



**VERMONT
YOUTH
CONSERVATION
CORPS**

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



On the eve of our 30th anniversary, the VYCC is working hard to share our mission with as many young people as possible – teaching youth to take personal responsibility for all their actions. With personal responsibility comes an ethic of hard work, values of community service and civic engagement, and skills in leadership, communication, and problem-solving.

The demand for our programs – measured by the number of youth who apply and the geographic reach of those applicants – demonstrates that our model has great value. In 2013, we fielded entire crews beyond the borders of Vermont for the first time, completing work in North Carolina. Three of our four programs brought in youth from outside Vermont. These initiatives are continuing in 2014.

Youth and young adults want to contribute meaningfully to issues of food security, sustainable agriculture, community building and, of course, conservation. Our role – with your help – is to give them a chance to make these contributions. Together, we are shaping the leaders of tomorrow into thoughtful, creative, and effective citizens. As one parent shared, the VYCC provided “[our son] an opportunity at a time in his life when he needed direction.” Our passion grows with each young person we serve.

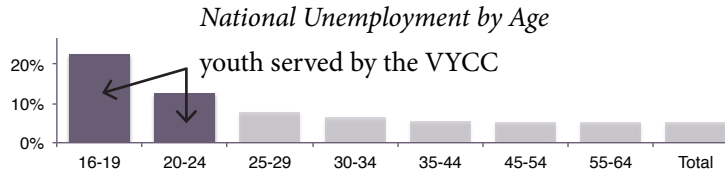
None of this would be possible without your support. Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you.

MORE THAN JUST A JOB

When VYCC staff conduct interviews, there are three things youth and young adults consistently tell us they want: a chance to serve, a chance to make a difference, and a good job. One strength of the VYCC lies in our ability to address pressing needs while providing opportunities to work and learn. Here are just a few of the many needs that inspire our work:

Unemployment

10 million Americans between the ages of 16 and 24 are out of work or underemployed. Vermont's youth unemployment rate is nearly triple the state's overall rate of 4.5%. In 2013, we received 945 applications for 200 positions. 63% of individuals who are blind or visually impaired are unemployed nationally.

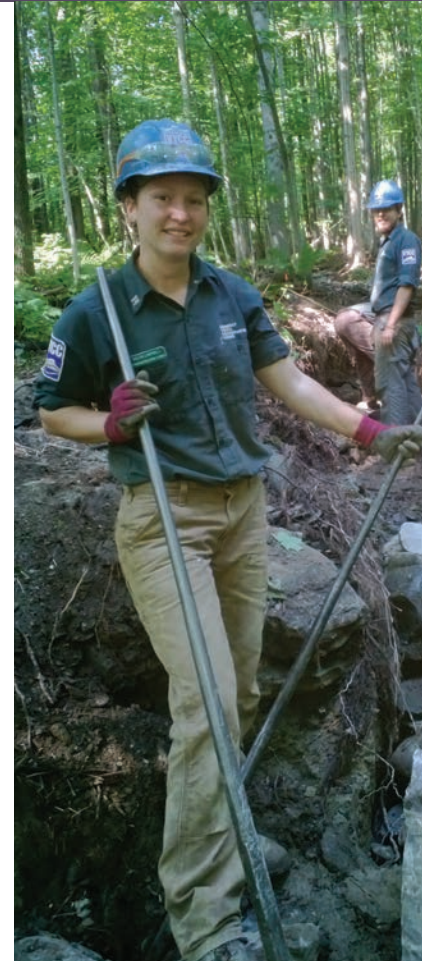


Conservation and Recreation

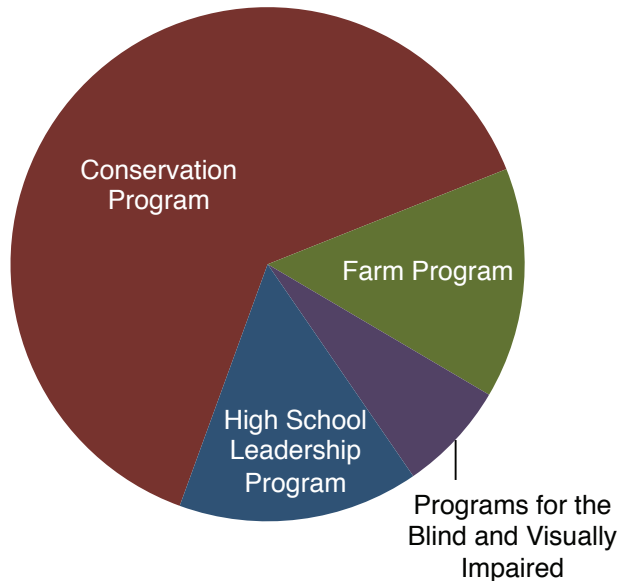
Public lands, parks, and trail systems require ongoing maintenance. Vermont has close to 850,000 acres of public lands open to recreation. 28 outdoor activities in VT have participation rates greater than 10% of the population.

