



Vermont Afterschool

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

Quarterly Report: December 2017

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 many 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.

We are also grateful for the youth who came together this fall to create a powerful statement of Youth Rights. It's impossible to read their declaration without feeling humbled by the way 40 youth ranging from age 9 to 20+ could come together for one day and jointly create a vision for Vermont that covers everything from basic needs to social connections to justice and equality. They discussed mental health, climate change, and post-secondary education. They claimed a right to be safe, to engage in the arts, and to spend time in the outdoors. They recognized and valued every person's right to explore and express their own identity. They were not daunted by their differences or by tough topics such as gun control or birth control. Perhaps most importantly, they put forward the right for young people to have a say in decisions that affect them. We are grateful to the youth for creating a vision for Vermont that is both hopeful and inspiring.

It is also a vision that will require us to listen, to apply effort, and to respond with true commitment and a willingness to change the status quo. As we've started talking with others about helping to shape a new approach to youth work and youth policy in Vermont, it has been encouraging to see how many partners and organizations have eagerly stepped forward to be part of that conversation. There is a real interest in stronger collaboration, better alignment of efforts, and coming together to create a more positive, assets-based vision in our state when it comes to supporting our youth. It's exciting. However, the challenge before us is to use this energy, this coming together, to create authentic, long-lasting, and positive change. A lot of people are talking about change. We have to be part of the group that actually enables change to occur. So please post the Declaration of Youth Rights someplace front and center, and join us in making it happen.

Here's to the New Year ahead!

Holly Morehouse, Executive Director

Center Operations

- In September, Bill Huckabay of Tapia & Huckabay completed a full financial audit for Vermont Afterschool. Vermont Afterschool has an audit done every three years and annual reviews each year in between.
- We are beyond thrilled to share that Holly received the 2017 Con Hogan Award for Creative, Entrepreneurial, Community Leadership. The \$15,000 award, to be used however the recipient chooses, was presented to Holly at a reception on October 4th at the Vermont College of Fine Arts in Montpelier. Big congratulations to Holly in recognition of her outstanding leadership.
- Vermont experienced a Finnish flurry this fall with a three-day visit and speaking tour by Anu Partanen, author of *The Nordic Theory of Everything*. Several of us attended one or two of Anu's events including a small-group, women's discussion on the well-being state model. Particularly pertinent is the connection between public education as Anu discusses in her book with what Holly learned about the Finnish model of youth work on her trip this past summer. It's definitely fueled a number of interesting conversations in the office and with partners and legislators.
- Tracy is now a trained coach for a project called *Afterschool Coaching for Rural Educators (ACRES) in STEM* and is leading her own national cohort. The heart of the ACRES model involves frontline staff in afterschool programs coming together online to share videos of their own interactions with youth, and then discussing their videos with peers and an experienced coach. This work is being done through our partnership with Maine Math & Science Alliance under their National Science Foundation (NSF) grant.
- We are excited to share that Alissa Faber, our team lead on youth voice who is also a talented artist, was accepted to the Vermont Creative Schools Initiative's Teaching Artist Academy. The Academy, which starts in January 2018, supports artists interested in partnering with educators to "expand their skills and boldness, broaden their range, and empower them as local leaders and school partnership developers."

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Sara Forward, SEL Project Coordinator

