



Vermont Afterschool

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

Quarterly Report: March 2017

This is a busy and exciting time at Vermont Afterschool. We are thrilled to kick off our long-dreamed about Social Emotional Learning (SEL) initiative and to welcome Sara Forward to our staff. Sara is a certified social worker and brings important new capacity and a wealth of knowledge to our team. Sara has a professional interest in developmental psychology, trauma-informed programming, behavior analysis and intervention, and in outdoor and nature-based curriculum. What's particularly exciting about Sara's new position is that she'll be spending a good chunk of her time each week out in the field supporting afterschool staff as they implement SEL-supportive practices and curriculum in their programs.

We are also excited about our Board's recent work to dig deep into discussions on how Vermont Afterschool can best support improvements in program quality across the state. One outcome of those discussions has been recent efforts to restructure our staff position on quality initiatives in order to add a more intensive focus on onsite coaching and mentoring for programs. Tricia Pawlik-York, a long time trainer and mentor for Vermont Afterschool, has stepped forward to take on this new position. We're excited to see Tricia lead in this role; as well as explore how our organization can change and grow with the times in order to best support afterschool staff in the important, rewarding, and yet sometimes difficult, work that they do in serving Vermont's children, youth, and families.

And we can't forget that the legislative session is in full swing... Things are hopping at the State House and it's been very exciting to see the way support for afterschool and summer learning programs continues to grow. If you are ever in the Montpelier area and have time to stop by, we'd love to have you join one of us in the State House and can help you connect with your legislators, pop in on a committee hearing, or catch up on policy issues and discussions that may affect your programs and your community. Every voice is important and our elected officials need to hear from you.

Thank you for being aware and engaged,

Holly Morehouse, Executive Director

Center Operations

- We are excited to welcome Sara Forward to our team at Vermont Afterschool. Sara has taken on the new position of Social Emotional Learning Coordinator. Sara is a licensed social worker and has worked as a mental health consultant to public school teams and preschool programs in Vermont. Her previous work experience includes classroom teacher, school social worker, afterschool program director, children’s mental health clinician, and mom. We are thrilled to have Sara on-board!
- Guess what. We have a second great new hire to announce: Tricia Pawlik-York is stepping into a newly restructured position as our Workforce and Program Improvement Coach. Tricia’s position will combine support for our quality initiatives with onsite coaching and technical assistance out in the field and at program sites. Tricia brings a wealth of experience in the afterschool field with over 25 years running programs and providing professional development and support. Welcome, Tricia! We’re happy to have you in this new role!
- We’d like to congratulate Board Member Rich Tulikangas on his new position. Rich is the Director of Linking Learning to Careers, a project of the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, State of Vermont, and the University of Vermont. Congratulations, Rich!
- In her role as a member of the National Advisory Committee for the Beyond School Hours National Conference, Holly spent several days in Atlanta last month attending sessions and participating in committee activities. Beyond School Hours is a large, national conference in its 20th year with about 2000 attendees and run by Foundations, Inc.
- Erin attended the Transform the Sector conference last week in Toronto. The conference brings together data experts, policy innovators, and social sector leaders for learning, networking, and strategizing on how the social sector can increase its impact through the use of digital data.

Board of Directors

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

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

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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

- Tracy attended the STEM Institute in Maryland along with Deanne Bailey of the Vermont Science Teachers Association. The STEM Institute was all about building systems to support quality STEM programming in out-of-school time. Right up Tracy's alley!
- Congratulations to Holly for being selected as the 2017 Outstanding Professional of the Year by the KidsSafe Collaborative. Board members and staff will be attending the awards luncheon with Holly on April 18th to celebrate the honor. Special thanks to all those who played a role in Holly's nomination!
- In the last quarter, we had 2,349 visits to our website with over half (57%) being new visitors. Compared to the same period in FY16, the number of page views increased by 29% and we saw a decrease in the bounce rate—from 58% to 25%—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) Afterschool & Summer Learning Day; 2) Professional Development Training; and 3) Job Openings/Who We are.

