faye Conte**, Hunger Free Vermont

**Thara Fuller**, LAFTER Afterschool

**Christy Gallese**, Burlington Kids

**Deb Hathaway**, Tapestry

**Diane Janukajtis**, Kingdom Afterschool

**Sarah Kleinman**, University of Vermont 4-H

**Katy Miller**, ENCORE Afterschool

**Mike Mrowicki**, Vermont State Representative

**Mary Mulloy**, VT Agency of Education

**Ken Page**, Vermont Principals' Association

**Cathy Printon**, VSAC GEAR UP

**Lynne Robbins**, Child Development Division, Dept. for Children & Families (DCF/AHS)

**Sara Robertson-Ryan**, Greater Burlington YMCA

**Barbara Russ**, Vermont Afterschool Board Member

**Sarah Teel**, Voices for Vermont's Children

- Karen Scott served as an expanded learning case study champion for the Creative Learning Forum held at the Woodstock Inn on November 14 and 15, 2016. The Forum brought together professionals, teachers and artists from around the state to consider how creativity can be integrated into learning in school, out-of-school, and during the summer. Karen led the out-of-school learning case study group along with Alan Tinkler (UVM) and Greg Young (Big Picture Learning).
- In the past three months we have seen 3,644 visits to our website with 21% of users accessing the page via a mobile device (phone or tablet). Given the conference in October, it comes as no surprise that the conference and training pages were the most visited and also explains why 52% of people viewing the site were new visitors.
- Our social media stats have somewhat flat lined. The good news is that while growth is slow, we are still seeing increases: Facebook has 466 likes and Twitter has 556 followers. Generally speaking, many nonprofits are seeing declining engagement and reach in social media due to the powerful algorithms rewarding those with big advertising budgets and oversaturation of social media by businesses, brands and nonprofits alike. Plainly put, we've either got to step up our creative storytelling and/or advertising budget if we want to see success on social media channels for 2017.
- One area where we continue to do well is the open rate for our e-newsletters. For 2016, our open rate averaged 23% with a click rate of 18%. This is well above industry averages (according to MailChimp at least), and highlights that email continues to be an excellent—and effective—way to reach our community and partners.
- We were fortunate to receive several donations around Giving Tuesday on November 29, 2016. Any donations are much appreciated and categorized as general use funds for unrestricted use.

## Partnership Development

- We have a new partner related to STEM programming: the Maine Math and Science Alliance, whose Afterschool Coaching for Rural Educators in STEM (ACRES) project is integrated into the current STEM Coaching Strand. ACRES is a coaching model that aims to improve quality in STEM instruction via video conferencing.
- Tracy is currently developing an afterschool STEM program that features a partnership between Northeast Vermont Area Health Education Center, Lerner College of Medicine, and Vermont AHEC Program Office at UVM for MedTrek. Two programs will be participating in the pilot this spring, which will be for middle and high school students to gain interest and exposure in health science careers.
- Department of Labor Commissioner Annie Noonan organized a meeting for us with key staff to explore potential connections and synergies around workforce development. The specifics of the work are still in development and further meetings are in the works to include additional partner organizations and funders.

- We were honored to be asked to present at the joint conference of the Vermont School Boards Association and the Vermont Superintendents Association in October. The theme of this year's conference was educational equity, which connects nicely to all the work that we do and what we know about the importance of afterschool and summer learning programs. Holly presented the workshop twice to approximately 35-40 participants. Most of the people attending the workshop were school board members, offering a wonderful opportunity to speak with board members from communities across the state.
- In October we participated as an exhibitor at the annual Vermont Early Childhood Conference, organized by VAEYC and held at the UVM Davis Center. Cassie and volunteer Kathy Olwell attended for the day and welcomed the opportunity to reach a different population with parallel education interests.
- Cassie is a member of the Washington County Hunger Council, and attended the September meeting to talk about our advocacy efforts. She also presented on the Zap the Gap campaign at the Chittenden County Hunger Council meeting. The Hunger Councils are statewide and organized by Hunger Free Vermont, one of our longstanding partners.
- As part of our contract supporting Vermont's 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21C) program, we meet monthly with Emanuel Betz, VT Agency of Education. At our last meeting, Holly appreciated also having time with Jess DeCarolis, the new Division Director overseeing 21C, adult education, and work areas under Personalization and Flexible Pathways.

## Policy and Advocacy

- The Advocacy Committee worked throughout the late summer and into fall to prepare for the second round of the Zap the Gap campaign. Efforts this fall focused on outreach to candidates leading up to the election. Informational packets on the importance of afterschool and summer learning were mailed to every candidate in every state race from the Governor down to local representatives.
- We are pleased to share that three of our key partners will be working with us again this year on the Zap the Gap Campaign. Voices for Vermont's Children, Hunger Free Vermont, and the Vermont Early Childhood Alliance are all including language supporting an appropriation for the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Special Fund in their legislative agendas for 2017. We so value and appreciate these partnerships!

