



Vermont Afterschool

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

Quarterly Report: June 2017

Many of you have probably seen items in the news about President Trump's proposed budget and the complete elimination of all funding for afterschool and summer learning programs. I'm having a hard time getting my head around the idea. Everywhere I turn, I come across new research and new studies documenting the effectiveness and importance of out-of-school time opportunities for our children and youth. I hear stories from working parents about how they wouldn't be able to do their job without their child's afterschool program. We have long discussions about the added challenges of summer—where families can need up to ten weeks of care and programming for their kids.

Then there are other considerations, like access to healthy snacks and meals. We know that there are children in afterschool programs today who without the afterschool supper program and meals in the summer would be left hungry and without adequate nutrition. And we're all concerned about the opioid epidemic and its very real effects on our families and young people. How does cutting access to afterschool and summer programming, leaving in particular, teens and young adolescents without safe places to be and opportunities to build healthy relationships, explore new interests, and think about pathways to college and careers, match up with research showing that without access to programs the hours between 3-6pm are the peak hours for youth to engage in risky behaviors and experiment with alcohol and drugs?

How can a program that brings so many benefits for our children and youth and that has such a strong research base behind it be specifically targeted for complete elimination? It's hard to comprehend. I am grateful for our Vermont Congressional Delegation and for their strong and consistent support for afterschool and summer learning programs. I appreciate the growing number of passionate and active afterschool legislative champions in the Vermont State House. And I recognize and value the voices of all our partners, programs, and friends who continue to stand up for children, youth, and families and who understand how critical it is to ensure access to afterschool and summer learning programs for all of our young people and most especially for those most in need.

Let's keep our voices strong. Thank you for all that you do.

Holly Morehouse, Executive Director

Center Operations

- On May 15, Erin attended and presented at the Northeast Arc Users Group's (NEARC) annual Spring Spatial Technologies Conference in Amherst, MA. The conference brings together GIS professionals of all levels for a day professional development, workshops and networking. In her presentation, she talked about the development of our ELT web map (vermontafterschool.org/resources/map).
- Cassie had the opportunity to attend the Nonprofit Technology Conference, held in March in Washington, D.C. She had a grand time there learning about how she can use different technologies to improve our communications efforts, and greatly enjoyed the keynote on data visualization by Alberto Cairo. It was an extremely well-run, well-attended conference and she hopes to return in 2018.
- Tracy participated in the March STEM Institute in Maryland with representatives from many national STEM entities supporting quality afterschool STEM. Key workshops addressed advocacy issues related to the new administration, STEM partnerships, virtual training and coaching and technical assistance for programs seeking STEM business collaborations for both funding and program partnerships.
- In April, Holly and Sara traveled to Los Angeles with Lynne Robbins, Child Development Division, and Jess DeCarolis, VT Agency of Education, to participate in the National Mott Meeting. This year's meeting focused on workforce readiness and culminated in a National Summit at the Schwarzenegger Institute on the campus on the University of Southern California.
- Holly has been honored twice this spring. She received the KidSafe 2017 Award for Outstanding Professional and also the KIDS COUNT Award from Voices for Vermont's Children for her advocacy to ensure low-income students across the state have access to quality afterschool and summer programs. Big thanks to the Vermont Afterschool Board of Directors for their support around these awards!

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Sara Robertson-Ryan, Greater Burlington YMCA

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- At the end of May, the Vermont Afterschool staff took a day away from the office together for our annual team retreat. Big thanks to our friends at the Montshire Museum for letting us use their conference room for the day! The day gave us time to reflect, build our relationships with one another, and to think big picture about our work and where we want things to go over the next year or two.
- Holly is super excited to be headed to Finland and Estonia later this month for an international learning exchange program organized by the National Afterschool Association. The schedule includes visits with the Finnish Ministry of Education & Culture, Helsinki Youth Services, and the Estonian Youth Work Center. During the trip, Holly will participate on a panel discussing the impacts of the Trump Administration on education, afterschool and summer programs, and youth services.
- This summer we will have Tapia & Huckabay do a full audit of our accounts and financial procedures. We do a full audit every three years and an annual review in the intervening years.
- In the last quarter, we had 2,207 visits to our website with over half (60%) being returning visitors. Compared to the same period in FY16, the number of page views increased by 20% and we saw a decrease in the bounce rate—from 60% to 32%—which measures the percentage of people that leave our website after landing on the homepage. Subpages of the website that saw the greatest amounts of activity during this period are 1) Summer Program Booster; 2) About Us; and 3) Professional Development.

