VYCC VERMONT YOUTH CONSERVATION CORPS

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

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Dear Friends,

What is your VYCC story?

Here at the VYCC, one of our greatest joys – and challenges – is sharing all the amazing stories and experiences that unfold over the course of a year. The VYCC's stories are about people, young people, working together to make a difference. At its most basic level, the organization is simply a broker – bringing together project sponsors, young people, community members, local and state government, foundations, and corporations. The real learning happens when these groups collaborate, helping young people to share in a powerful work experience.

This year, we chose just a few stories that illustrate the impact of the organization in 2012. Your support makes this possible. Please know that we are truly grateful for your continued interest and support. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and any VYCC stories you want to share.

Thomas Hark Founding President

Cheers!/



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VYCC PROGRAMS: BY THE NUMBERS

Conservation Program

4 weeks to 6 months Residential and non-residential Employment and training for youth ages 16-24 Statewide

141 youth served, plus 40 young adult leadersFrom 60 Vermont towns45,728 hours of service74 projects in 44 townsAverage project length: 2 weeks

The Farm at VYCC

4 weeks to 12 months Residential and non-residential Employment and training for youth and young adults At VYCC headquarters

32 youth served, plus HSLP students 300 volunteers 28,760 pounds of produce and 2,470 pounds of poultry donated to 355 families



Business Enterprise (BEP) and Learn, Earn, and Prosper (LEAP) Programs

Year-round or 4 weeks in summer Job skills training for individuals who are blind or visually impaired At Overlook Cafe, ReSOURCE, and The Farm at VYCC

11 individuals served250 state employees benefit from enhanced service and gathering space at Overlook CafeIn partnership with the Vermont Division of the Blind and Visually Impaired

High School Leadership Program (HSLP)

10 months (academic year) Hands-on learning and skill development for high school students At VYCC campus, partner schools, and in local communities

57 students3 public school partners48 projects completed in Washington and Chittenden counties



IMPACT ON ENVIRONMENT

Conservation and High School Leadership crew projects:

- Improve wildlife habitats
- Remove invasive species
- Improve trails and access to public lands
- Stabilize river banks
- Mitigate erosion
- Restore park facilities



MARSH-BILLINGS-ROCKEFELLER NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Project Sponsors: Recreational Trail Program National Park Service Vermont Agency of Transportation



completed 7 weeks of service

Sawyer worked on the Woodstock Community Crew in 2012. This crew employed youth aged 16-18 who live in the Woodstock area. Their work took place at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, and the adjacent Billings Farm.

"VYCC was my first job! I had never worked in a team environment. It was very cool to come together with a team. My Crew Leaders were great role models. They displayed leadership, and I saw who I could be in them."

The ten-year partnership between VYCC and Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park is guided by the Park's theme of sustainable forest management and education. Projects are grounded in the history and mission of the Park, and are chosen for their learning potential. All projects help the Park meet its mission of sustainable forest management. Crew Members also mentored campers from the Mountains and Rivers Forever summer camp; together, they constructed garden beds and removed invasive species.

Work projects are integrated into the VYCC curriculum, which imparts skills that prepare youth to lead successful, service-oriented lives. To facilitate this learning, crews often meet with conservation professionals. Sawyer and his crew were fortunate to meet Jon Jarvis, director of the National Park Service. Jarvis spoke to the crew about careers in conservation.

After graduating from high school, Sawyer hopes to take a gap year and work on a family farm in Sweden. He plans to apply to college in the fall.

"I absolutely am a better leader thanks to VYCC. As 'Crew Leader of the Day,' I had to make decisions, try things out, and discover what worked. I learned to lead by example, work hard, have a positive attitude, and encourage others." -Sawyer, age 17



Jon Jarvis, Director of the National Park Service, speaking about careers in conservation.



The impact of VYCC is made possible by generous individual supporters:

\$5,000+

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IMPACT ON ENVIRONMENT



Amanda Foster, from Graniteville, completed 11 weeks of service on 2 crews

When she first joined VYCC in 2008, at the age of 16, Amanda Foster was already an experienced logger and loved being in the woods. 2012 was her third year with the VYCC's Conservation Program. "I care about our world and the place we live in. At VYCC, I get paid to do things I love."

