This is the time of year when we can’t help but feel especially grateful... for our colleagues, our partners, our board, the programs we get to work with in the field, and all the amazing individuals that we interact with across the state of Vermont. This truly is a rewarding field comprised of so many giving, passionate, and creative people who care deeply about the children, youth, and families in Vermont.

We are also grateful for the people who have stepped forward in many different ways to take a risk with us in order to try something new. Directors of 21C programs across the state are helping us to build a new model for community-building and leadership. The six communities involved in the Vermont Youth Project have signed onto 5-year agreements with us to implement strategies from Iceland and Finland that increase protective factors for youth. There is a new Youth Center Alliance bringing together directors and staff from teen centers across Vermont. There is a new statewide Afterschool Advisory Group serving to give input into state issues and policies affecting licensed afterschool programs. The Youth4Youth participatory budgeting process is being implemented in seven new communities. And the VT9to26 Coalition continues to meet monthly and is working on nothing short of changing the culture around how Vermont views, supports, and serves our young people. How amazing is all of that, especially when you’ll see as you read through this report that it is just the tip of the iceberg?

Thank you for being our partners, colleagues, funders, and friends. We couldn’t do what we do without all of you.

Warm regards,

Holly Morehouse
Executive Director
Vermont Afterschool is excited to welcome Katie Mobley as our new Board Chair. Katie is Dean of Enrollment and Community Relations, Community College of Vermont (CCV). Katie brings over 20 years of experience in higher education and also served for four years on the Expanded Learning Opportunities Working Group for the Vermont Legislature.

We also want to give a huge thanks to Barb Russ who has fulfilled four years of service in the Board Chair position and will continue to be on the board as the Immediate Past Chair. We love Barb for her enthusiasm, integrity, and passion for kids and families. We are so grateful to have her continued presence on our board.

This fall a couple of us took trips to New Orleans for two different conferences. At the request of the Mott Foundation, Holly attended the Grantmakers for Education conference in October and presented on a panel about statewide systems to support social emotional learning. Sam attended the Youth Thrive National Convening where he connected with many different programs utilizing the Youth Thrive Framework in diverse and exciting ways. He also had the chance to meet with the New Orleans Youth Alliance and get some ideas from them about a youth leadership program they run.

This fall we were excited to move to our new office space at 150 Kennedy Drive in South Burlington. The space is wonderful with new carpets and paint, ample parking, a large conference room, co-working space, kitchen, and enough space for all of us to fit comfortable. And as a big bonus, our office buddies at Champlain Valley Educator Development Center (CVEDC) made the move as well and are located downstairs here just as they were back at the Fort. We are so grateful!

Vermont Afterschool hired Tapia and Huckabay to do an annual financial review for the organization. We are happy to share that there were no findings or corrections of note and we will continue to follow our established protocols. In 2020, we will have a full audit as per board policy.
• Erin has updated Vermont Afterschool’s statewide impact data on the website and added a new map highlighting where we work across Vermont. Take a look here: www.vermontafterschool.org/impact/our-impact

• Since September 1, 2019, we had 2,505 visits to our website which is a slight increase compared to last year. We also saw the percentage of new users increase by 13%. Subpages of the website that saw the greatest amounts of activity during this period were all related to the conference.

• The team at Vermont Afterschool will be celebrating the holidays together on December 9th. Our plan is to enjoy lunch at Tiny Thai and then travel to Tricia’s house for games, cookies, and festive cheer. We’ll celebrate this year with thanks for all the wonderful people in our personal and professional lives!

Strengthening Programs

• We wrapped up our 10th annual Vermont Afterschool Conference on November 1, 2019, and were thrilled to welcome so many afterschool and out-of-school time staff and partners from across Vermont. This year we welcomed Matt Emerzian as the keynote speaker, founder of Every Monday Matters. We also gave out the “Afterschool Superhero Award” to Senator Ginny Lyons, who was deeply honored and excited to wear her superhero cape. Of note, 96% of conference participants rated their overall experience as excellent or good and 97% of participants found that the conference met or exceeded expectations.

• This fall we created and published a 2019-2020 professional development catalogue for afterschool professionals and distributed it to the field at meetings, trainings, and events. Directors and staff have responded favorably to having all the various options for professional development and training catalogue in one place.

• So far this fall, we have run 11 on-site professional development trainings for programs with three more on the books through December 31st. We are also continuing to support the use of the Youth Program Quality Assessment tool in over 100 programs across the state. This year, Vermont is transitioning to using the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) version of the tool and offered three SEL webinars this fall through the Weikart Center.

