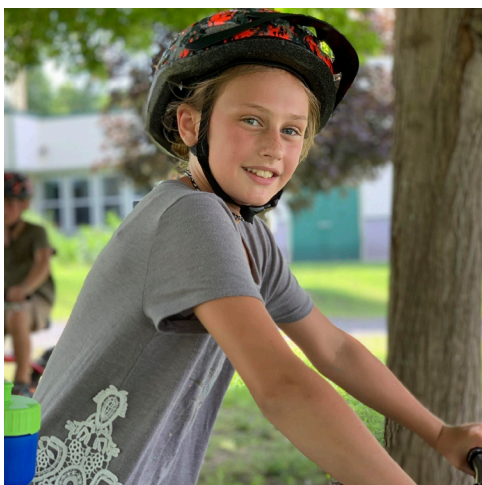




AFTERSCHOOL IS PART OF THE SOLUTION

FY2020 ANNUAL REPORT



DEAR FRIENDS & PARTNERS,

It's hard to find one word, phrase, or even paragraph to describe this past year. We moved offices in October 2019 and fell in love with our new space. We worked with several new funders which, in turn, connected us to additional partners who have stretched our scope in such positive ways. We welcomed a new staff member, Umesh, to our team. We hosted young visitors from Finland to speak about youth voice, and we implemented Iceland's Planet Youth survey for the first time. We heard Governor Scott announce an initiative to create universal access to afterschool, and we followed two key bills in the legislature. Together, as an organization and as a field, we were making progress and achieving important wins.

When the first case of COVID-19 was announced in Vermont in March 2020, our landscape—like everyone else's—changed. Life changed. We stood (and remain) in awe of our field as we watched all of you navigate the new landscape, challenge assumptions, break out of boxes, and find the roles that your communities, youth, and families most needed you to play. We are grateful for the deeper connections we have developed with program directors and staff thanks to more frequent Zoom calls. We have learned from you, been inspired by you, and recognize that together we are reinventing and strengthening our field in so many critical, and sometimes unexpected, ways.

Thank you for staying in the conversation with us, for sharing your highs and lows with us, and for allowing us to raise up all that you do for Vermont's children, youth, and families. Our field continues to adapt and change, but your strength, dedication, adaptability, and caring remain consistent and undeniable. COVID changed the landscape. It changed how we deliver programs and work with youth. Despite that, and in some new ways because of it and because of who you are as a field, we are still making progress, we are still achieving wins.

With gratitude,



Holly Morehouse
Executive Director



OUR MISSION:

We 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.

RIISING TO THE MOMENT: OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

Vermont Afterschool is a nimble, flexible, and dynamic nonprofit working statewide to bring the power of afterschool to every community. We mobilize people, organizations, and communities to connect afterschool, summer learning, and third space programs with the supports they need to create positive youth outcomes for inspiring futures.

Much of our work pivoted in March 2020 when the coronavirus pandemic shut down schools and forced afterschool, third space, and other out-of-school time programs to close as well. But many didn't simply stop. They stepped up to do virtual programming; distributed meals to families; provided online homework support; delivered activity kits and supplies; and stayed open for children of essential workers. They are, no doubt, part of the solution.

At Vermont Afterschool, we remain deeply committed to the field through this very challenging time. We have offered:

- Virtual field calls for networking
- COVID resource center and curriculum library
- Free virtual professional development
- Trauma-informed trainings
- 21st CCLC advocacy on the federal level
- Virtual Town Hall with Rep. Welch
- Virtual Youth Forum with Lt. Gov. Zuckerman
- Summer planning roundtable calls
- Fall reopening roundtable calls
- Bar soap distribution to summer programs
- Webinars on health and safety guidance for programs planning to reopen
- Advocacy for CARES funding to be directed to afterschool programs
- Connecting with state agencies and partners around topics relating to afterschool, reopening, and funding
- Providing opportunities for engagement
- Regular communications via email to keep everyone up to date
- A hopeful attitude and gratitude

As we continue to see our field evolve, we expect no less of ourselves and our organization.

FY20 IMPACT DATA

89%

of Vermont towns with afterschool and youth-serving organizations have been supported or impacted by Vermont Afterschool since FY19.

1,081

Providers of afterschool and youth-serving organizations have been involved with Vermont Afterschool's initiatives since FY19.

794

Afterschool and youth-serving program leaders and staff participated in our various initiatives since FY19.

76%

of individual afterschool and youth-serving program sites in VT have been impacted by Vermont Afterschool since FY19.

17,000+

Children and youth in Vermont have been supported and/or impacted by Vermont Afterschool since FY19.