Holly Morehouse, Executive Director

Tricia Pawlik-York, Workforce and Program Improvement Coach

Erin Schwab, Research Analyst

Tracy Truzansky, Project Manager for Training

Cassie Willner, Communications Coordinator

- Cassie continues to serve on the Afterschool STEM Hub as a representative of the afterschool networks by participating in quarterly calls and an annual meeting. Cassie also sits on the STEM Hub's communications committee and delivers feedback on related communications projects. The Afterschool STEM Hub is not only a website that offers insight into "how to speak STEMish" but also a policy vehicle for afterschool and STEM on the national level.
- Cassie also attended the Vermont Story Lab Summit in September. Hosted at Shelburne Farms, the event gathered nonprofits and individuals from across the state for a day of networking, sharing storytelling techniques and resources, and skill-building time. Cassie enjoyed the chance to meet with other nonprofit communicators and learn how to improve story angles that will drive a deeper level of impact.
- As for other connections, Holly will be in Boston December 13-15 in her role on the board of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and also to meet with the other Northeast Afterschool Networks (MA, NJ, ME, RI, NY, NH, and CT). Holly also represented Vermont Afterschool at the National Meeting for Network Leads in DC this fall. Coming out of that meeting, state network leads have formed professional learning communities to focus on certain key issues. For example, Holly is in a group looking at policy implications for afterschool regarding: (1) prevention/ marijuana legalization and (2) efforts to address ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences).
- The team at Vermont Afterschool will be celebrating the holidays together on December 19th. Our plan is to do a hike together, gather at Tricia's house, and enjoy Indian food. We'll celebrate this year with thanks for all the wonderful people in our personal and professional lives!

Policy and Advocacy

- The national Lights On Afterschool celebration was held on October 26, 2017. This year 47 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, over 8,000 events were held across the nation.
- The Advocacy Committee has continued to meet on a regular basis all fall. The new campaign for the legislative session will be finalized this month and includes continuing to build support for programs that serve children and youth outside the school day and over the summer, especially for students from low-income families and underserved areas of the state. The plan will also include steps to amplify youth voice and youth rights in Vermont (see below).
- Building on our work with Youth Ambassadors over the past six years and all the work around youth voice and youth engagement that programs are doing throughout the state, Vermont Afterschool hosted the Youth Rights Summit on Friday, October 20, 2017. The goal of the youth summit was to bring together youth ages 9-26 from across Vermont to create a Youth Declaration

of Rights. We believe that knowing what is truly most pressing and most important to our young people will help all of us design and develop better and more effective programs and resources. Here are a few highlights from the summit:

- Approximately 40 youth participated in the Youth Rights Summit representing different towns from throughout Vermont as well as the full age range from 9 to 20+.
- The question that framed the day was: What do you, as a young person in Vermont, need in order to be the best version of yourself? In response, the youth developed the framework for the rights, that categories, and all the wording.

The only changes we made in the final document was to format it and to fix a few small spelling errors.

- The youth decided on nine major categories for the rights: Mental Health, Natural Environment, Social Supports and Connections, Justice and Equality, Hobbies/ Entertainment, Education, Work/ Transportation, Physical Health, and Home/ Shelter.
 - Also interesting to note is that several rights show up multiple times and across different categories, such as safety, youth voice in state decisions, identity, time outdoors, and access to transportation and technology.
 - The rights also emphasize interests and activities such as arts, sports, outdoor recreation, basic life skills, and self-defense; the importance of connecting to information and to each other; and the need for caring adults and having important people in their lives who spend time with them.
- We presented the Youth Declaration of Rights to the Vermont Child Poverty Council on November 16th. The Declaration was also shared with partners at the Youth Work and Policy Partner meeting on December 5th and the Vermont Principals' Association is planning to send the document to all public school principals in Vermont.

Partner Points

The **Youth Declaration of Rights** is a dynamic document that will inform our work moving forward and we hope will inspire others working with youth. The declaration can be read here:

<http://bit.ly/2nAaHOS>

Save the Date

For the Afterschool & Summer Learning Day at the State House!

Friday, February 16, 2018

Partnership Development

- We are excited to have a new and growing partnership with VSA Vermont around social emotional learning (SEL). In October, Vermont Afterschool and VSA Vermont co-hosted two SEL events: a social hour for collaborators in the field to network and a focus group to explore the

language used in the field. Both events were well received. In December we will hold our second SEL focus group exploring how collaborators are using data in their work.