Policy and Advocacy

- With help from and regular national policy calls with the Afterschool Alliance, Vermont Afterschool is following developments in Washington, DC, that impact afterschool and summer learning programs. Of concern at this time are appropriations for the 21st CCLC Program and the Child Care Development Fund. Holly visited DC this month to meet with education staff in both Senator Leahy's and Senator Sanders' offices.
- While in DC, Holly also attended an event at the National Press Club announcing the release of a new research compendium on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) in afterschool and summer learning programs. Guest speakers included Dr. Gil Noam, Dr. James, and a wonderful group of panelists. The event was co-hosted by the Mott Foundation and the Noyce Foundation.
- We appreciate the House Education Committee's continued support for increasing access to afterschool and summer learning programs. The committee is working on a bill now that would appropriate \$1,000,000 for the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Special Fund in FY18. Also assigned to the House Education Committee is H.270, a bill that has Rep. Lanpher and Rep. Christie as lead co-sponsors along with another 38 co-sponsors. The bill would confirm the structure around the ELO Special Fund in order to ensure that any money in the fund would be used as intended to increase access to programs for low-income students and underserved areas of the state. H.270 also adds a funding priority for afterschool and summer programs that offer programming around science, technology, engineering, and math- particularly for older youth.

SAVE THE DATE!

- 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.

Next Steps and Partner Points

- Check out the Youth Ambassador video online at <http://bit.ly/2moxwmC>. We promise that you'll love it!

- Afterschool & Summer Learning Day was held on February 16th and, despite snowy weather, it turned out to be a great day. We originally had 75 adults registered, including chaperones and partners, with over half in attendance at the event. We had 60 Youth Ambassadors signed up, including several who testified in the Senate Education Committee. Special thanks to Thara Fuller, Carol Lizotte, Christy Gallese, and Orianna Baez- all program directors who gave official testimony—and to the many program directors, staff, parents, and partners who spent the day at the State House with us talking with legislators about the importance of afterschool and summer learning programs.
- In their own voices, here's the 2017 afterschool youth ambassador video that premiered at the Afterschool & Summer Learning Day on February 16th. It's really truly heartwarming, honest, and funny. We kinda love it and hope you do too! Link to video: <http://bit.ly/2moxwmC>
- And for those who want more... Numerous youth and programs across the state sent in video clips. From Onward to AIM to Unbound, check out the full (and fantastic) video library of the 2017 Afterschool Youth Ambassador videos here: <http://bit.ly/2lru0s0>
- With support from the Overdeck Foundation and help from Burness, a DC-based communications firm, we've created the first of three new flyers around science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). The flyer focuses on the connections between afterschool and summer STEM programming and preparing Vermont's future workforce: <http://bit.ly/2n6t6xG>. We've also been pleased with our underwriting spots on Vermont Public Radio. We hope you've been able to catch us on the radio!

Professional Development and High-Quality Programs

- Since July 2016 Vermont Afterschool has sponsored 47 trainings with 757 participants surpassing our goal. Of note:
 - 36 trainings are currently scheduled between now and August 2017. Additional training requests are anticipated. The high volume is in part due to our Noyce grant that is funding STEM professional development statewide to improve quality and access for STEM learning afterschool.
 - 11 trainings were YPQI workshops (Weikert Center trained Trainers)
 - 14 trainings were focused on social emotional learning
 - 13 trainings were in STEM
- Coming this spring, we are piloting a full day Summer Booster training event on June 3rd in Rutland. The intent is to provide front line staff with the skills and content for ten hours of experiences on a thematic week of summer learning. Partnerships will help us support programs such as biking, gardening, financial literacy, yoga, tinkering, the science of cooking and fishing.
- Trainings scheduled to date will be hosted in in seven counties: (Chittenden, Franklin/Gl, Lamoille, Orange/No Windsor, Rutland, Washington, and Caledonia). Work is needed to expand trainings in Windham and the Northeast Kingdom.
- Since July, 84% of participants in Vermont Afterschool sponsored trainings indicated that they FULLY AGREE with the statement, "I believe this workshop will help me do my job better."

