



Vermont Afterschool

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

Quarterly Report: March 2016

This winter we have fully enjoyed working with our partners and supporters throughout the state on our advocacy efforts. We have especially appreciated the strong support of Voices for Vermont's Children, Hunger Free Vermont, the Vermont Early Childhood Alliance, and Action Circles. It makes a daunting task much easier and way more fun when you have other talented and committed people working with you.

We've also appreciated the overwhelming support throughout the state from all the many individuals who filled out Zap the Gap supporter cards. Special thanks to our advocacy committee for all their work, to Ginny Burley and Barb Russ for their continued leadership and presence at the State House, and to Kathy Olwell for making those magical gold capes for the youth ambassadors. Thanks also to the many friends and supporters who helped to collect supporter cards, who spoke at budget hearings, and who participated in the 2016 Vermont Afterschool & Summer Learning Day. It's truly amazing to see the energy and support across the state for this work.

On the quality side, our partners continue to grow and to bring new information, resources, and skills to the programs that we work with. We are particularly excited about our growing work with the Montshire Museum on tinkering, with SWEEP on environmental literacy, and with the Howard Center for Human Services around trauma, behavior, and program climate. It's exciting to build these partnerships in support of programs, kids, and families!

Thank you for your partnership.
We couldn't do what we're doing without all of you.

Holly Morehouse, Executive Director



Center Operations

- We have greatly appreciated having Alissa Faber working with us these past few months. Alissa has been helping out in support of our advocacy efforts and training initiatives. She also was the lead this year on the Youth Ambassadors program creating a new six-week curriculum for the students in addition to planning for the event in Montpelier. Thanks, Alissa!
- Erin Schwab is currently in the process of researching a better method for processing online event registrations. We have scoped out a few viable options that would have the ability to accept online payments and discount codes for members. We are testing the options and analyzing the costs in order to streamline the billing for our events, trainings, and membership payments.
- A few new capabilities exist in our internal online database. It now has the capability to match program sites with the state legislators that serve their districts (and vice-versa). Additionally, a “trainings” component has been added for the purpose of tracking information on our trainings and workshops, including STEM trainings in particular which will help with our reporting of information for the Noyce grant.
- In February, Holly was invited to join the National Advisory Committee for Foundations, Inc. and their Beyond School Hours Conference. She was also recently nominated to be on the Board of Trustees for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). We’re hoping that these opportunities will bring in new connections for Vermont Afterschool and the programs we serve.
- Karen Scott and Tricia Pawlik will be traveling to sunny Orlando, FL, for the NAA Convention on March 20-23, 2016. The Convention will feature Dr. Angela Duckworth as the keynote speaker and we look forward to sharing her connections between out-of-school time programs and building resiliency in kids.
- A small VT team will attend the national Mott meeting in Detroit in April. The focus of the VT team is on “fundamentals of afterschool programming” and Emanuel Betz (VTAOE- 21C), Mary Mulloy

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(VTAOE- Title Funds), Lynne Robbins (CDD), and Fagan Hart (Vermont Children’s Trust Foundation) will be joining Holly at the conference.

- Tracy will be traveling to Oregon in May to attend the STEM Institute, which will convene national STEM System Building Noyce Grant recipients. She will also be making a stop in San Francisco to meet with internationally recognized Tinkering experts at the Exploratorium.
- Our Facebook and Twitter fans are slowly but steadily increasing: Facebook has 415 likes and Twitter has 419 followers. Thanks to the additions of afterschool champions who signed Zap the Gap supporter cards, we’ve seen our e-news list grow to 1,187 subscribers! We now have the ability to separate the list into different groups and send e-newsletter and action alerts to certain sub-groups of the general Vermont Afterschool Community subscriber list.
- In the past three months we have seen 2,700 visits to our website with 16% of users accessing the page via a mobile device (phone or tablet). Our Zap the Gap and Afterschool & Summer Learning Day pages were the most visited pages other than the homepage.

Partnership Development

- The ELO Working Group released their third report in early January, *All Learning Counts: How Expanded Learning Opportunities Support Flexible, Personalized, Student-centered, and Proficiency-based Learning in Vermont*. Holly presented the report and its recommendations to the PreK-16 Council and Senate Education Committee. We also heard from the McClure Foundation that they shared the report with their full board and all of their education foundation partners in New England.
- Following up on one of the recommendations in the report, Vermont Afterschool is working with Helen Beattie (Up With Learning) to host an ELO Summit on May 5th at the Stoweflake Resort. The summit will bring together school-based personnel, students, and ELO providers to identify strategies and resources that can help support more students being able to include ELOs in their personalized learning plans.
- Under the newly formed Expanded Learning Coalition, Karen partnered with Paul Gambill (Community Engagement Lab) to complete a grant application for the Agency of Education. Titled the ELC Project, the goal will be to raise awareness about opportunities, provide training to schools and providers, and organize expanded learning opportunity providers from around the

Highlights

- The ELO Working Group’s third report, ***All Learning Counts: How Expanded Learning Opportunities Support Flexible, Personalized, Student-centered, and Proficiency-based Learning in Vermont***, offers recommendations on how to build and strengthen systems in the state in order to more fully utilize ELOs in support of Vermont’s vision for educating students in a way that is personalized, student-centered, and proficiency-based.

