Dear Friend,

The Community Foundation experienced an exceptional year for grantmaking in 2015. The grants made by our advised fundholders, through our grant programs, and through our supporting organizations totaled more than $16.7 million.

The report you now hold in your hands centers on our Giving Together program, a unique part of our grantmaking at the Foundation. Many of our fundholders—perhaps including you—participate in Giving Together, and we share this report as both a gesture of appreciation and to offer examples of how we can increase our power to make Vermont a better place by giving together.

As you may know, Giving Together shares the best grant proposals we receive through our competitive grant rounds directly with fundholders, inviting them to co-fund the proposals that most inspire them. The program is one of the ways we add value to your philanthropy—it was designed to connect our expertise on the challenges facing Vermont with the unique passions and interests of fundholders.

By leveraging our mutual support, we are able to magnify impact. And when we give together, we are better together.

If you haven’t already joined us in Giving Together, there hasn’t been a better time to jump on board. The program continues to grow and offer more diverse opportunities that donors are passionate about and where philanthropy can make a difference.

We hope you feel inspired by this report—it includes both stories from 2015 grants and stories of impact from grantees in previous years. You help us to make this work possible, and for that, we are truly grateful.

Enjoy!

Warmly,

Jen Peterson
Vice President for Program and Grants
The Vermont Community Foundation
We are Better Together

**FOUNDATION EXPERTISE**

- Research & Collaboration
  - We provide the big picture view and bring people together.

- Community Knowledge
  - We identify where giving can best help Vermonters.

- Details
  - We take care of them all—from the simple to the complex.

**GIVING TOGETHER**

is our program which invites you to partner with us to fund the grant proposals that inspire you. Together, we create more powerful philanthropy.

**FUNDHOLDER PASSIONS**

- Support the causes you care about through charitable funds and gifts that help meet today’s needs and ensure a bright future.
How Giving Together Works

“It’s easy to be overwhelmed with all the possibilities for giving, but each edition is just the right amount to take in and choose from. It’s a very positive thing and a valuable way to do philanthropy.” — Eleanor Ignat, Fundholder

**Review**
Our Program and Grants team and several advisors thoroughly review proposals we receive through our grant programs—including Small and Inspiring, Innovations and Collaborations, and Big Impact: Food and Farm Initiative, among others.

**Select**
Drawing on our expertise from meeting and working with nonprofits everyday, we select the strongest proposals to include in Giving Together.

**Share**
The Giving Together program shares funding opportunities throughout the year with our fundholders, inviting them to join the Foundation in supporting proposals. The opportunities sent to fundholders include a summary, story, and staff comments about each proposal.

Photo: In 2015, Burlington School District received $2,500 to support Parent University, a program that works closely with community partners to provide educational classes to parents that enrich, engage, and empower them as equal partners in the education and well-being of their children. Classes include financial literacy, English language learning, nutrition education, and parenting skills.
Give

In making final awards, our team reviews the proposals again and considers total dollars available for funding, including Giving Together contributions. We strive to distribute funding widely across geography and issue areas.

Report

Within a year of receiving a grant, nonprofits provide the Foundation with a progress report on their work. These reports help us evaluate our grantmaking and tell stories about the work we support.
Thank You

...to the Giving Together partners who contributed a total of $890,367 to our Giving Together grant programs in 2015.

In addition to Community Foundation fundholders, this list includes other partners who contributed $10,000 or more. For a complete list of partners, visit vermontcf.org/GivingTogether

Admiral Fund*
Ann C. Livingston Fund*
Anonymous (7)
Back Forty Fund*
Brianne E. Chase Fund
Cashdan/Stein Great Grandmother Fund*
Charlie and Sue Grigg
Cookie Jar Fund*
David and Eleanor Ignat Fund*
Dr. Thomas and Marilyn McLaughlin
Edwin and Helen Lynch Fund
Flying Birch Fund*
Fountain Fund*
Green Mountain Fund*
Harriet and Harry Mitiguy Fund
High Meadows Fund, Inc.*
Honey Pot Fund
Indian Tree Charitable Fund
Ira and Anne Kaplan Fund*
J. Warren and Lois McClure Foundation
Jamie Kanzler Memorial Fund*
John W. and Louise G. Bristol Fund
Johnson Family Foundation
Johnson Family Foundation Fund
Kathy and Richard White Northeast Kingdom Fund
Kokoro Fund
Lady Elaine’s Fund*
Landmann Family Fund*
Localhost Fund
Lyman Orton Fund*
McClure Motivation Fund*
Niebling Family Fund*
Northshire Community Fund
Nowak Family Fund*
O.P. and W.E. Edwards Foundation, Inc.
Phaeton Fund*
Reiner Charitable Fund
Saunders-Wise Fund*
SEE Fund
Sockol-Segal Family Fund for Orleans County
Stony Point Foundation
Sturman Family Fund
Sustainable Future Fund*
Tamarack Fund*
Tane Family Fund
Vacanza Fund
Valentine Fund
Wakan Fund*
WINGS Fund
Woodstock Area Fund

* denotes partners that gave to more than one Giving Together grant program.
Overall Grantmaking

In 2015, the Vermont Community Foundation awarded more than $16.7 million in total grants.