Policy and Advocacy

- STEM at the State House event was held on March 16, 2017. The day was a great success with 56 participants including 40 youth from 10 afterschool program sites. The morning session was led by ExpandedED Schools educational consultant Rachel Chase leading a session on STEM Careers, Innovation and Identity. Youth were provided with coaching from Cassie Willner to prepare them for interacting with their legislators who joined youth in the State House for hands-on activities that exemplified quality afterschool STEM programs.
- Our Zap the Gap 2.0 campaign wrapped up at the end of the legislative session in May. H.270 still sits on the wall in House Education Committee, which means that there is still the opportunity for it to pass in 2018. This year in the State House we welcomed many new legislative champions, and though we weren't able to get an appropriation to the Expanded Learning Opportunities Special Fund we did see passionate

Partner Points

President Trump's budget calls for eliminating funding for **21st Century Community Learning Center**. It's now up to Congress to counter the cut—or execute it and eliminate programs relied on by families across the nation to keep kids safe and engaged. Nearly 13,000 children and families across Vermont who attend 21C programs could be left without reliable afterschool and summer choices.

Take Action!

Call on Congress to protect funding for afterschool and summer learning programs.

www.afterschoolalliance.org/policytakeaction.cfm

legislators committed to the issue and fighting for money. We'd like to give a big, enthusiastic thank you to our incredible Advocacy Committee and all the many advocates, partners, and supporters who made trips to the State House to meet with legislators.

- Special thanks to Voices for Vermont's Children, Hunger Free Vermont, and the Vermont Early Childhood Alliance for their partnership and support throughout the session!
- We saw the number and strength of our legislative champions grow this year as well. Big shout outs to: Rep. Alice Miller, Rep. Diane Lanpher, Rep. Coach Christie, Rep. Dave Sharpe, Rep. Kurt Wright, Rep. Kate Webb, Rep. Peter Conlon, Senator Debbie Ingram, Senator Chris Bray, and Rep. Martin LaLonde.
- The Vermont Congressional Delegation continues to be supportive of funding for afterschool and summer learning programs. Congressman Welch and Senator Sanders both signed on to letters this spring in support of continued funding for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21C) Program. Senator Leahy, as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, supported a \$25 million increase in funding for 21C in the Omnibus Spending bill for FY17.
- Cassie and Holly were joined by Christy Gallese of the Burlington School District and Beth Chambers of the North Country Schools Supervisory Union at the Afterschool for All Challenge in Washington, DC. this month. They met with Congressional staffers to talk about the importance of 21C funding, as well as attended the Afterschool Showcase that featured afterschool champions, programs, and speakers. Senator Leahy also spoke at the Afterschool Showcase to show his support for 21C programs!
- Holly was also in DC in early April for a national STEM event at the National Press Office and a day of Hill visits in support of STEM in afterschool and summer learning programs. It was an exciting day with new research around STEM, transferable skills, and youth outcomes to share!

Partnership Development

- This spring we sent information to all Vermont principals in collaboration with Vermont Principal's Association (VPA) outlining how schools can use ESSA Title IV, Part A funds to support STEM learning during the out-of-school time hours. This mailing was funded by our Overdeck Grant and marks a continued partnership with VPA. We are also looking forward to being a sponsor again this year of VPA's Leadership Institute in August.
- In May, Vermont Afterschool and VSA Vermont co-hosted a discussion with about 25 participants on Social Emotional Learning. The purpose of the meeting was to pull together the wide variety of individuals and organizations working on social emotional learning, exchange information about relevant projects and identify possible synergies and ways to work together going forward.
- We are working on restructuring our Partner Advisory Council and looking for ideas and feedback for next year. We'd like to use the meetings to support collaboration, focus on statewide issues, and bring new voices to the table. Stay tuned for more information to come over the summer!