Amanda has always wanted to hike the Long Trail, and in 2012 her crew installed stepping stones and built a turnpike on a section in the Wallingford area.

"Rock work came easy to me, and I enjoyed it. Every time I see rock work now, I take time to appreciate it because I know how much work it took. I'll never hike a trail the same way again."

In the fall, Amanda worked on the Irene Recovery Crew. The crew used an innovative technique to stabilize a riverbank by inserting tree trunks deep into the bank. Willow stakes were then driven into the bank, above the buried trunks. Coconut fabric (pictured at left) holds soil in place and will decompose as the willows become established.



THE LONG TRAIL

Green Mountain Club Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation Public Land Corps



In addition to this technical project, the crew pulled debris out of the Tweed and White rivers, including more than 200 tires.

"Hurricane Flats was a high-priority project. The farmer was going to lose his whole field. We hand-cut every stake. It was a lot of work, and removing debris was very emotional. We would find children's toys – to think that people's whole houses got washed into the river."

-Amanda, age 20

Tropical Storm Irene caused significant damage to trail systems and river banks across the state, and spread invasive species to new areas. Recovery work in 2012 included trail repair and relocation, river bank restoration, and invasive species removal.

Currently, Amanda is training horses, and competing in barrel races across New England. "I had never left Vermont. It was interesting to meet people from other places; many stopped to talk to us. I'm a people person, and at the VYCC you meet all kinds of awesome people."



HURRICANE FLATS

White River Partnership Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation WaterWheel Foundation Martha McDaniel M.D. and Stephen Plume M.D. Bunny and Peter Merrill Lyman Orton Catharine Rogers Milton Russell Leigh Seddon and Ann Aspell Ann Weathers \$250+ Anonymous Robert and Carol Backus Donald and Irene Ballas **Joel Blumenthal** Emily and Bill Boedecker Robert Burge Jake and Donna Carpenter Carol Cone Mark Crane Cairn and Jeanmarie Cross Pamela Duprey Perry

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David Martin

David and Meredith Babbott

IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

Each year, crews complete trail building projects in towns and cities statewide. Trails:

- ·Connect neighborhoods and parks
- Offer alternatives to driving
- Connect residents to the outdoors
- •Create a greater sense of community





Joe was struggling to maintain his grades as a freshman at Mount Mansfield Union High School, despite doing extra work and getting help from teachers. "I just didn't understand it. Especially history. I just barely passed." But in 2012, as a sophomore enrolled in the VYCC's High School Leadership Program (HSLP), Joe began earning A's and B's.

"I like to learn hands-on," said Joe, and he went on to explain how you can learn about the history of a place by studying the landscape.

In the fall of 2012, Joe and his classmates improved access to a popular swimming hole along the Huntington River by constructing 29 timber-framed steps. The original stairs had rotted, and swimmers were creating dangerous, damaging routes to access the river.

Joe knew this problem well, as someone who spends time there with friends and family.

"The hill was eroding. The stairs that were there were not working."

The students cleared trees, extracted the old stairs, built new wooden frames, and even made the "crush" (hand-crushed rock) for fill. Along the way, they learned about erosion and watershed health.

Joe plans to attend the Center for Technology, Essex in the fall to study natural resources. In ninth grade, Joe visited CTE to look at the computer program but didn't pursue it.

"I'm glad I didn't, because that would have been the wrong program." Spending a year with the VYCC helped Joe recognize his love for working outside and build skills to be successful at CTE.



BUCKETS STAIRCASE

Richmond Land Trust Mount Mansfield Union High School



Betsy Evans Teresa Fama Lois Feenan Peter Gilmore and Cynthia Kingsford Prospero Gogo and Amy Lilly Amy Golodetz and Gregory Leech Katharine Greenewalt Paul and Maryanne Kaemmerlen Jed and Catherine Kalkstein Paul Kendall and Sharon Rives Fred Lager and Yvette Pigeon Bernard Lambek and Linda Sproul Roy Lloyd and Judi Kamien Nancy Lothian Daniel Lustgarten and Callie Fortin Ron Miller and Jacqueline Fischer Elise and Robert Mills Richard and Patricia Nye Anne Oakes Gail Osherenko James and Paula Palmer Dan and Mary Patch Mary Peloquin Judy and Jim Pizzagalli Chris and Fred Pratt Mark and Suzannah Schroeder Russell and Roxanne Scully Nicholas Skinner Phil Stackpole David Stoll and Elizabeth Sutton R. Day Surles Lise Thibodeau David and Carol Usher Jason Wyman Thomas Yurista