- Environment 21%
- Health & Human Services 21%
- Community Benefit & Economic Development 29%
- Education 19%
- Arts, Culture, Humanities 7%
- Other 3%

The majority of these grants are made by our advised fundholders, grant programs established by donors, and supporting organizations.

By the Numbers

Growing Together

We’re proud to be growing philanthropy alongside our fundholders. The number of Community Foundation funds participating in Giving Together and total contributions have been increasing over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Participating VCF Funds</th>
<th>Giving Together Contributions from VCF Funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(in thousands)
Giving Together
In 2015, 71 partners contributed $890,367 to our Giving Together programs, allowing us to award 273 grants totaling $1.8 million.

Giving Together Contributions by Grant Program
- Small & Inspiring: $61,081
- Innovations & Collaborations: $298,500
- Food & Farm Initiative: $305,700
- Special & Urgent Needs: $43,511
- Vermont Women’s Fund: $12,964
- Northeast Kingdom Fund: $33,950
- Samara Fund: $55,250
- Vermont Arts Endowment Fund: $11,150
- Others: $68,261

49% of the total was made through the contributions of 71 partners.
Small and Inspiring grants, ranging from $250-$2,500, are aimed specifically at work that builds social capital in communities around the state. Whether a project delivers meals to house-bound seniors, offers an acting camp at an affordable housing complex, or hosts an annual summer picnic at a renovated town hall, we want to support work that connects us to our own humanity and to each other, building trust and connections among neighbors. This work embodies the sense of community in Vermont that we all know and cherish.

In 2015, 21 Giving Together partners contributed a total of $61,081 to the Small and Inspiring program.

We made 70 grants totaling $150,583.
Restoring a Gathering Place

2015 Grant: The Town of Guildhall received $2,500 to support renovations of the Guild Hall. Built in 1795 and situated on the Town Green, the Guild Hall is the center of the community; however the roofing on the building was failing and insulation and ventilation components needed updating.

Strong community support for this historic gathering place generated momentum around the project. The $2,500 grant from the Community Foundation supplemented more than $22,000 raised through donations and fundraisers.

Learn more at vermontcf.org/GivingTogether
Learning Outside

2015 Grant: The Muckross Youth Day Camp received $2,500 to provide a safe, natural environment for Springfield children to experience hands-on environmental education and outdoor recreation, regardless of economic circumstance.

Over four weeks, groups of children between the 1st and 8th grades explored outdoor hobbies such as fishing and kayaking while learning new outdoor skills. The campers also participated in their own service project at the park.
Their Own Marketplace

2014 Grant: Mercy Connections received $2,500 for Mercy Marketplace, a craft fair in Burlington. The experience helped people who are often marginalized and isolated develop leadership, business skills, and confidence. The June 2015 event was a resounding success; 13 vendors sold their crafts and baked goods to a constant stream of shoppers. Sales were brisk during the three-hour event, and nearly everyone sold over $100 of goods. The top seller grossed over $400!
Innovations and Collaborations grants, which range from $10,000 to $20,000, support nonprofits working together across issue areas and sectors to solve problems and create structural change. The work we support through this program demonstrates the many ways that the nonprofit sector collaborates to improve efficiency while finding new solutions to difficult challenges, pushing the leading edge of change-making.

In 2015, 26 Giving Together partners contributed a total of $298,500 to the Innovations and Collaborations program.

We made 36 grants totaling $540,500.
El Viaje Más Caro/
The Most Costly Journey

**2015 Grant:** Open Door Clinic and its partners received $20,000 to create and distribute comics—a popular art form in Latin America—to help Spanish-speaking migrant workers write their stories and communicate their shared experiences with each other, alleviating isolation.

Marta, 17, came to the US to earn money to build a home in Mexico but quickly found herself feeling cut-off and alone. Like many migrant women in Vermont, she is unaware that peers on nearby farms face similar challenges. Reading comics about shared struggles can help farmworkers like Marta feel connected and supported.