Professional Development and High-Quality Programs

- FY17 will close the year in June with a total of 103 workshops sponsored by Vermont Afterschool. The increase is due in part to our addition of the PATHS social-emotional learning trainings and the Noyce Foundation funded STEM trainings. This year we held 21 YPQI trainings, 32 trainings with a focus on social/emotional learning, and 38 STEM trainings in either content learning or instructional best practices.
- Although 16 trainings are still to be delivered this fiscal year and evaluative data is still forthcoming from recently implemented trainings, we are proud that the statement: “I believe this workshop will help me do my job better” has 87% of respondents reporting “fully agree” to this questions across all topics.
- There are 8 professionals participating in the Afterschool Essentials class. They have already completed part one of the in-person training, participated in a 6 hour basic specialized care course, and will be meeting again in June.
- This quarter we received and approved 21 Vermont Afterschool Foundations Certificates for afterschool professionals.
- CDD Quality Improvement and Start Up grant applications were submitted in May from several programs. The grant committee met in mid-May and awarded over \$30,600 that will impact the quality at nine programs. New for this year: we have tied on-site quality coaching to each grant!
- We have begun to roll out a brand new and highly automated online system for collecting and reporting on evaluation data for our trainings. We're phasing out pencil-and-paper training evaluation forms. Using the web technology of Cognito Forms, Zapier and Google Sheets, we are now able to create customized links for training evaluation forms. The data submitted are automatically aggregated into the online system and populate an interactive dashboard where they are visualized and can be filtered in user-specified ways. It will be helpful for providing direct feedback to trainers in the form of both quantitative data and qualitative feedback.
- It is the end of the third year of facilitating the completion of the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) for all 21C sites in the state. All sites are required to submit a self-assessment and improvement plan for quality improvement. We are collecting the last few data submissions and will release the final report for 2016-17 in June.
- All 10 program sites for the SEL pilot have received staff trainings in how to implement the curriculum from our project coordinator. In addition, staff at various sites received one-to-one staff coaching to increase staff competency in SEL practices. Ground-level staff have given very positive feedback about this exciting new approach to supporting professional development!

SAVE THE DATE

The annual **Vermont Afterschool Conference** will be held November 3, 2017, at the Stoweflake Mountain Resort.

We have secured **Dr. Michele Borba** as the keynote speaker and are excited to have her on board. Dr. Borba is a globally-recognized educational psychologist whose aim is to strengthen children’s empathy and resilience, and break the cycle of youth violence.

Funding and Sustainability Efforts

- We are pleased to announce we have received a \$30,000 grant from the J. Warren and Lois McClure Foundation for the 2017-2018 school year to create meaningful job and expanded learning opportunities for students across rural Vermont. This grant will support Vermont Afterschool to train high school students who will deliver content around science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) to their local afterschool and summer learning programs. The grant also provides support to Vermont Afterschool's ongoing efforts to improve the quality of STEM instruction in Vermont's afterschool and summer learning programs.
- We are excited to be working with both the Agency of Human Services, Child Development Division, and the Vermont Agency of Education again next year as the lead organization providing professional development, technical assistance, and other supports to the afterschool field in Vermont. Thank you to the Child Development Division for a new 2-year grant starting this July. With the Agency of Education we will be moving into our second year of work under our current contract.
- Vermont is one of five states that has been selected to participate in the first round of a project sponsored by the Mott Foundation around sustainability. The Board is currently working through the process developed by Spectrum Nonprofit Services based on the theories and teachings from the books *Nonprofit Sustainability: Making Strategic Decisions for Financial Viability* and *The Sustainability Model*. The Board will be discussing the results of our financial and impact assessment process at their June board meeting.

Vermont Afterschool, Inc. Staff

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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