• We have 15 afterschool staff currently enrolled in the Fall 2019 online CCV course, Introduction to Afterschool Education. This course is offered free to those working in licensed afterschool and childcare programs.

• CCV and Vermont Afterschool are also moving forward with the development of an Afterschool and Youth Work Certificate, which would be offered at CCV for those who take six select classes. Two new course drafts to help meet this requirement were submitted and approved by CCV in November. We are hoping to have the courses and certificate approved to begin Fall 2020.

• We have six afterschool staff currently in Afterschool Essentials for the Fall 2019 cohort. This course is offered free to those working in licensed afterschool and childcare programs. It involves about 45-hours of in person and distance learning and focuses on the needs of professionals new to the field.
• The Leadership, Exploration, and Development (LEAD program) is running again this year with two cohorts. This two-year program is for leaders of licensed programs in the afterschool field in Vermont. L.E.A.D. provides afterschool professionals with the tools to hone their strengths and develop new skills to take on more advanced leadership roles in the future. The 2019-2020 LEAD 1.0 cohort met in October with Ross Gibson as the first speaker. Ross trained on staff culture, retention, and engagement. The LEAD 2.0 cohort meets for the first time on December 12.

• Tricia attended STARS oversight and PPD in September, October, November and December. She also attended STARS evolution meetings and is now transitioning to co-lead for the guidance manual work group for STARS and has volunteered to work on the 5 STARS criteria with CDD.

• Onsite coaching with program leaders continues to be a growing emphasis of our work and how we feel we can best help support the field. Since September, we have done nine program coaching visits around quality, STARS, and/or PQA support.

• This year’s Leadership Institute in Resiliency Afterschool (LIRA) is focusing on Restorative Practices, led by Annie O’Shaughnessy of True Nature Teaching. The Leadership Institute is a signature project of our funding partnership with the Northfield Savings Bank Foundation. Fourteen afterschool leaders are participating and have gathered twice, 10/8 and 12/3, as part of their deep dive into a relational-based approach that builds student and staff resilience. LIRA participants meet six times over the course of Fall 2019 and Spring 2020, with those who finish receiving over 36 hours of professional development and a Micro-Credential in Youth Resilience.

• Also through the partnership with the Northfield Savings Bank Foundation, we’ve hired Damir Ališa to lead the One Planet Community of Practice. Damir is a licensed mental health counselor and will lead the Community of Practice through Spring 2020. Eight site coordinators and lead staff are meeting monthly for 90 minutes each month to share, problem-solve, and create new experiences for youth who need support in SEL. They also focus on their needs and that of their staff in working with youth.

• In addition, Burlington’s Community of Practice cohort has ten participants, who meet for two-hours each month. This group is being led by Annie O’Shaughnesssey and focusing on restorative practices.

• We’ve hired a new SEL trainer, Beth Martell, to provide additional training and support for programs. Beth is a licensed teacher with 30 years of experience. She has expertise in developmental psychology, attachment theory, learning theories brain maturation, executive function and emotional health. Since 2015, she’s been working in a private practice as a parent coach, relationship coach & life coach, while also working with educators.

• This year, in partnership with the Vermont Agency of Education, we are running four full-day retreats for the directors of Vermont’s 21C programs. Our September 21C directors’ retreat was held on 9/27 at Seyon Lodge State Park in Groton. The agenda for the day included group networking and team building exercises, new tools for leadership skills, resource sharing, and facilitated problem-solving sessions. Our winter 21C director’s retreat will be held 12/13 with an emphasis on summer resource sharing, planning and models.

• Five programs are participating in the STEM Pathways: LEAPS, All-4-One, Encore, One Planet, and AIM. This project received funding from the McClure Foundation for the 2019-2020 school year to create meaningful job and expanded learning opportunities for students across rural Vermont.
• VerMoney will be offered again this year in partnership with the Vermont State Treasurer’s Office giving 12 afterschool programs access to a financial literacy curriculum for grades 2-5, training, stipend, materials kit, and more. Applications were due on December 5th and participating programs for Spring 2020 will be announced soon.

• Vermont Afterschool’s Research Analyst hosted a ZOOM call with site coordinators whose students completed the PEAR Holistic Student Assessment (HSA) last spring. The site coordinators received an online training on how to access and interpret their students’ results on the online dashboard. A video recording of the training webinar is also available.