Hunger and Health

~90,000 Vermonters, including 27,100 children, live in food insecure households. Access to, and familiarity with, fresh produce are barriers to healthy eating. Children living in food insecure homes are at greater risk for poor health, developmental delays, poor academic achievement, depression, and aggressive or hyperactive behavior.



BY THE NUMBERS



Youth and Young Adults Served

317 Individuals

Impact on Environment

297 acres of land improved or restored

110 work projects completed

55 miles of trail constructed or maintained

Empowering Youth Who Face Challenges

104 low income and/or at-risk youth

48 high school students who struggled in a traditional class setting

28 new Americans

14 youth who are blind or visually impaired

9 employed through VT Dept. of Labor's Workforce Investment Act

Food Donated

52,810 pounds of produce and poultry

500 free community meals served

~1,500 food-insecure Vermonters benefit

Custom Service-Learning and Volunteers

150 seasonal Ben and Jerry's employees

34 Middlebury College students

263 volunteers completed 2,200 hours of work

ONE CORPS MEMBER, TWO AMAZING TRAILS



NATIONAL LIFE TRAIL

Vermont Agency of Transportation,
City of Montpelier, Federal Highway Administration



National Life Foundation President Beth Rusnock and VTrans Secretary Brian Searles attend ribbon cutting in August



2014
Corps Network
Project of
the Year

VYCC is honored to have the National Life Trail named *Project of the Year* by the Corps Network. Since 2011, the VYCC and the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) have worked to improve a pedestrian route from the National Life office complex to downtown Montpelier.

Before construction, a person had to choose between a mile-long route along a highly trafficked street or a makeshift path straight down a steep hill known as the “Goat Path.” Neither choice was safe. The beautiful new trail transformed the path and connected the city’s largest office building to the downtown area. Sherry Winnie, Recreational Trails Program Administrator for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation, works in the National Life office complex. She says:

I see folks every day getting outdoors onto the trail to run, walk, or go downtown. I can walk downtown in five to ten minutes on this trail. I’ve used it to go to the State House, the Credit Union, and to get a flu shot. People use the trail to go to meetings downtown. The travel time is the same if you take a car.

Elizabeth, 21, of Ludlow returned to VYCC for her second year and worked on the National Life Trail:

I had just finished my second year of college before applying for a job with VYCC. I chose to come back because my first experience impacted my life in such a positive way. Since joining, I've taken more personal responsibility as an adult than I ever have before. I... wouldn't be where I am today without overcoming these challenges.

Elizabeth and her crew also spent time in the Northeast Kingdom on the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. VYCC crews are helping to convert a railroad, built in 1877, to a four-season recreational trail. Once complete, this trail will cross the breadth of Vermont and traverse eighteen communities.

Because the railway fell into disuse, trees and vegetation have grown through bridge abutment foundations and are beginning to dislodge foundation stones. Dirt and debris hold water and hide problems from structural engineers. VYCC crews worked in areas inaccessible to excavators and other large equipment. Elizabeth's crew repaired stone bridge abutments, cleared debris accumulated around culverts, and stabilized a large, crucial railroad bridge that was in danger of being lost. More work is planned for 2014.



LAMOILLE VALLEY RAIL TRAIL
Vermont Agency of Transportation,
Vermont Association of Snow Travelers,
Federal Highway Administration



Senator Sanders at the ground-breaking

A SUMMER IN THE FOREST



Placing Corps Members in a setting without computers, television, electricity, and running water creates an environment that is both challenging and full of opportunity. Each day crews are expected to be thoughtful about their impact on the natural world and in the crew's tight-knit community. In turn, Corps Members develop a new-found respect for the environment and an awareness of the need for environmental stewardship.