### SAVE THE DATE!

- The annual **Afterschool & Summer Learning Day** will be held at the State House on February 16, 2017. This year will focus on the Zap the Gap campaign and encourage participants to connect with legislators about afterschool issues and need for further funding.
- Thanks to our new Overdeck STEM Policy Grant, we are going to host a **STEM at the State House Day** on March 16, 2017. This event will feature youth and their afterschool STEM projects, as well as STEM partners and advocates.

- Vermont Afterschool is pleased to announce that we have been awarded a STEM Policy Grant from the Afterschool Alliance with funding through the Overdeck Family Foundation. The grant will help us to expand our policy and advocacy efforts to emphasize the importance of programs that build skills in science, technology, engineering, and math as a way to help prepare today's youth to be the problem solvers of the future.
- The nationwide Lights On Afterschool celebration was held on October 20, 2016. This year 48 programs registered to hold Lights On events across Vermont, joining the nationwide rally organized by the Afterschool Alliance to highlight the many ways quality afterschool programs support children, families, schools and communities. In total, 9,000 events were held across the U.S.
- For Fall 2016, Vermont Afterschool offered mini-grants to 22 different afterschool programs to use towards their Lights On events for a total of \$5,000 in funding. These mini-grants helped cover food, pumpkins for carving, t-shirts, entertainment, etc.
- Join us in cheering for our 2016 Afterschool Superhero: Representative Alice Miller! Rep. Miller is a true supporter and ally of afterschool, and we gave her an afterschool superhero cape in recognition of the award at the Vermont Afterschool Conference. Read this newspaper article for more: <http://www.benningtonbanner.com/stories/rep-alice-miller-is-an-afterschool-hero,490314>
- We have been working closely with the STARS Coordinators (who are in charge of Vermont's child care quality rating and improvement system) and the STARS Oversight Committee on a new version of Vermont's School Age application. The revised application makes Vermont the first state using the YPQI program assessment tool and improvement process to move away from awarding points based on assessment scores to awarding points based on the fidelity of the assessment and improvement process being implemented at the program site. This is an important distinction that supports staff confidence and involvement in a continuous quality improvement process.

## **Professional Development and High-Quality Programs**

- The Vermont Afterschool Conference was held on October 28, 2016 at the Stoweflake Mountain Resort. This year we welcomed Gayle Danley, an internationally awarded slam poet. Gayle was a highlight of the conference with her incredibly powerful performance and well attended workshop. Of note, 98% of conference participants rated their overall experience as excellent or good (an improvement from last year's event) and 99% of participants found that the conference met or exceeded expectations.
- Due to a one time generous funding opportunity from the Child Development Division (CDD), we were able to provide additional scholarships to licensed programs this year at the Vermont Afterschool Conference. The intent of this funding was to allow programs to bring more people to the Vermont Afterschool Conference than they have been able to in the past. Priority was given to licensed programs that have not sent people in the past. We saw a 39% increase in total

licensed program attendance and a 30% increase in licensed program individual participants at the 2016 conference. In total, 31 CDD scholarships were awarded to licensed programs.

- Five programs started their work under the Afterschool Grant program sponsored by the Child Development Division. Their projects range from starting up new sites, providing new maker spaces, and increasing offerings during summer programs.
- During this quarter, 20 professionals successfully earned their Vermont Afterschool Foundation Certificates. Four professionals earned their Afterschool Essentials Certificates as well.
- Eighteen professionals from 13 programs participated in our first Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) pre-conference workshop the day before the conference at the Stoweflake. Participants were led through the assessment process using the YPQ tool, and had a chance to set up a plan for how they would implement the assessment at their site. Karen and Tricia Pawlik-York led the group.
- Vermont Afterschool has sponsored 36 trainings with 559 participants this quarter. Of note:
  - 22 trainings were hosted by 21C programs and 32 trainings hosted by programs that were licensed 21C OR licensed only programs (non-21C). Three trainings were regionally supported.
  - 9 trainings were STEM focused with two covered in full by Noyce grant
  - 8 trainings were YPQI workshops
  - 10 trainings were focused on social emotional learning
- The 2016 -2017 Afterschool Professional Learning Stands (APLS) launched with new name and format, replacing ISSAP as our hallmark professional development opportunity. There are four learning strands currently being offered, with 49 registered participants for Fall 2016 Semester.
- Over the summer, several of Vermont Afterschool's STEM Trainers worked to design new STEM professional development trainings with a focus instructional best practices for front line staff as well as coaching and assessment for directors and site coordinators. The new STEM trainings include elements of the nationally recognize Click2Science video learning platform for STEM informal learning. Other new STEM workshops to spotlight include:
  - Inquiry 101
  - Cooking Up Science
  - STEMify Your Existing Programs
  - Breakthroughs and Blunders: Building Transferable Skills
  - Coaching for Quality STEM Programs
  - STEM Misconceptions: What DO Kids Know?

## Highlights

- The annual **Vermont Afterschool Conference** went smoothly and we are grateful to the planning committee for putting on such a high-quality event. Of note, we had 285 participants for 2016 (including exhibitors and presenters), which is a noteworthy increase over past years.