El Viaje Más Caro:
José’s Journey: “Painful to Remember”
Story: José
Art: Marek Bennett

Learn more at vermontcf.org/GivingTogether
Independent and Interconnected

2015 Grant: “What if I completely freeze during the interview?” said Billie, a 7th grader. Goddard College, WGDR, and community partners received $10,000 in continued funding to help Billie and 26 peers develop, produce, and edit Indie Kingdom audio segments for broadcast. On the day Billie finally sat down to interview a Burmese refugee about her experiences, she was ready to engage in dialogue like a professional journalist. The months of preparation paid off; Billie captured a strong and thought-provoking interview. When asked later about whether she had been nervous during the interview Billie replied, “I was SO nervous, but… her story needs to be heard.”
Collaborative Care

2014 Grant: Brattleboro Retreat and partner Groundworks Collaborative received $20,000 to offer on-site therapeutic support to Groundworks Shelter residents. “Joanne” had been homeless for two years and was struggling with sobriety when she was offered a bed at the Shelter. Shortly after intake, Joanne met with a Retreat clinician, who helped her work on the challenges that led to her homelessness. She enrolled in the Retreat’s intensive outpatient addiction treatment program and eventually graduated. After receiving services at Groundworks through the Retreat, Joanne was able to work actively on her sobriety, maintaining employment and saving money that enabled her to transition into sustainable housing.
Big Impact: 
Food & Farm Initiative

As our inaugural Big Impact project, the Food and Farm Initiative is fighting hunger while supporting our farmers. We’ve granted $1.6 million since 2012, and we are seeing more kids getting healthy local food at school, more Vermont food sold here in the state, and an increased focus on creating a local food system that serves Vermonters.

In 2015, 31 Giving Together partners contributed a total of $305,700 to the Food and Farm Initiative.

We made **15 grants** totaling **$500,313**.
Growing Healthy Roots

2015 Grant: The Food and Farm Initiative extended its support to Franklin and Grand Isle counties with a $36,000 grant to Northwestern Medical Center to house Northwest Healthy Roots, a community effort supporting local farmers and families. Thanks in part to the Food and Farm Initiative, the young program quickly found statewide partners prepared to guide and support their work. These partners provided business planning for their farmer support programs and expert training on school food purchasing. One early win: getting humanely-raised beef into an area school and a nursing home!

Learn more at vermontcf.org/GivingTogether
A “Home Base” for Vermont’s Food System

2012-2014 Grants: The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund has received $150,000 for the Vermont Farm to Plate Network. Now in its fifth year, the Network has become the hub of the effort to build a sustainable food system in the state. With more than 350 farm and food sector organizations participating, we’re seeing increased collaboration generating real results: more land in agriculture, more jobs in the food sector, and local foods increasing from 5% to 7% of Vermonters’ food purchases. John Sayles, CEO of the Vermont Food Bank, notes: “Farm to Plate has given Vermont’s food system work a home base, and one that treats everyone equally, regardless of size or place in the food system.”

“What better way to leverage our resources than to join forces with the Community Foundation’s creative and knowledgeable staff?”

— Tom Johnson, fundholder, on why he supports the Food and Farm Initiative
Local Food for All

2013 Grant: While Food Connects, Green Mountain Farm-to-School (GMFTS), and Rutland Area Farm and Food Link (RAFFL) each serve distinct areas of the state, all knew their communities could benefit from eating more locally-grown foods. With a grant of $74,923, Food Connects worked with GMFTS and RAFFL in 2014 to hold focus groups with families of limited incomes, host almost 100 cooking demonstrations and taste tests to build comfort with local foods, and pilot “buying clubs” to make buying local more affordable and convenient. The Food and Farm Initiative supported the launch of six clubs that reached nearly 300 households. One grandmother in Brattleboro reported: “I love getting fresh, local food at a price I can afford. It’s helping me improve my health.”
Special and Urgent Needs (SUN)

What can a community action agency do if its freezers break unexpectedly? What can an afterschool program do after its location has been vandalized? Vermont nonprofits such as these typically operate on tight budgets, so unbudgeted and unforeseen expenses that arise due to equipment failure, structural damage, or even happy-but-unanticipated opportunities can be difficult to absorb. The SUN grant program makes grants of $250-$5,000 to help organizations preserve or enhance their ability to meet their mission when faced with these types of expenses.

In 2015, five Giving Together partners contributed a total of $43,511 to SUN.

We made 23 grants totaling $73,005.