In 2013, a crew of seven Corps Members and two Crew Leaders spent the entire summer completing United States Forest Service projects. For five weeks, the crew was in the northern section of the Green Mountain National Forest, and for two weeks they were in the Finger Lakes National Forest in New York State. They built stone stairs and retaining walls, installed puncheon (similar to a boardwalk), repaired picnic tables, and maintained and improved 21 miles of trail.

VYCC culture is created not just through work, but through structure and traditions. For example, uniforms and VYCC-issued tents forge a sense of community and reinforce that the group's success relies upon the contribution of all its members. More importantly, providing gear and equipment ensures that VYCC employment is open to everyone, regardless of personal finances.



**GREEN MOUNTAIN
NATIONAL FOREST
US Forest Service**



**FINGER LAKES
NATIONAL FOREST
US Forest Service**

The VYCC's personalized approach to education enables Crew Leaders to work with each Corps Member individually. Through the Writing, Reading, and Discussion (WoRD) curriculum, Corps Members learn to listen to others and while expressing their own ideas. Each individual also acts as "Crew Leader of the Day" several times, wherein the Corps Member takes on extra responsibility, leading the crew in project work, daily scheduling, and WoRD. These educational components are the heart of all VYCC programs.

Corps Members also take responsibility for cooking, cleaning, and managing their day-to-day lives. For most, this is a new challenge and Corps Members are quick to talk about new skills when sharing what they have learned. Carter, a freshman at Middlebury College, had this to say:

The VYCC helped me become more responsible, independent, and confident. Before working with VYCC, I had no experience with conservation work or camping. I was dependent on my friends, family, and technology for entertainment, and I avoided any responsibility that took me outside my comfort zone. Cooking meals, setting up camp, building trails, and moving rocks all gave me the chance to handle responsibility, which helped me become more independent and build confidence. My summer at VYCC was not only a fun outdoor experience, but it also helped me improve and grow as a person.



Carter, 19, Middlebury College



CREW LEADERS: LEADING BY EXAMPLE



Brittany Kusserow and twelve other Crew Leaders began their season with the VYCC in late April: removing invasive species, planting trees, and repairing eroded culverts. In May, Corps Members arrived and Crew Leaders went their separate ways to lead and inspire their respective crews. Brittany reflected on her experience:

The VYCC is a platform for growth. It's a place for youth and leadership development. Above and beyond conservation work itself is the importance of leadership development and the ability to grow as a person, as a mentor, and as a role model. I think I grew a lot more in these last six months than I have in several years of other work experience.

HURRICANE FLATS
White River Partnership,
Vermont Forests Parks and
Recreation, Waterwheel
Foundation



(Continued)

VYCC projects directly benefit Vermont's waterways and natural spaces. On a larger scale, these projects also impact people. Students and leaders come here and then spread to the far corners of the earth and take with them a mentality for stewardship, a mentality for conservation, and the skills to do these things all over the planet.

After the seven-week session concluded, Brittany and her fellow Crew Leaders formed two crews. All individuals on these "peer crews" had leadership and conservation experiences, and, therefore, they were able to complete a range of projects, some of which were quite challenging. Highlights included:

- Continuing a stream bank restoration project on Hurricane Flats Farm in South Royalton that started in 2012 after Tropical Storm Irene. The work included "soft armoring" 150 feet of stream bank with large root wads.
- Constructing a boardwalk at One World Conservation Center, which exposed Crew Leaders to sustainable techniques in trail construction.
- Placing rock weirs (stones placed across a stream bed to prevent erosion) at Lake Iroquois. The crew placed these rocks with a front end loader.
- Building a kiosk on Vermont Land Trust land in Jeffersonville.
- Planting trees around Allen Brook in Williston and Winooski Floodplain Forest in Richmond to reestablish riparian habitat and decrease erosion.
- Clearing debris in tributaries of the Otter Creek in Rutland leftover from Tropical Storm Irene.



LAKE IROQUOIS
Lake Iroquois Association, Department
of Environmental Conservation



WORKING AND LEARNING ON THE FARM



The Farm at VYCC follows VYCC's time-tested model: young people, small teams, well-trained leaders, and tangible projects. In 2013, 9 Farm Crew Members, 28 Winooski High School Students, 14 LEAP Corps Members who are blind or visually impaired, and 48 High School Leadership students all worked and learned on the Farm.

Farm activities are tied to academic lessons in history, math, social sciences, and English. In addition to completing conservation projects, participants plant and harvest crops, raise and process chickens, and complete nutrition education classes in our commercial kitchen. Participants also lead a Friday Food Affair event. These are free community meals in Richmond in which students and Corps Members plan a menu, cook, and serve food using mostly products from the Farm.