WE BUILD STRONG PROGRAMS



STRENGTHENING PROGRAMS

Much of our work is focused on coordinating efforts around professional development, program quality initiatives, and overall elevation of the afterschool and youth-serving field. We do this by:

- Providing quality coaching and technical assistance to programs.
- Offering leadership opportunities.
- Helping programs to start and sustain.
- Promoting best practices.
- Coordinating statewide systems and connection.
- Delivering trainings designed especially for out-of-school time and youth-serving professionals.

ELEVATING QUALITY

For FY20, our professional development efforts reached staff across the state. We provided 72 trainings to 376 people. Additionally, 70 professionals advanced their careers with higher education coursework, micro-credentials, and certificates. We are proud to share that 89% of afterschool professionals participating in our various trainings agreed that Vermont Afterschool helped them do their job better.

We also help programs set up and use the Weikart Center Youth Program Quality Assessment and Improvement Tool (YPQA) to evaluate program quality. Currently we provide targeted support to 21st CCLC sites and licensed programs for YPQA.

CREATING COMMUNITY

Within our field, we bring people together to network and share inspiration. In FY20, we convened 21st CCLC directors for retreats and meetings; started an Afterschool Advisory Group of licensed program leaders; offered leadership opportunities through the LEAD training and micro-credential program; and hosted field calls for staff and partners during the coronavirus pandemic.

Our ongoing field calls have been an outstanding way to stay connected with the field during a very challenging time. We also hosted virtual trainings, open to anyone across Vermont for free, and found participation and engagement to be positive.

IN FOCUS:

YOUTH RESILIENCY

Since 2018, the Youth Resiliency Project at Vermont Afterschool, with support from the Northfield Savings Bank Foundation, has focused on supporting afterschool and out-of-school time programs and professionals to help children and youth build resiliency and social emotional learning (SEL) skills. Our goals for this project have been to:

- **Raise the Baseline.** Focusing on professional development and trainings, we worked to increase competency across the region so that more afterschool and summer programs are trauma-informed and have the basic skills necessary to start doing SEL.
- **Dig Deeper.** Create a Leadership Institute for Resilience in Afterschool (LIRA) to empower peer experts in the field and give them time and tools so they can implement real, progressive change at their programs.
- **Bend the Curve.** Establish networks of support or “communities of practice” for afterschool program sites so they build and sustain SEL best practices as a team.

As a result of staff participation and engagement in trainings, summits, communities of practice cohorts, and LIRA, the Youth Resiliency Project initiatives ultimately benefitted:

438 afterschool, summer, and out-of-school time professionals from 52 programs across Vermont who receiving training on SEL and trauma-informed practices.

9,900 school-age youth (grades K-12) in 57 towns across Vermont at their respective afterschool and summer programs involved with the Youth Resiliency Project.

7 communities of practice that met monthly through the school-year, providing 64 direct service and leadership staff with support specific to their unique needs.

24 participants who completed LIRA and earned a micro-credential in “Resilience Leadership in Afterschool.”

New for this year, we started as the statewide coordinator for the **Building Flourishing Communities** initiative in Vermont. There are currently 33 Building Flourishing Communities Facilitators guiding BFC learning events in all regions of Vermont to increase awareness about how early, overwhelming and/or threatening experiences can lead to poor health and well-being later in life. This proven public health approach reduces early, overwhelming events for children; increases resilience; and leads to flourishing lives.



WE INVITE YOUTH TO THRIVE



YOUTH VOICE

We firmly believe that young people deserve to be heard and valued. Which is why we provide outlets for youth to express their opinions as part of our ongoing work. In February 2020, 50 Afterschool Youth Ambassadors came to the State House to meet with legislators as well as testify on the value of afterschool and third space programs.

We also hosted a Virtual Youth Forum with Lt. Gov. David Zuckerman in April 2020 for young people across Vermont to share how COVID-19 affected them. We had 27 youth ages 9-23 tell us what life was like for them in 1-2 minute testimonials. Their stories were remarkable, honest, and insightful to say the least.

YOUTH4YOUTH GRANTS

This year for the Youth4Youth Project we worked with seven afterschool and youth-serving programs to help them create youth councils that each had their own pool of money to offer grants to local youth.

The individual councils defined the processes and parameters of the grants and received coaching and support from Vermont Afterschool in areas including leadership, group development, participatory budgeting, communications, and financial literacy.

Modifications were necessary because of COVID, but funded projects included a free thrift store for youth, new recess equipment, and a ghost hunting workshop!

LEARNING EXCHANGE

During Fall 2019, 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 with Helsinki Youth Services.

Throughout the week, they visited programs and met professionals from a wide range of afterschool and youth-serving organizations and also spent a day helping train youth council members in the Youth4Youth Grant project. Vivi and Johanna showed us how youth councils can succeed and imagine a place where youth can thrive.