Their “Forever Home”

2015 Grant: A $5,000 SUN grant helped the Bennington County Child Advocacy Center (BCCAC) take advantage of an unanticipated opportunity to acquire a building to become their permanent, “forever home.” While searching for a handicap-accessible rental property centrally located in Bennington, only one building met their criteria. During lease negotiations, the building went up for auction. BCCAC attended the auction but didn’t expect to win. However, BCCAC managed to win the property with a bid of $65,000 for the house assessed at $209,000. The SUN grant helped the organization meet the closing costs of acquiring the property unexpectedly.
Vermont’s future depends on the economic advancement of the state’s women and girls. The Vermont Women’s Fund was established in 1994 to support women and girls in Vermont through collective philanthropic giving. Today, the Fund focuses its support on Vermont’s young women and girls, ages 12 to 25, with a strategic emphasis on programs that offer financial literacy and job and life-skill training.

In 2015, five Giving Together partners contributed a total of $12,964 to the Vermont Women’s Fund.

We made **16 grants totaling $250,700.**

**Exploring New Fields**

2015 Grant: The Governor’s Institutes of Vermont (GIV) received $10,000 to help 276 Vermont young women, ages 14 to 18, access high-quality, intensive academic and creative learning residencies on college campuses. The girls explored their academic and creative interests hands-on and in-depth with expert mentors and role models. Ninety-five young women studied engineering, math, science, or technology, while another 17 studied entrepreneurship.

Learn more at vermontcf.org/GivingTogether
The Northeast Kingdom Fund

The Northeast Kingdom Fund is philanthropy by the Kingdom and for the Kingdom—though we have discovered that many people who live far from this deeply rural part of the state will support grantmaking in the region. With decisions made by a group of local residents, the small grants given through the Fund are making a big difference in Vermont’s most isolated region.

In 2015, ten Giving Together partners contributed a total of $33,950 to the Northeast Kingdom Fund.

We made 24 grants totaling $59,560.

Helping Survivors and Families in the Kingdom

2015 Grant: AWARE in Hardwick received $2,500 for its Legal Assistance Project. The project helps address domestic and sexual violence in the community by assisting survivors in retaining legal counsel and representation in family court. The goal of the project is simply to help those survivors who need to hire an attorney to achieve a positive outcome within the legal system for themselves and their children. Positive court rulings can have a significant and long-lasting impact on the well-being and safety of these families.
The Samara Fund

The Samara Fund’s mission includes providing core support for Vermont’s LGBTQ community organizations as well as HIV/AIDS services and prevention programs. The Fund also works to find and support projects that are unexpected or off the beaten path, from oral history collections to media projects and artist residencies—all in support and celebration of Vermont’s LGBTQ community.

In 2015, seven Giving Together partners contributed a total of $55,250 to the Samara Fund.

We made 18 grants totaling $65,006.

Coming Out Later in Life

2015 Grant: The Pride Center of Vermont received $5,400 to support programming for LGBTQ adults coming out later in life. The Pride Center reports: “People over 50 often contact us to tell us that they are just coming out. In a ten-minute chat, they are nervous but excited to talk. In a few lines, they move from stories of extreme isolation and heartbreak to tales of relief and joy for having come out. By the end, one thing is clear: they are happy to have found community. It did not take long to realize that these individuals, who took leaps of faith after years of struggle, would benefit from each other’s company.”

Learn more at vermontcf.org/GivingTogether
Vermont Arts Endowment Fund

The arts are integral to building healthy and vital Vermont communities. The Vermont Arts Endowment Fund provides direct support for both emerging and established artists and arts organizations presenting new or challenging work in the state. The Fund is advised by a group of working artists and presenters.

In 2015, four Giving Together partners contributed a total of $11,150 to the Vermont Arts Endowment Fund.

We made 23 grants totaling $57,700.
Eyes on the Land

2015 Grant: In partnership with Vermont Land Trust (VLT), Shelburne Museum received $2,000 to host the exhibition “Eyes on the Land.” The exhibition featured new works from 13 Vermont artists and photographers who used conserved land assigned to them by VLT as their inspiration. Artists explored how our landscape can be viewed and experienced through a variety of lenses.

The exhibit displayed the emotional and aesthetic responses to the natural and working landscapes that can be explored through personal experience, art, observation, conversation, and reflection.

Bonnie Acker
Angus Baldwin, Vermont Farmer, 2015. Paper, linen, and varnish, 60 x 38 x 1 ½ in.

Courtesy of Bonnie Acker.
Photography by Tom Way.

Learn more at vermontcf.org/GivingTogether
For a complete list of 2015 grants and Giving Together partners, please visit vermontcf.org/GivingTogether