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IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

Vermont is the 9th hungriest state in the nation. 90,000 Vermonters, including 27,100 children, live in food-insecure households. In 2012, VYCC food security efforts included:

Health Care SharesHoliday Harvest BasketsFree Community Meals



Heidi Lynch, from Rutland, 3 months of service



Just as the Conservation Program engages youth in meaningful projects, The Farm at VYCC is teaching and inspiring youth to affect positive change in their communities. Heidi Lynch enrolled as an intern on The Farm at VYCC because of the Health Care Share. Piloted in 2012 at Central Vermont Medical Center, this initiative provided 145 foodinsecure families with 12 weeks of fresh produce, chicken, and nutrition education.

"Growing up in Rutland and attending St. Michael's College, I was always surrounded by local organic foods, and I knew I wanted to dedicate myself to work involving food systems and access. The Farm at VYCC has provided me the opportunity to do this in my own backyard!" -Heidi, age 26 During the course of the summer, Heidi discovered a passion and talent for working with youth. She was trained as an instructor in The Learning Kitchen, a hands-on nutrition education course provided in partnership with Hunger Free Vermont. Heidi taught The Learning Kitchen to five teens employed on the farm for the summer. And, in 2013, Heidi has returned as a Farm Apprentice!

In total, 89 young people worked and learned on The Farm at VYCC in 2012. Students, interns, and volunteers grew and harvested 45,000 pounds of produce, and raised 1,000 chickens. The vast majority of this yield was donated while a smaller portion was sold.

Without a fee-for-service component, The Farm at VYCC is dependent upon the generosity of donors. In addition to the corporate and foundation support listed at right, employees at Central Vermont Medical Center played a pivotal role in underwriting the cost of food. Additionally, capital gifts have made it possible for the VYCC to reinstate agricultural activity on the property; please see a list in the 2012 donor section.



HEALTH CARE SHARE

Central Vermont Medical Center, Vermont Department of Labor, Morris and Bessie Altman Foundation, GDS Legacy Foundation, George W. Mergens Foundation, Russell Family, National Life Foundation, SerVermont, Fletcher Allen Health Care, Walmart Foundation, Windham Foundation



\$100+

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IMPACT ON YOUTH: A DAY IN THE LIFE

Conservation Program

5:30 Cooks wake up
6:00 Rise and shine
6:30 Breakfast
8:00 Hike to work site, begin work
12:00 Lunch, WoRD discussion, journal
1:00 Return to work
4:20 Check tools
5:00 Return to camp, cook dinner, free time
6:30 Dinner, clean up
8:00 Evening activities

The Farm at VYCC

- 5:30 Morning chicken chores
- 6:00 Roles and goals for the day
- 8:00 Welcome volunteers
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 WoRD discussion
- 2:00 Return to work
- 4:00 Volunteer wrap-up
- 6:00 Work day ends



Learn, Earn, and Prosper (LEAP)

- 6:30 Rise and shine
- 7:30 Breakfast
- 8:00 WoRD discussion
- 9:00 Begin work, skills training
- 12:00 Lunch, continued WoRD discussion
- 1:00 Return to work
- 2:45 Job training
- 4:00 Work day ends, cook dinner
- 5:00 Dinner, clean up
- 7:00 Evening activities

High School Leadership Program

8:00 Students arrive at their school
9:00 Math class
10:00 Travel to VYCC
10:30 Academic lesson
11:00 Small group learning
12:00 Lunch
12:30 Hands-on work project
2:00 Team building
2:30 School day ends



IMPACT ON YOUTH



The VYCC trains youth to be effective, service-oriented leaders. In addition to technical skills, participants learn:

INTERPERSONAL AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Cooperation, teamwork, and group dynamics
- Conflict resolution and debriefing
- Facilitating group discussions
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities
- Nonverbal communication
- Setting goals
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Listening skills and accepting different opinions