IN FOCUS:

VERMONT YOUTH PROJECT

The Vermont Youth Project (VYP) is a statewide initiative supporting communities to create a built environment that embraces positive youth development. As the state developer and manager of VYP, Vermont Afterschool helps participating communities with establishing local coalitions centered around positive youth development, creating localized plans to address risk and protective factors of youth, supporting youth voice and engagement, and building cross-sector partnerships and collaboration. Communities that participate in VYP commit to empowering youth and creating healthy spaces for youth to be themselves, engage with peers, learn new skills, and connect with caring adults.

2019-2020 Pilot VYP Communities:

Enosburg, Fair Haven, Richford, Richmond, Rutland City, and Swanton

VYP uses the **Planet Youth data tool**, designed by researchers at the Icelandic Center for Social Research and Analysis, to survey middle and high school youth in the participating communities on risk and protective factors around family, school, peer groups, and out-of-school time activities in addition to perceptions of substance use.

Students from 13 schools in the six communities took the Planet Youth survey in Fall 2019, with an 82% student participation rate. Based on this real time data, local teams designed action plans and held community meetings with the goal of helping youth feel more safe, connected, heard, and engaged.



The data points out a few important take-aways for youth in the six communities:

Substance Use. Rates among youth in grades 7-12 are relatively high, particularly cannabis and alcohol use.

Parent and Family Engagement. There is limited collaboration and communication between parents & caregivers in the communities.

Youth Perceptions. There is a culture of acceptance, particularly around alcohol and cannabis, amongst peers.

Third Space Activities. There is significant unorganized free time (i.e. late outside hours) and limited participation in structured activities during the out-of-school time.

WE EXPAND ACCESS



LEGISLATIVE WINS

As Vermont's leading voice for afterschool, we advocate for state and federal policy that promotes access, affordability, and sustainability of afterschool, summer learning, and third space programs. Wins for 2020 included:

- H.775 (see this page)
- S.335 (see p. 8)
- \$6 million in restart grants for child care, afterschool, and summer programs in early summer
- Afterschool programs also included in the \$12 million for operational grants in the late summer
- \$12 million for the School-age Child Care Hub initiative to support school re-opening in the fall

YOUTH COUNCIL BILL

In 2020 Rep. Diane Lanpher introduced H.775, the Statewide Youth Council bill, partly inspired by Vivi and Johanna's visit from Finland (see p. 5). Legislators heard testimony from youth on their support of the bill but it has not yet passed out of the House.

A group of 50 youth formed a Youth Advisory Group to develop recommendations that will be used to inform language for a new bill (hopefully to be introduced at the start of the next legislative session in January 2021). They met virtually over the summer and worked hard to create recommendations for policymakers to help make the Statewide Youth Council become a reality.

COVID-19 VIRTUAL FORUM

After we started hosting weekly field calls during the pandemic (p. 3), the stories that we heard from our community helped us realize that afterschool was a key part of the state's COVID recovery response.

We decided to co-host a Virtual Forum in May 2020 with Rep. Peter Welch as a way to showcase the incredible work happening across the state. Our Executive Director Holly Morehouse facilitated a panel of afterschool professionals for part of the call, and then Representative Welch answered questions as well. It provided Rep. Welch and other policymakers with a wonderful snapshot of the field's efforts to support children and families during COVID-19.

IN FOCUS:

UNIVERSAL AFTERSCHOOL

Our advocacy efforts scored a huge boost in January 2020 thanks to an unanticipated and remarkably supportive announcement from **Governor Phil Scott in his annual State of the State** address to the legislature. In the address, Gov. Scott featured afterschool for all as a central part of his education policy platform. He proposed “that we begin creating a universal afterschool network that ensures every child has access to enrichment opportunities outside of current classroom time” and stated that “kids who participate in afterschool activities and programs do better in school and in life than kids who don’t.”

To be acknowledged by the Governor was a huge moment. And promptly launched us into action to work with legislators to make his vision a reality. The **Afterschool Task Force Bill (S.335)**, introduced by Sen. Phil Baruth in response to the Governor’s “Universal Afterschool” proposal, passed out the Senate and seemed on track for a speedy course through the House until the coronavirus pandemic hit. Subsequently S.335 stalled until legislators took it up at a later date and it finally passed in Fall 2020.

During the pandemic, we advocated on behalf of afterschool, summer learning, and third space programs to receive federal CARES recovery funds. This meant ensuring legislators included afterschool and summer learning programs in their initial child care reopening grants, as well as afterschool staff and child care workers to receive hazard pay.

We also worked to increase access across the state through our “Afterschool for All” grant program. Last year, the Vermont legislature allocated \$600,000 for the Afterschool for All Grants with funding given to projects to start or expand afterschool and/or summer learning programs in Vermont. There are currently 12 projects in year two of their grants. All projects are receiving technical assistance and coaching from Vermont Afterschool.