**LEARN, EARN, AND
PROSPER (LEAP)**



**HIGH SCHOOL
LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**

Olivia, a student at MMU and a member of our Farm Crew in the summer of 2013, had a transformative experience at VYCC. Her mother recently wrote a letter in support of our programs:

Olivia said to me in 7th grade, “Mom the day that I turn 16, I am dropping out of school. I hate it.” Attending VYCC as a reasonable alternative to traditional classroom learning is what helped her turn the corner and feel hope for the future...and ignited something in Olivia that was dormant. This October, on her 16th birthday she walked in the house after school, handed me a brochure and said, “Mom, this is where I am going to go to college.” It was a brochure for Sterling College in the Northeast Kingdom.

....I think that as the localvore and sustainability movements continue to take hold in our communities, the skills and knowledge taught in this program can become the foundation that non-traditional students can use to build a career and future. The VYCC school program builds self-esteem and confidence in students, encourages out-of-the-box thinking, and teaches real-world problem solving skills.



Olivia, Richmond

Partners in Education

Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc.
Center for Technology, Essex
Hunger Free Vermont
Mount Mansfield Union High School
New Visions Foundation
Partnership for Change
SerVermont
Vermont Department of Labor
U-32 High School



PRODUCE POWER



THE FARM AT VYCC



At the VYCC, I'm able to attack a really terrible problem, food-insecurity, in a state that has so much food to give. I'm learning how to educate and engage with youth in a way that makes them want to engage back. I've learned that people are looking for a way to get their hands dirty on a problem we all want to fix. – Caelan, Food Security VISTA

Young adults like Caelan learned that sustainable agriculture is a powerful vehicle for social change. These SerVermont AmeriCorps VISTAs (Volunteers in Service to America) – the next generation of Vermont's farmers – benefited from an intense agricultural service experience. Their training covered farm management, community food systems, market analysis, business planning, equipment maintenance, infrastructure, management and supervision of staff, hospitality, food-insecurity, and the charitable food system.



The product of the Farm Team's labor is the Health Care Share. The Health Care Share provides food-insecure families with free, local, farm-fresh food and nutrition education. Families are identified by health care providers and they receive twelve pounds of produce and poultry every week for twelve weeks. Food is picked up at the provider's office, making the connection between nutritious food and health.

2013 was the second year of this program; to date, 400 families have received the Health Care Share, and 100% of surveyed participants reported that they ate more fresh vegetables and felt healthier as a result. 97% stated that the Health Care Share will have a positive lasting impact on their family's diet.



Lead Partners in Food Security

- Central Vermont Medical Center
- Citizens Bank
- Fletcher Allen Health Care
- George W. Mergens Foundation
- Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Inc.
- Lintilhac Foundation
- Morris and Bessie Altman Foundation
- Mount Philo Fund
- National Life Group Charitable Foundation
- Richmond Family Medicine
- The Russell Family
- S&C Harvest Foundation
- TD Charitable Foundation
- Windham Foundation
- Vermont Foodbank

PROGRAMS FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED



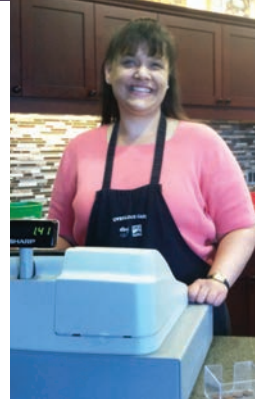
LEAP (Learn, Earn, and Prosper) provides youth who are blind or visually impaired the opportunity to gain the skills needed to become independent, confident, and productive young adults. Each week, Corps Members work at ReSOURCE, the Farm at VYCC, and participate in career and college readiness workshops with Navicate.

Vanessa, a 2013 Corps Member from Rutland, formed a deep bond with her fellow Corps Members that empowered her to step out of her comfort zone. She had never met another peer with a visual impairment.

I've always been the only person who's visually impaired. That's how it's always been. I was so relieved to find other people who understood what I was feeling.

Vanessa feels that LEAP prepared her to go away to college. She started at Russell Sage College this past fall:

LEAP helped me be more independent and helped me to not rely on others for things as simple as finding my way to class. When I went to LEAP I hadn't had any mobility instruction. I now have a cane and a mobility instructor. I've been able to find my way around Troy, and am crossing streets with confidence.