- With the six newly developed STEM trainings now in implementation, our focus since the summer has been in building partnerships. In southern Vermont, the Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center is interested in joining the environmental literacy trainer team. New trainer Cindy Perry is revising the VerMONEY financial literacy program and its associated training session. New trainers for math are also on the horizon to link with school day instructional practices, especially for the elementary level.
- As our efforts on Social and Emotional learning continue to broaden, we have secured one new trainer who can take the theory and put it into practice for both site coordinators who are working to adjust their behavior management practices to look at positive climate, mindfulness and relationship building. Currently we are also working to develop a partnership with Kindle Farm staff whose expertise in working with emotionally challenged youth will add a new perspective beyond our work with the Howard Center and UVM's PBIS trainings.
- The 2016 -2017 Afterschool Professional Learning Stands are in full swing with our third session at Lake Morey having met on January 27th. Our total enrollment including both fall and spring sessions of Afterschool Essentials is 55 participants. For the January meeting, Vermont Afterschool arranged for Dr. Charles Smith of the Weikart Center to present their recent work on the Social Emotional Learning Challenge, a yearlong research project to identify and document practices that support social emotional learning in afterschool and summer programs.
- Vermont Afterschool has made every effort to accommodate the tremendous increase in the number of applications for the VT Afterschool Foundations Certificate (71 processed and awarded in the last six months). The increase is due to changes in the licensing requirements and Vermont Afterschool staff made necessary adjustments to meet the need from the field.
- Vermont Afterschool staff has presented Introduction to the Common Instrument to over 26 staff involved in STEM grant-funded programs to collect data on youth engagement in science, engineering, or tinkering as well as reflecting on the transferrable skills of collaboration, critical thinking, perseverance, and communication with peers.
- Five STEM Trainers have completed certification to be PEAR *Dimensions of Success* external assessors. These individuals will be able to assess staff development in quality instruction of STEM programs, and also coach staff teams and site leaders on improving STEM learning and instruction.
- Erin has been holding small-sized individualized webinars with 21C directors about the statewide evaluation data and the reports for their individual program sites. These small group discussions have been a great way to engage directors in the data, talk about the statewide goals, and understand issues and concerns at the local level.

Highlights

- Our new Social Emotional Learning (SEL) initiative is off to a strong start. Sara has completed training on the PATHS curriculum, met with potential pilot sites, and will start implementing a first set of lessons with students next week in programs.

- In her first month with Vermont Afterschool, Sara has been full out getting the SEL pilot up and running. She's completed training on the PATHS curriculum, modified the program to fit better into afterschool settings, visited all twelve of the potential pilot sites, led test runs of the curriculum with kids in programs, and researched possible evaluation tools. She's now starting onsite trainings with staff at each pilot site. Exciting times!
- Four STEM Trainers are now qualified to lead a 3-hour training, *Engineering is Elementary: Engineering Adventures Getting Started* to support informal learning curriculum designed by the Museum of Science, Boston.
- We're excited to have awarded engineering grants to six afterschool programs. Each awardee receives training, curriculum and materials, and site assessments. The curriculum that we're using for this project is *Engineering Adventures* out of the Boston Museum of Science.

Funding and Sustainability Efforts

- We're pleased to announce that out of 23 submissions, our Letter of Intent was one of six selected by the McClure Foundation for this year's grant competition. Timing will be tight as full applications are due by March 30th. However, we're excited about the new project we're developing which ties together work-based learning, rural afterschool programs, and STEM.
- We also submitted a Letter of Intent to the UVM Medical Center around investing in more intensive prevention efforts for at-risk middle school youth. If funded, this project would allow us to work with afterschool programs in Chittenden County to implement small group, peer supported prevention programs.
- 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*.

Vermont Afterschool, Inc. Staff

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Sara Forward
Social Emotional Learning Coordinator

Tricia Pawlik-York
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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