Next Steps and Partner Points

- Read the report here: http://www.vermontafterschool.org/advocacy/working_group/

state under one coalition. This one-year contract will be co-chaired by Karen and Paul. Montpelier Schools will be the fiscal agent for the project. The proposal has the backing of numerous schools, institutions, non-profits and other organizations across the state.

- The CDD Afterschool Care grants have been released and are due March 25. A technical assistance webinar was hosted on February 22, and attended by nine potential applicants. The webinar was taped, and a link will be available on our website to others who are interested.
- Holly and Cassie will be attending the Early Childhood Day at the Legislature on March 9, 2016. Our Zap the Gap campaign for an appropriation of \$2.5 million to the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Special Fund is on the Vermont Early Childhood Alliance's 2016 policy agenda and will also be featured as a breakout session in the morning of the event. Holly and Cassie will be leading that session and look forward to furthering our advocacy efforts with PreK partners.
- Holly and Karen will be attending the Vermont Nonprofit Legislative Day on March 11, 2016. This is a great opportunity to network with other nonprofits from across Vermont, as well as advocate for the ELO Special Fund with key legislators.

Policy and Advocacy

- Our annual Afterschool & Summer Learning Day saw a new format this year: we scaled back to cut costs and decided to base the event at the State House in order to emphasize the value of meeting with legislators.
 - The day started with coffee and breakfast in the State House cafeteria.
 - At 9 a.m., the House Education committee heard testimony for 90 minutes from LAFTER Program Director Thara Fuller and three LAFTER high school students, as well as testimony from Holly on the need for dedicated state funding.
 - By lunch time, the halls were filled with youth ambassadors in their "Zap the Gap" capes! Throughout the State House, Zap the Gap supporters and youth ambassadors were engaged in great conversations with their legislators about the value of afterschool and summer learning.
 - We had 30 participants register for the event, plus 17 adult chaperones, 41 youth ambassadors, and 5 Vermont Afterschool staff. There was a great article published in *VTDigger* on the event, "Students, educators ask lawmakers to fill an empty after-school program fund."

Highlights

- The **Zap the Gap** campaign is focused on the State House right now, working to encourage the Appropriations Committee to include a \$2.5 million appropriation in the ELO Special Fund for the FY17 General Fund Budget.

Next Steps and Partner Points

- If you would like to come to the State House and talk with legislators at any point in the session, let Holly know! We can help set up meetings and provide support.

- The Youth Ambassadors ran a separate agenda at the Afterschool & Summer Learning Day, with Alissa Faber and Tracy Truzansky as co-facilitators.
 - The highlight was their “March of the Ambassador Superheros” where they walked into the State House wearing their Zap the Gap capes (which were handmade by Kathy Olwell).
 - Various media covered their State House appearance, with stories on WCAX, WPTZ, and WWNY22 and a front page photo of the Youth Ambassadors in the *Times Argus*.
 - Lastly, Youth Ambassadors essays that they wrote prior to the event were published in a booklet, “Opportunities for All: Youth Voices on the Value of Afterschool.” These booklets were delivered by the youth to their legislators at the event.
- We have wrapped up the Zap the Gap Supporter Card Campaign and surpassed our goal of 1,000 cards! To date, we have collected 1,183 via in person and online submissions. This has been an incredible effort to see new and old champions emerge to help collect cards. We are grateful for your support and could not have done this without our partners and advocacy committee members. Supporter Cards are now being delivered to legislators, with all but five representatives receiving cards from their constituents!
- We are currently running a Letter to the Editor (LTE) push for the Zap the Gap campaign to highlight local support for afterschool and summer learning programs. To date, 14 LTEs have been submitted and 8 have been published.
- We had a great group of friends and supporters show up on a Monday (2/15) to give testimony in support of the ELO Special Fund at budget hearings held by the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Thank you to Deb Hathaway, Sara Robertson-Ryan, Barb Russ, Jim Fitzpatrick, Judy Dow, Nicole Miller, Ginny Burley, Sue Fortier, Jolanta Labejsza, Thara Fuller, and Jim Flint for showing up and speaking out.
- The Vermont Child Poverty Council (a legislative council) included funding for the ELO Special Fund as one of only three recommendations from the full council in their January 2016 report to the legislature. <http://bit.ly/21dCdeF>
- The Governor’s Pathways from Poverty Committee also included a recommendation for funding to all schools and districts in the state for afterschool programming (Nov/Dec 2015). <http://bit.ly/1OI8jvL>
- The Working Vermonters Caucus (group of about 40-50 legislators) voted to send a letter to the House Appropriations committee a couple weeks ago asking that they include an appropriation of \$2.5 million for the ELO Special Fund. A second sign-on letter was circulated by Rep. Mrowicki collecting additional signatures from representatives not on the Working Vermonters Caucus.