When she was 22, Heidi was in a car accident that took her sight. She couldn't keep her bookkeeping job, but worked hard to get back on her feet. In 2008, she earned a degree from Champlain College in business finance and graduated with honors.

Heidi participates in the Business Enterprise Program (BEP), which is run jointly by the VYCC and the Vermont Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The BEP works with adults like Heidi who need sustainable, satisfying employment so they can fully participate in civic life. The Randolph Sheppard Act of 1936 established this federal program.

Heidi is now completing training at the Overlook Cafe in preparation to run another cafe within the family courthouse at 32 Cherry Street in Burlington:

I love to cook but never thought of food service. I have the business experience. I'm a little nervous, and very excited. I want to work. I want to be an adult with a job and a retirement plan. [Also] the café closes at 2:00pm so when my daughter starts school, I'll be able to meet her when she gets off the bus.

The new cafe is expected to open in 2014.

TODAY'S YOUTH



U-32 is home to one of our High School Leadership Programs (HSLP), where students struggling in a traditional classroom environment are able to learn through hands-on projects. Their four areas of study are design and build, forestry, agriculture, and watershed. In September, students at U-32 High School were just getting to know each other and their instructors when they set out to improve a heavily traveled trail on their campus.

Students identified a safe path for the trail and bench cut the soil in order for it to have a more gradual incline and prevent future erosion damage. Now, HSLP students, as well as many others, can use the trail for wildlife tracking and monitoring.

These projects connect students with a larger legacy that they will build upon: we hiked up Owl's Head in the Groton State Forest to see a structure built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). These young men and women from U-32 will be building their own legacy through the trails, structures, and farm work they will do over the course of the year.

– Melody McKnight, U-32 Instructor

Mount Mansfield Union HS in Jericho also hosts a HSLP crew.

TOMORROW'S LEADERS



It was the summer of 1978 and Mike Snyder was a 15 year-old kid on a Federal Youth Conservation Crew. Like the crews of the VYCC, he worked on public lands building bridges, working on trails, and conducting apple tree release.

I could have worked in a restaurant, washing dishes, but working on a crew was bliss. I learned you could do this for a living! That I could be paid to be in the woods.

Recounting this time, Mike says it affirmed the values his parents had taught him – working hard, showing up on time, and being a good team player. “Values that are still with me today,” Mike says. He also learned the importance of strong leadership:

Our leader was really important....We would do anything for him. He was a tough taskmaster and things had to be done right. He pushed the limits of what we were capable of. He allowed us to challenge ourselves. He also had a focus on safety. The only bad thing I have to say about the guy was that he was a Yankees fan.

Michael Snyder is the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks, and Recreation.

LOOKING FORWARD: MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE



Peyton Woodson and Crew Leaders



NCYCC

**Conservation Trust for North
Carolina, US Forest Service,
National Park Service,
US Army Corps of Engineers**

Our goal is to serve as many young people as we possibly can, to instill in them our mission, and to complete much-needed projects that the public can enjoy. The demand for our programs is growing rapidly, both within Vermont as well as beyond our borders.

– Linda McGinnis, Board Chair

In 2013, with great excitement, we successfully launched the North Carolina Youth Conservation Corps (NCYCC) by fielding two crews for a summer session in North Carolina. The story began with Martha Woodson, who developed a love for the outdoors at a young age and spent considerable time in Vermont. When she passed away at the age of 87, Martha's husband Peyton made a gift to the Conservation Trust for North Carolina (CTNC) to fund nature programs for youth in her memory. This gift aligned perfectly with the goals of CTNC to involve young people in their work. Jan Pender, NCYCC Program Director at CTNC, recalls:

We had been looking at how different corps did it. What intrigued us about the VYCC was the diversity of their projects.





**OYSI
Americorps,
The Corps Network**



Peyton Woodson shares:

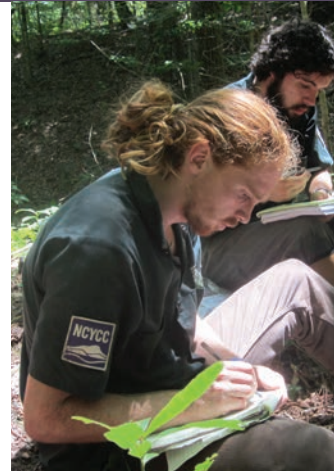
This fits right into Martha's long time love of Vermont. She wanted to leave a legacy, and this is a perfect tribute to her.