CONSERVATION KNOWLEDGE

- Identification of native and invasive species
- Organic farming practices
- Understanding ecosystems, habitats, and food chains
- Causes and effects of erosion and pollution
- Guidelines and techniques for universal trail accessibility
- Careers in conservation and agriculture

TOP: Conservation Crew on Scrag Mountain Trail CENTER: Irene Crew removing trash, Farm Crew participating in The Learning Kitchen

BOTTOM: Women's Park Restoration Crew Members journaling for WoRD, LEAP Crew picking blueberries

LETTER FROM A PARENT:

A Special Note... g/3/2 VYCC was an awesome experience) for our poro. you accepted him jato the program three pummers ago We learned so much and formed a foundation for his current efforts. Dk.

...joined ACE American Conservation Experience – in Flagstaff, AZ at the end of January. Recently he signed on for 900 hours with AmeriCorps. He expressed an interest in pursuing college studies in Forestry. We are so happy that he wants to use his talents to gain further knowledge toward a life-long career that he enjoys. I want to thank you for giving him the opportunity at a time in his life when he needed direction."

-Kathy R.





LETTER FROM AN ALUMNUS:

"I am writing to thank you for the great experience I had with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps. Four summers ago, in 2009, as a 16-year-old, I was a member of a VYCC crew. My group camped for a month alongside a reservoir. It was the most empowering summer of my life and gave me much of the confidence and self-understanding that propelled me to pursue other adventures....Giving back to this beautiful state resonated with me. I realized that part of loving a place is giving back to itVYCC was an invaluable part of my teenage experience that strengthened my self-confidence and thirst for service opportunities. I have benefitted from it greatly and will always cherish it." -Anya R.

FACEBOOK COMMENT FROM A PARENT

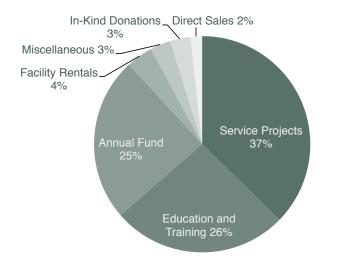
Debby Clemons The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps offered my daughters Jess and Martha rich and rigorous experiences that provided a supportive and fun environment, instilled values, taught life skills, and served to create memories and relationships they carry with them today. As a parent I can't say enough positive things about the VYCC's programs which have grown and expanded since the summers Jess and Martha were VYCC crew members. I feel the VYCC is an ideal organization for Vermont high schoolers to become involved in. The experience of living in the woods for the summer, learning to be a steward of the land, being a cooperative team member to build trails, move boulders and construct bridges all while gaining external and internal strengths and knowledge. Thank you VYCC!

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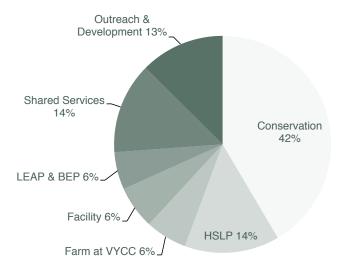
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ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

Revenue	
Service Projects	776,759
Education and Training	547,727
Annual Fund	511,108
Facility Rentals	82,609
Miscellaneous	64,545
In-Kind Donations	63,483
Direct Sales	36,616
Total Revenue	2,082,846



Expenses	
Conservation	872,039
HSLP	297,437
Farm at VYCC	130,282
Facility	134,328
LEAP & BEP	117,280
Shared Services	285,436
Outreach & Development	264,107
Total Expenses	2,100,909



AWARDS



Marissa Edwards from West Dover, VT (front, center)



Marissa received the Holly D. Miller award for Women and Girls for her service in 2012. This award was presented by the Vermont Women's Fund in May.

"I felt that my summer job options were limited; I didn't feel qualified for anything. I joined VYCC thinking it would be fun. I never expected that the experience would have such a great impact on my life and self-confidence. My crew and I spent seven weeks living, working, and learning together in Vermont's Groton State Forest The work was physically difficult; we were moving huge rocks and were active from sunrise to sunset. VYCC really pushed me outside of my comfort zone... [and] helped me change from the person who would wait for someone to give instructions to someone who is proactive." -Marissa Edwards, 22

Marissa is a 2013 graduate of the University of Vermont. She is returning to VYCC for a second summer followed by a ten-month AmericCorps position in October.

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