Highlights

- Representative Mike Mrowicki has been selected as one of 40 people being honored nationwide by the National Afterschool Association (NAA) for his contributions to afterschool. Mike will be featured in an upcoming issue of the NAA magazine as one of NAA’s Most Influential in State and Local Government. Congratulations, Mike!

- In 2015, for the first time we had a question that was accepted for inclusion on the high school version of the *Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey*.
 - The question reads, “In an average week when you are in school, how many total hours do you participate in afterschool activities such as sports, band, drama, or clubs run by your school or community groups?” Recently, the VT Department of Health released a report of the results.
 - The survey found that during an average week, 24% of students spend ten or more hours per week afterschool participating in these types of activities. Sixteen percent spend 6-9 hours per week, 28% spend 1-5 hours per week, and alarmingly, nearly one-third (32%) of the high school students surveyed spend zero hours per week in afterschool activities.
 - The report can be downloaded from <http://healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs/2015/index.aspx>. We are awaiting raw data to be released so that we can determine whether higher levels of afterschool participation correspond with lower levels of youth engaging in unhealthy behaviors such as drug and alcohol use.

Professional Development and High-Quality Programs

- The first group of Afterschool Essentials participants finished most of their program in December and January. In March, a new group of ten participants are signed up to start the program at the ISS-AP meeting in Lake Morey.
- So far in FY16, 20 people have earned a Vermont Afterschool Foundations Certificate, 12 have earned an Afterschool Essentials Certificate, and three have earned the Vermont Afterschool Professional Credential.
- Ten mentors are in place through the Mentors 4 Quality program. Six matches are currently working together on action plans.
- Karen attended a two-day YPQI External Assessor training in Columbia, MO. It was hosted by the Missouri Afterschool Network and presented by the Weikart Center. She received her Assessor Certification in school-age YPQA.
- As of the end of February, 47 professional development trainings will have been completed with

Highlights

- Numerous new professional development opportunities around our **STEM Initiative** continue to roll out. In May, Tracy will travel to Oregon to meet with nationwide STEM leaders around afterschool, and Vermont Afterschool recently joined the Afterschool Alliance’s STEM Hub steering committee as a partner.

Next Steps and Partner Points

- Spring Trainings are being promoted as a low-cost, high-quality professional development opportunity for direct service staff. Learn more here: <http://www.vermontafterschool.org/training/spring/>

689 participants attending at least one evening or weekend two-hour workshop. This number does not include the conference attendees or ISS-AP. Of these completed trainings, 12 were designed as regional trainings open to all 21C and/or licensed school age program providers.

- Two trainers have completed Certification to be Dimensions of Success (DoS) External Assessors as part of our Noyce STEM Systems Building Grant. Burlington and Ludlow will be the pilot sites for these assessments this spring.
- Three new trainers have been recruited and trained specifically to support the STEM Initiative as well as expand our geographic reach for STEM trainings.
- Between the November and March ISS-AP training dates, there is one-to-one coaching and opportunities for further engagement in the strand via webinars and onsite staff trainings. These elements expand the learning to direct service staff who are often included in ISS-AP pilot programs, summer planning, policy and procedural revisions and best practice trainings. ISS-AP will resume for the third session on March 4th.
- Three STEM webinars were held during this period:
 - (1) Introduction to *Click2Science*, an online STEM training and coaching platform used by afterschool networks nationally;
 - (2) Introduction to *Vermonticate!*, a online game that engages all age Vermonters in prompts and live activities to encourage positive behavior change in response to climate change and other human impacts on our ecosystems; and
 - (3) Introduction to the *Common Instrument*, the tool for assessing youth engagement and excitement, teamwork, critical thinking and perseverance in STEM learning for afterschool.
- A new STEM training, *Winter Science: Patterns, Structure and Function*, was piloted in two locations (Johnson and Northfield) in support of our ongoing partnership with the Statewide Environmental Education Programs (SWEET) and our environmental literacy focus for FY16.
- The Vermont Afterschool Tinkering Project is in full swing with twelve sites (including one library and one tech center); these sites are implementing a wide range of tinkering programs in afterschool across the state. We are gathering stories and images for our website and will host a *Tinkering for ALL Educators* training at Montshire Museum on March 5th led by Tracy and Rachel Donegan.



Funding and Sustainability Efforts

- We recently set up a PayPal account. We've been using it to collect registration fees for trainings and events. We also received our first few donations to Vermont Afterschool. Thank you's go out to Barb Russ and Dean Williams, Tracy Truzansky, Mary Hood, and Chris Kline for kicking off our first donations!
- After receiving a call from the McClure Foundation, we submitted a letter of intent for a small grant to work with three high schools and two middle schools on using proficiency-based graduation standards to document student learning in their afterschool programs. We'll hear later this month if we are invited to write a full proposal.
- Just this week we submitted a 100-page proposal to the Vermont Agency of Education for a new contract to continue to provide professional development opportunities, technical assistance, and evaluation and assessment supports for the 21C programs. The request for proposals was extremely specific in the level of detail and complexity of what needed to be included. However, it gave us the opportunity to highlight all our past work supporting 21C programs as well as our plans and strategies for the future. We should hear back on this sometime in the spring.

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