VYCC is honored to partner with the Trust in order to offer this life changing experience to youth in North Carolina. In 2014, four NCYCC crews will complete work throughout North Carolina during the summer.

Also in 2013, the VYCC was awarded a multi-year Opportunity Youth Service Initiative (OYSI) grant. This funding supports training and service opportunities for low-income and disadvantaged youth who are unemployed and not in school. In 2014, we will enroll 16 youth in a ten-month term and an additional 12 youth in a six-month term. These youth will complete service in Vermont during the summer and in North Carolina during the early spring and late fall.

In total, OYSI will enable the VYCC to serve 84 additional young people over three years; together with 11 other participating corps, 340 youth across the country will gain employment and training.

Also in 2014....The VYCC is thrilled to join hands with the Superior Watershed Partnership and Land Trust to field crews in the upper peninsula of Michigan. Stay tuned for more details!



OUR COMMUNITY

IN MEMORIUM:



DAVID WALLER MACNIVEN CONARD 1962-2013

David served on the VYCC Board of Trustees for 5 years and was the Board Chair at the time of his passing. He is sorely missed.

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Vermont Bar Association
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Peter Bennett
Weiwei Yu

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\$20,000+

Ben and Jerry's Homemade, Inc.
Keurig Green Mountain
Thomas P. Johnson
L.Z. Francis Foundation
Lintilhac Foundation
New Visions Foundation

\$10,000+

Morris and Bessie Altman Foundation
Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation
Central Vermont Medical Center
Davis Conservation Foundation
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National Life Group
Charitable Foundation
Virginia Russell
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Vermont Women's Fund
Windham Foundation

\$5,000+

Robert L. Crowell Charitable Fund
Lucius & Eva Eastman Fund
Fletcher Allen Health Care
Jamieson Insurance Agency
Merchants Bank
Mount Philo Fund

S & C Harvest Foundation
Elizabeth Steele and Scott Hammond
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\$1,000+

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Sandy's Books and Bakery
Sarducci's
Shaw's Supermarkets of Waitsfield
Shelburne Farms
Shelly Lutz
Sign*A*Rama
Ski and Snow Express
Skinny Pancake

Slope Style Ski and Ride
Small Dog Electronics
SoYo Frozen Yogurt
Stagecoach Inn
Stone Soup
Stowe Soaring
Sugarbush
Sun and Ski
Sunshine Valley
Susan and Jerry Adams
Sweet Cecily
The Sweet Spot
Tim Weller
Tradewinds
Trapp Family Lodge
Umiak
Underhill Country Store
University Mall
Vermont Auto Detail
Vermont Kitchen Supply
Vermont Symphony Orchestra
Vermont Vows
Wachusett Mountain
Warren Store
Wild Mountain Thyme
The Wilder Farm Inn
WND&WVS
Wonder Walks
Woodbury Toys
Woolen Mill Health Club
The Works Bakery Cafe
Yankee Tattoo
Yestermorrow
Zachary's Pizza

PROJECT SPONSORS

We are proud to complete educational fee-for-service projects in partnership with the following organizations:

Burnt Rock Farm
Catamount Trail Association
Center for Technology - Essex
City of Barre
Conservation Trust for
North Carolina
Equinox Preservation Trust
Fund for North Bennington
Hunger Free Vermont
Lake Champlain Basin Program
Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (VAST)
Maine Division for the Blind
and Visually Impaired
Massachusetts Commission
for the Blind
Mobbs Farm
Mount Mansfield Union
High School
National Park Service
Navicate
New Hampshire Services for the
Blind and Visually Impaired
One World Conservation Center
Richmond Land Trust
State of Vermont, Agency of
Natural Resources, Department of
Environmental Conservation

State of Vermont, Agency of Natural
Resources, Department of Forests,
Parks & Recreation
State of Vermont, Agency of
Transportation
Stowe Land Trust
The Corps Network
The Nature Conservancy
Town of Calais
Town of Fairfax
Town of Georgia
Town of Richmond
Town of Williston
U-32 High School
US Army Corps of Engineers
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Forest Service - North Carolina
US Forest Service - Vermont
Vermont Land Trust
VT Agency of Agriculture,
Food & Markets
VT Department of Labor
VT Division for the Blind
and Visually Impaired
Wild Shepard Farm
Winooski High School
Winooski Valley Park District



PLANNED GIVING

Are you interested in supporting the VYCC for years to come? It's possible to make a substantial gift through the VYCC's active planned giving program. The VYCC partners with the highly regarded Vermont Community Foundation to offer a variety of estate planning strategies.