Empowering Youth

• During the week of October 14th, two strands of youth leadership that span the Atlantic merged for an informational and cultural exchange. Two visitors from Finland were invited by Vermont Afterschool as part of an ongoing international partnership: Vivian Ljungqvist, the student head of the Helsinki Youth Council and Johanna Laukkanen, a youth worker supporting Ruuti within Helsinki Youth Services. Throughout the week, they visited programs and met professionals from a wide range of afterschool programs and youth-serving organizations and also spent an entire day helping train youth council members from across the state.

• We’ve reworked and revised the Youth4Youth (Y4Y) grants program for FY20. Instead of one statewide youth council, this year we are working with seven afterschool programs across the state to help them create regional youth councils that will each have their own pot of money ($3000) to offer local grants for youth. Y4Y programs and youth councils are also being trained in participatory budgeting practices. We are creating a Y4Y guidebook which includes modules on: Coming Together As a Group, Participatory Budgeting/Youth Voice, Financial Management, Telling Your Story, and Keeping It Going.

• We kicked off the Y4Y project with a summit on October 15th in Bethel. We had 51 total people with around 40 youth from all seven programs. This was a full day event, complete with pizza lunch and a participatory budgeting exercise on how to budget and buy food for their afternoon snack break. Part of the morning workshop included a presentation from our visitors from Finland, Vivi and Johanna.

• The Vermont Youth Project is up and running, with 13 schools in six communities administering the Planet Youth Survey in October with an 82% student participation rate. Communities will be reviewing this data and creating community strategies at a workshop in December where we’re expecting 60+ people from 6 different communities to attend.

• We offered a two-day Youth Thrive training this fall with Matt Wolf as the trainer and 19 people in attendance. Youth Thrive is an evidence-informed framework for approaching work with youth ages 9-24 built on a strengths-based approach and positive psychology. In becoming the new organizational home for Youth Thrive, Vermont Afterschool is helping to match interested communities with local trainers, support trainers with additional resources and networking opportunities, and arrange for all the logistics around training events. This winter we are also expanding the model to include a follow-up Community of Practice for participants.

Increasing Partnerships & Access
• Vermont Afterschool recently formed an Afterschool Advisory Group comprised of front line directors and coordinators, Northern Lights at CCV staff, and a CDD representation. The group was assembled to give licensed afterschool professionals more of a voice at the state level. The committee was formed to complete the following scope of work:
  o Provide feedback specific to the STARS Phase 2 work as it relates to afterschool programs
  o Afterschool Competencies Revisions
  o Afterschool Credential Revision
  o Bonuses-alignment throughout the system
  o Afterschool pathways revisions
  o Micro-credentials
  o Youth Work & Afterschool Certificate

• We’ve had some great VT9to26 Coalition meetings the past few months. Members have been collecting supporter cards to build out our ring of interested people and we started a new e-newsletter for those who signed cards as well as all 9to26 members. Vivi and Johanna also presented to the Coalition on their experiences with the Helsinki youth council and participatory budgeting process. Lots of interesting ideas popped up in that meeting, as well as inspiring advocacy efforts for 2020.

• The Vermont Youth Center Alliance (aka "Vie-Ka") has been going strong this quarter. Vermont Afterschool helps convene this statewide group of drop-in centers that serve adolescents. We have been having a monthly two-hour video call to continue the working of coming together to get to know one another, develop a mission and vision statement and share resources, expertise and support. There was also an in-person gathering in October and the December call had 15 people! We had a rich discussion of both practice (how do you develop and maintain relationships with youth?) and organizational development (what does everyone want to know about the other centers in the Alliance?).

Funding and Sustainability Efforts

• Nicole attended a four-day course, Principles & Techniques of Fundraising, sponsored by the Mott Foundation in August 2019.

• This is our fourth year of funding from the Overdeck Family Foundation. The $10,000 grant comes with technical assistance and support from our national partners at the Afterschool Alliance and the STEM Education Coalition.

Vermont Afterschool, Inc. is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that children and youth in every Vermont community are able to benefit from the power of afterschool, summer learning, and third space programs. Our mission is to support organizations in providing quality afterschool, summer, and expanded learning experiences so that Vermont’s children and youth have the opportunities, skills, and resources they need to become healthy, productive members of society.

For more information on Vermont Afterschool, Inc. visit: www.vermontafterschool.org