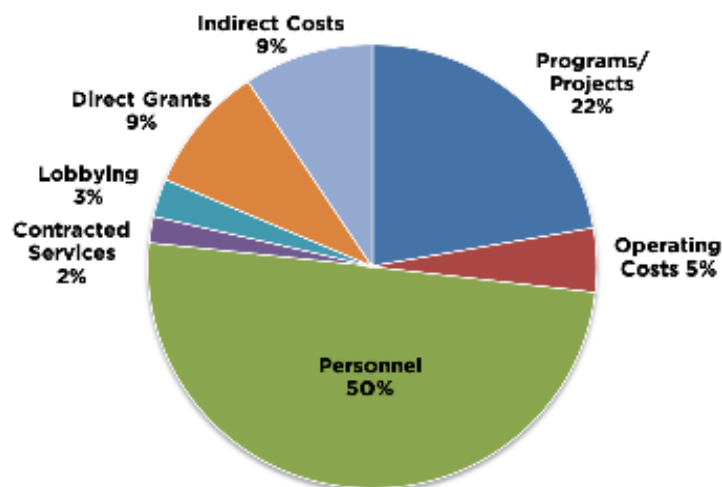


2019-2021 Afterschool for All Grantees:

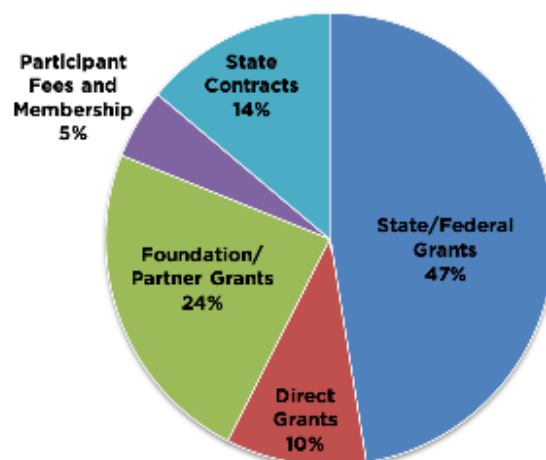
Brookfield Elementary School, Two Rivers SU Afterschool Program, Bennington Center for Restorative Justice, Bellows Falls Friends for Change, Addison Northwest School District, Kingdom East Afterschool, Albany Community School, LEAPS, Meeting Waters YMCA, Twinfield Union School, Upper Valley Haven, and Winooski School District

IN TOTAL

FY2020 Total Expenditures:
\$1,011,660



FY2020 Total Income:
\$1,033,575



WHO WE ARE

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Overdeck Family Foundation

STEM Education Coalition

Vermont Agency of Education

Vermont Child Development
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Children and Families, Agency of
Human Services

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(VCF)

Vermont Department of Health

Vermont Department of Mental
Health

Vermont Student Assistance
Corporation (VSAC)

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Thank you to Burlington Kids, Encore, One Planet, Winooski Student Success and Beyond, Swanton Crossroads, TRSU, and U-32 Y4Y for your wonderful photos.

Saying goodbye to Fort Ethan Allen: Sam, Robin, Holly, Tricia, Nicole, and Cassie (L-R) on the final day at the old office.



These are extraordinary times.

This is an extraordinary field.

The afterschool, summer learning, and third space field has been an essential part of our communities' response to the coronavirus pandemic, and programs will continue to play a critical role throughout recovery. Our field stepped up to be part of the solution and remains ready to help. Here are some ways in which afterschool, summer, and third space programs fulfilled Vermont kids' and working families' needs during a very challenging time.



The MAUSD Expanded Learning Program ran the essential care program for school-age youth in Addison County in the spring. In close partnership with the superintendent and school leaders, they made sure to include time during the day when youth could complete remote learning assignments, offered technology and wifi for access, and homework support to make sure youth had help when needed. They also provided a safe, structured, and fun place for youth to be while their caregivers were at work.

Friends for Change in Bellows Falls offered remote-based mentoring with youth after schools closed in the spring. On their

daily calls with individuals, staff would make resource referrals, play games, talk about struggles, and help with schoolwork. The time was rich and connected, and often the only contact their youth (ages 12-18) had with the world outside of their homes.



The afterschool staff from **All-4-One** worked with the Springfield schools and town to help distribute over 760 lunches, snacks, and breakfasts to families daily after schools closed in March. Meals were distributed to 25 sites around Springfield, keeping connections and engagement alive as kids and families came get their bagged food and interacted with staff.

In North Country Supervisory Union, home of nine afterschool and summer programs called **Encore**, over 900 children in grades K-4 received enrichment packs during Spring 2020. Each of the nine sites developed clubs that would have run in a normal afterschool program session, and purchased all the supplies necessary for children to partake in the clubs, bagged them in reusable totes, and delivered them to homes on buses also delivering school meals. The instructors also made lessons to go with the materials for a complete at-home activity kit with no internet or computers required.



LEARN MORE:

www.vermontafterschool.org