Consider supporting the VYCC by including a bequest in your will, naming the VYCC as a beneficiary of your life insurance or retirement plan benefits, or establishing a charitable gift annuity or charitable trust. To begin a conversation about any of these simple options, please contact Breck Knauff, Chief Development Officer, at 802.434.3969 x110, or breck.knauff@vycc.org

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



What is it about VYCC that is so inspiring?

For me, it is witnessing the transformation of young people into confident, competent, and thoughtful leaders. Equally important is what these young people accomplish: from building and maintaining recreational trails to eradicating invasive species to learning sustainable farming techniques that feed hundreds of needy families. Young

people are working hard and meeting an important spectrum of community needs.

Our goal is to serve as many young people as we possibly can, to instill in them our mission, and to complete much-needed projects that the public can enjoy. The demand for our programs is growing, both within Vermont as well as beyond our borders.

We intend to meet this demand in three ways:

- By making informed investments in programs and, as needed, our campus so that we can serve youth and young adults year-round;
- By diversifying our revenues beyond annual giving, including out of state partners, federal grants, and tuition for a residential gap-year;
- By applying our time-tested model in new exciting ways, be it responding to natural disasters or after school internships for new Americans.

Most young people come to VYCC with the idea that they would like to work in a forest or on a farm. Yet, time and time again they leave with passion, direction and personal responsibility. None of this would be possible without you, our extraordinary network of VYCC supporters. Your active interest, encouragement, and partnership are at the core of what makes today's youth tomorrow's leaders. Thank you!

– Linda McGinnis, Board Chair

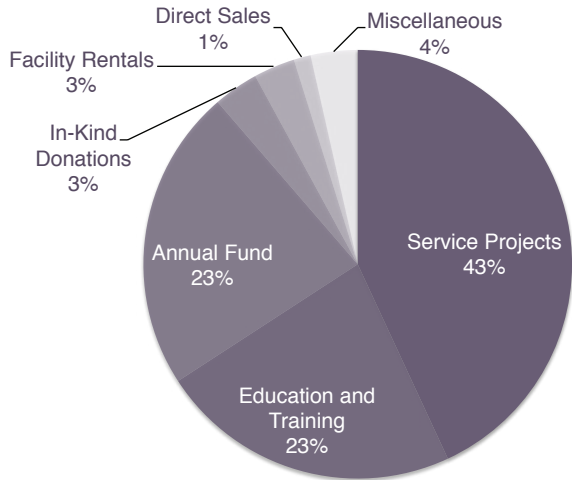


ANNUAL BUDGET

Revenue

Service Projects	\$1,172,079
Education and Training	\$618,509
Annual Fund	\$621,226
In-Kind Donations	\$92,472
Facility Rentals	\$84,878
Direct Sales	\$34,775
Miscellaneous	\$96,305

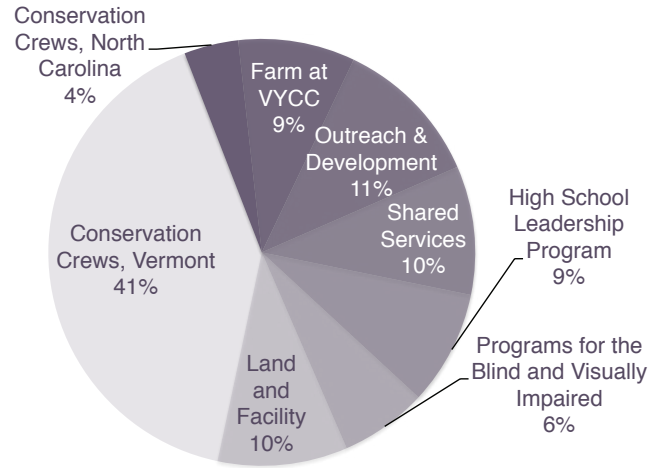
Total Revenue \$2,720,244



Expenses

Conservation Crews, Vermont	\$1,099,876
Conservation Crews, North Carolina	\$111,124
Farm at VYCC	\$238,752
Outreach & Development	\$306,381
Shared Services	\$263,112
High School Leadership	\$234,052
Blind and Visually Impaired	\$178,313
Land and Facility	\$265,606

Total Expenses \$2,697,216



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