- We are also working with VSA Vermont on the development of three new professional development training opportunities on arts and inclusion. These workshops are being rolled out now, and we expect to start booking trainings for programs this winter.
- As an expansion of our partnership with Hunger Free Vermont, Cassie represents Vermont Afterschool at the Washington County Hunger Council. The quarterly meetings are a great opportunity to share our news, meet new colleagues (such as Cass Mabbott the new youth services librarian at VT Dept. of Libraries), and gain support on advocacy outreach. The Hunger Councils are statewide and anyone can contact Hunger Free Vermont to learn more.
- Holly and Cassie both attended the Education Equity Conference held in November. Organized by Voices for Vermont's Children and Public Assets Institute, this conference looked into Vermont's school funding system putting forward the goal of "creating education that works for all students." Holly had the great experience of co-presenting at the conference with Jay Diaz from the ACLU in a breakout session called: "Addressing Education Inequities: Two Programs That Work."
- Since last summer, Holly has been part of a small group serving as the Advisory Committee for the redesign of the Early Childhood Professional Development System. Last January, CCV took over a large state contract from the Child Development Division that includes training for the field, career advising, and coordination for professional development systems. We are glad to be part of these discussions and look forward to seeing improvements and changes implemented in the coming year.
- We are happy to share that our first Youth Work and Policy Partner meeting was well-attended with about 50 people working in a wide range of programs and fields in support of youth ages 9-26 in Vermont. Next steps for the collaboration include creating a discussion series on youth issues, forming a Youth Policy Coalition, and exploring the development of full-service youth centers at one or two locations in Vermont. Thanks to our partners at Voices for Vermont's Children for being our co-hosts for this event!

Professional Development and High-Quality Programs

- We held our annual Vermont Afterschool Conference on November 3, 2017, at the Stoweflake Mountain Resort. This year we welcomed Dr. Michele Borba, an educational psychologist and author of *Unselfie*. Dr. Borba's keynote presentation highlighted how to teach empathy and SEL skills, and she also delivered a well attended workshop. Of note, 98% of conference participants rated their overall experience as excellent or good and 98% of participants found that the conference met or exceeded expectations.
- In line with the conference, Tricia Pawlik-York led a pre-conference training on YPQI Basics and Planning with Data on November 2. As part of our YPQI initiative to support programs using the

tool, Tricia has been coaching multiple sites around creating teams, doing observations, and setting goals. Tricia has a particularly large challenge this fall: our goal is to help 100 sites (all of the afterschool program sites with 21C funding) through this process-- including observations, self-assessment scoring, and the creation of program improvement plans-- by the end of December. It's a large push, but the timing will help us to be better able to support sites in implementing the changes identified in their program improvement plans over the remainder of the school year.

- So far this school year, 52 trainings have been scheduled or held in locations all across the state. Offerings include:
 - Five regional trainings to support YPQI, licensing regulations, and Basic Specialized Care.
 - 28 trainings in SEL, with 17 led by Sara for *Basics of Social and Emotional Learning in Afterschool: Elementary Age*.
 - Nine STEM trainings: three at the Exploratory level, four at Foundational level, and five at Improvement level.
- This fall we have also worked on the development of a number of new professional development workshops including:
 - Second Nature Series (five workshops, including an advanced training for Site Coordinators) to expand environmental education created in partnership with three Vermont SWEEP members. Vermont SWEEP (Vermont State-Wide Environmental Education Programs) is a coalition of dozens of organizations and individuals promoting environmental education in Vermont.
 - Art in 2D, Art in 3d, Art and Inclusion in Afterschool in partnership with VSA Vermont
- Demand for training around SEL, in particular, continues to grow. For example, later this month Sara will lead a training in Springfield for all the school day teachers in the middle school around trauma, the brain, and building social emotional competency in young people. The training developed out of work with the afterschool program at the middle school and reflects how important it is to have both school day staff and afterschool staff using common language and common strategies. Big thanks to Springfield and their leadership team for taking this on!
- The FY18 Afterschool Professional Learning Strands (APLS) session kicked off in September with four different strands:
 - SEL Strand- focuses on helping afterschool staff to build and support social emotional learning competencies in children and youth. Activities involve: Helping program staff build a community of support onsite around social-emotional learning (e.g., school day

Highlights

- The annual **Vermont Afterschool Conference** was a huge success and we are grateful to the planning committee for putting on such a high-quality event. Of note, we had 285 participants (including exhibitors and presenters), and our highest number of fee-paying participants in several years.