## Next Steps and Partner Points

- We have a new **online data dashboard** shows how STEM-related afterschool programming in Vermont impacts students. See: [www.vermontafterschool.org/stem/data](http://www.vermontafterschool.org/stem/data)

- STEM content areas are also getting significant traction through two Noyce-funded projects that support STEM understanding of science processes and engineering design through training, material kits and support for data collection on youth experiences:
  - Vermont Afterschool Tinkering Project (Year 2)
  - Vermont Afterschool Engineering Adventures Project
- Our partnership with PEAR on the Common Instrument (which measures youth response to STEM experiences in terms of interest, excitement, collaboration, teamwork, critical thinking and perseverance) now has baseline data which will be interactive on our website accessible to all programs who are integrating STEM and measuring youth outcomes. The data represent 199 students who participated in a total of 13 afterschool Tinkering programs around the state. Eighty-four percent of the students reported significant gains in science interest, 83% reported significant gains in critical thinking, and 80% reported significant gains in perseverance since beginning their programs. In addition, PEAR found that overall, Vermont students reported significantly higher ratings of science interest when compared to students in the PEAR national norming database, particularly for middle school students. We will move ahead with Phase 2 implementing the *Dimensions of Success* external assessment process to support instructor confidence and competence in leading STEM activities. To check out the data, visit <http://www.vermontafterschool.org/stem/data/>.
- As part of our contract with the Agency of Education, we recently released the 2015-16 Annual Statewide Evaluation Report for 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Thirty 21C projects and their 105 of individual expanded learning time sites submitted data.
  - The findings revealed that programs operating in the summer were particularly strong in offering programming for a sufficient number of hours during the week; they were open for an average of 38 hours per week in summer 2015.
  - Programs were also strong in offering programming options that allowed for in-depth learning, and provided plentiful opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity.
  - Program directors and site coordinators were shown to have exemplary levels of expertise and experience.
  - Program directors and site coordinators improved from 2014-15 by connecting with their school principals more frequently. Principal-director interactions help to ensure that school principals understand the importance of expanded learning opportunities. This was identified as a targeted area in need of improvement after 2014-15.
  - Some programs may need to improve their strategies for retaining staff at the site-level, enrolling students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches, diversifying their funding sources, and having directors participate in professional opportunities. Overall statewide performance decreased in all of these areas between 2014-15 and 2015-16.
  - The report is summarized and available for download at [www.vermontafterschool.org/resources/vt\\_21c\\_evaluation](http://www.vermontafterschool.org/resources/vt_21c_evaluation).
- Common Evaluation for CDD
  - For the third consecutive year, we have been using CheckMarket.com to host the common evaluation tool for workshops given by CDD trainers. The platform provides a

password-protected user-friendly dashboard for trainers to view, filter and download their results. The complete set of data for the 1170 trainings that took place between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016 was presented to the CDD Think Tank in September. An average of 16 attendees were at each workshop and on average, 90% of workshop participants said that they "fully agreed" with positive evaluation statements such as "I will apply what I learned" and "I gained new knowledge and/or perspective by attending this training." We also led the Think Tank in a discussion around possible changes to make to the data collection.

## **Funding and Sustainability Efforts**

- The STEM Policy Grant from the Afterschool Alliance with funding from the Overdeck Foundation runs from November 2016 through June 2017. The grant is for \$20,000 and will allow us to hold a special STEM Day at the State House; provide information to state and local leaders on the connections between afterschool and summer STEM learning and workforce development, social emotional skills, and college readiness; and work with national partners and consultants on refining our STEM policy message.
- The new grant from the Department for Children and Families around social emotional learning includes \$83,000 in funding (December 2016- December 2017). This grant will partially fund the new SEL Project Leader position and focuses largely on mentoring activities with soon to be identified SEL pilot sites. To be eligible to participate, sites must be licensed afterschool programs that are also designated to provide Specialized Child Care.
- The Mott Foundation has brought in Spectrum Nonprofit Services to join the national technical assistance collaborative providing support to the statewide afterschool networks. Spectrum will be working with a subset of the states on implementing a sustainability process based on the theories and teachings from the books *Nonprofit Sustainability: Making Strategic Decisions for Financial Viability* and *The Sustainability Model*. We are hopeful that Vermont Afterschool will be selected to participate in the first cohort going through the process.

### **Vermont Afterschool, Inc. Staff**

**Holly Morehouse**  
*Executive Director*

**Tracy Truzansky**  
*Project Manager for Training*

**Karen Scott**  
*Project Manager for Quality Initiatives*

**Cassie Willner**  
*Communications Coordinator*

**Erin Schwab**  
*Research Analyst*

**Alissa Faber**  
*Project Assistant for Advocacy & Training*

*Vermont Afterschool, Inc. is a statewide nonprofit organization committed to building a strong foundation for Vermont's youth. Our work directly supports programs that provide innovative learning opportunities beyond the school day for all Vermont's children and youth. Vermont Afterschool's activities are directed toward building the capacity and commitment of communities to increase the quality and availability of programs during non-school hours.*

*For more information on Vermont Afterschool, Inc. visit:*  
**[www.vermontafterschool.org](http://www.vermontafterschool.org)**