Key Data Points

- Our **online STEM data dashboard** has been updated for 2017 data and shows how STEM-related afterschool programming in Vermont impacts students positively. See: www.vermontafterschool.org/stem/data

- teachers, guidance counselor, principal, parents/care givers, etc.); developing tools, strategies, and visuals for staff to use in working with children and youth; and helping programs work with SEL curriculum being used by their school.
- Program Quality Strand - focuses on strengthening program content and includes a strong emphasis on peer networking and sharing. Coach: Suzanne Birdsall-Stone, former 21C State Director in NH.
 - STEM Strand - focuses on support to middle school and high school students in STEM career exploration. Participants in this strand have two options: (1) MedTrek – a health science careers mentoring project for middle school youth or (2) STEM Opportunities – a work-based learning program where high school students are trained to deliver engineering units to elementary afterschool programs while making connections to broader STEM careers.
 - L.E.A.D. – focused on leadership development and is designed specifically for site managers of licensed programs. The strand meets four times a year with workshop themes including staff culture, grant writing, collaboration and partnerships, and working with vulnerable populations
- We also continue to support work around Career Pathways. Currently, there are nine participants in the Fall 2017 Afterschool Essentials course who are due to complete the class by December 31. Fifteen students are also in the fall CCV course, *Introduction to Afterschool Education*, and 27 Vermont Afterschool Foundation Certificates were approved from September-December 2017.
 - This year we are supporting seven afterschool programs that were awarded CDD Quality Improvement and Start-Up Grants. Grants cover a range of supports from funds for field trips in the summer to opportunities for advanced professional development for staff. Vermont Afterschool oversees the grants and supports sites through coaching and site visits.
 - As part of our contract with the Vermont Agency of Education, we recently completed the data analysis for the 2016-17 21C evaluation report. Twenty-nine 21C projects and their 102 individual sites submitted data. The report will be available on our website soon. Highlights of the analysis include the following:
 - On average, 21C sites offered 11 hours of programming per week in the school year, which was a decrease from 2015-16 and 3 hours short of the goal of 14 hours per week.
 - Programs improved site staff retention from the previous year. The percentage of projects with more than one third of their site coordinators in their first or second year of tenure at their particular sites decreased from 57% in 2015-16 to 31% in 2016-17.
 - Program directors and site coordinators at 21C-funded projects also reported high levels of expertise and years of experience in the field.
 - More than half of project directors reported an increase in their time spent on professional development endeavors in 2016-17 from 2015-16.
 - Although recipients of 21C grants are encouraged to diversify their funding sources, projects appear to continue to rely fairly heavily on their 21C funding. Forty-three percent of projects that have been in operation for five years receive more than half of their funding from a single source, which in almost all cases is their 21C grant.

- Throughout the year, we continued to collect outcomes data from STEM programs through the Common Instrument, which we use as part of our partnership with the PEAR Institute: Partnerships in Education & Resilience (PEAR). We recently aggregated data from Tinkering, Science and Engineering programs that ran in the spring and summer of 2017 and posted the results to our STEM data dashboard on our website (<http://www.vermontafterschool.org/stem/data>).
- The PEAR data were collected from a total of 281 students from 20 programs around the state. Here are the highlights:
 - PEAR found that overall, Vermont students in all three types of programs reported overall gains in science/engineering interest as a result of participating in their programs.
 - Compared with the rest of the nation, PEAR found that Vermont students reported significantly higher ratings of science/engineering interest as a result of participating in science and engineering programs.
 - In particular, Vermont girls that participated in science programs reported significantly higher levels of science interest than girls at the national level.
 - Both Vermont boys and girls reported significantly higher ratings of engineering interest than their national counterparts for those who participated in such programs in 2017.

Funding and Sustainability Efforts

- Vermont Afterschool has secured a contract with the Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance to support their ACRES Project for improving STEM instruction. This contract is for Tracy's role as an ACRES coach and STEM instruction expert.
- We also were excited to receive a second year of funding from the Afterschool Alliance and the Overdeck Foundation for our work on STEM Policy.
- We are thrilled that the CDD SEL grant will extend through December 2018. Efforts will include: leadership-level mentoring through the creation of communities of practice; regional partnerships to foster collaboration between afterschool professionals and local care providers across sectors (arts enrichment, sports, mentoring, etc.); and developing an SEL badging system for afterschool professionals statewide.

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*