

QUARTERLY REPORT

APRIL - JUNE 2021



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SUMMER MATTERS

We know that this summer, more than ever before, matters for Vermont kids and families. It is a time to celebrate our transition out of the grip of this pandemic and we know we need to focus on youth who have endured much hardship. This is why our team has been focused intensely on planning for Summer 2021 for the past three months. In partnership with the Office of Governor Phil Scott, Senator Bernie Sanders, Vermont Agency of Education, Vermont Department of Health, and numerous partners in a wide cross-section of state agencies, we launched the Summer Matters campaign in recognition that Summer 2021 will be an important time for Vermont's youth to re-engage, connect, and learn.

The campaign incorporated an outreach and family engagement plan, website content, a summer program map, professional development, social-emotional learning supports, program curricula, data collection, guidebooks, field forums, and staff recruitment. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of the state's recovery efforts and we knew we had to show up.

One of the biggest drivers of the Summer Matters campaign is the federal funding, secured by Senator Sanders in the American Rescue Plan, that will support programs not directly connected with a local school, school district, or independent school to increase access via the new Summer Matters for All Grant Program. As the administrator and manager of the grant program, it's been a huge lift for the team. We just sent out the final grant agreements for 93 projects selected to receive grant funds.

Best of all? Hearing about how excited the summer camps and programs are to get started and how much of an impact the summer grants will have on programs and youth across Vermont.



Operations Updates

We continue to grow and evolve as our work expands. We welcomed Becky Wilcke as a new part-time Project Assistant, Katie O'Shea will start in July as the new STEM and Career Awareness Coordinator, and Eli Pine will be our summer intern working on health equity data. Our current intern Kate Lewton will continue through the summer with the YET team. We also hired two new positions to support the Summer Matters grant management: Ben Ardel and Veronica Raley who will join us later this month. Lastly, we've contracted with the Robert Half firm to hire Phillip Mascis as a short-term consultant to our business operations and the Summer Matters grant process.

After a very long hiatus, team members are coming back to the office! Vaccinated staff members are returning to work in a staggered schedule. It's been wonderful to eat lunch together outside under the shade of the big oak trees, as well as enjoy connecting in person around our various work areas.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI)

Our six-part virtual series on equity and racism with Rebecca Haslam of Seed the Way concluded in June. She challenged us to move out of our comfort zones, inspired dialogue on difficult topics in breakout rooms, and showed ways to make personal and professional change. We couldn't have asked for a better trainer (from VT no less) on this important topic for ourselves and the field.

We're proud to share that the Summer Matters Grant Program included a priority area aimed at increasing access for marginalized youth in VT to ensure that underserved populations (BIPOC, LGBTQ+, ELL, New Americans/Refugees, Migrant, and Homeless Youth) are well-represented in the mix of children/youth participating in programs.

One of the highlights of the past quarter was our DEI keynote with Dr. Dena Simmons (pictured left), who presented an outstanding virtual session on "Self-Care, Healing, and Equity: Responsive Practices for When the World Feels Heavy." We've wanted to have Dr. Simmons speak to the Vermont audience for years and WOW did she deliver. Dr. Simmons recently founded LiberatED, a collective at the intersection of SEL, racial justice, and healing.

Grants and Funding

- Child Development Division renewed their grant at \$276,006 for FY22
- Agency of Education granted us \$4,095,838 for the Summer Matters for All Grant Program (\$3,850,000 for sub-recipient grants)
- STEM Next selected us to receive \$55,000 to expand Linking Engineering to Life and other STEM and career awareness activities
- National Conference of State Legislatures selected us for a data grant at \$10,000 to focus on health equity through data collection, analysis, and data sharing
- Vermont Community Foundation contributed \$100,000 to the Summer Matters for All Grants
- United Way of Northwest Vermont gave us a grant for \$10,000 toward equity and inclusion by improving third space participation rates among the following populations: youth with disabilities and/or special needs, youth who identify as BIPOC, and identify as LGBTQ+.

Summer is wide open.



Strengthening Programs Update on Summer 2021

Professional Development

We assembled a wide array of virtual trainings for program staff to get ready for summer. Kudos to Tricia and Nicole for putting this together so quickly. Notably:

- 6 different "Boot Camp Basics" trainings designed to orient new staff to the field
- 5 roundtable facilitated discussions
- 5 live field forums on various topics
- 3 virtual keynote speakers
- 3 "Coaching Beyond Winning: SEL in Action" workshops on positive youth development in the third space
- 2 Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality trainings for program leaders
- 2 "Supporting Youth with Disabilities in Summer Programs" workshops
- 1 "Youth Mental Health First Aid" training

Resources and Outreach

We curated a slew of curriculum and resources on the Summer Matters website. The website was created specifically for the Summer Matters campaign and developed for a variety of audiences. With support from our state partners, we also created special web pages "For Youth" and "For Families" with unique content. These pages are also available in translated formats in a variety of languages.

Summer Matters for All Grant Program

Vermont Afterschool is currently managing the grants in collaboration with the Agency of Education. This was a highly competitive grant process with 188 proposals submitting \$7,427,584 in requests, which far exceeded available funds.

To date, 93 projects across 13 counties in VT have been selected to receive a total of \$3,368,151. As a result, the number of weekly slots for K-12 youth has increased by 4,275 and the average cost per week to attend has decreased by \$169.81. This is a tremendous investment in our youth and we're thrilled to help make it a summer like no other.

Summer Staff Recruitment

In order to help programs hire staff for their summer programs, we launched a staff recruitment campaign with advertising in newspapers, Front Porch Forum, social media, YouTube, Spotify, Google Ads, and VPR. To date, 238 people from all walks of life have filled out the intake form on our website that matches potential applicants with summer programs who are hiring.

Summer Program Map

Erin developed a user-friendly map for families and caregivers to search for summer camp/enrichment opportunities across Vermont. With a wide array of filters, it is an outstanding resource and is automatically updated when programs fill out a survey. This resource was heavily featured by the Governor in his press conferences.



Empowering Youth Team (YET) Update

Youth Voice Outreach

Matt led 22 individual program consultation sessions on fostering youth voice in April and May. Youth voice consultation sessions are about assessing how prepared an organization is to receive and implement youth voice, and support them in the planning for that implementation at three possible levels within their organization; the individual interactions of staff with youth; group interactions with youth; and in the overall operation of the organization itself. We look at youth voice as a process that starts with learning about the youth's interests & skills, then supporting them to envision and plan for change to be made using their voice, and finally supporting youth in enacting that plan. The end goal is to solidify and institutionalize the change the youth create with their voices and thinking.

Vermont Youth Project

Kate Lewton, a high school student, has been interning with the Youth Empowerment Team this past quarter and has been supporting our efforts to increase understanding of the Vermont Youth Project (VYP) data in young people and increase participation rates of the VYP survey. Kate has created a variety of flyers, handouts, and social media graphics explaining VYP for youth and including data that young people would be most interested in. These resources will be used in the fall as part of a campaign to increase survey participation rates amongst VYP youth. Finally, Kate has created a presentation youth and teachers can use to talk about VYP and the survey to other youth in an easy and engaging way.

Youth Councils

The YET team supported eight youth council sites across VT to complete their community voting process and then award the winning projects based on peer voting (each council had a \$5,000 budget for youth projects). In total, 54 youth project proposals were submitted with 710 votes cast, resulting in 35 projects being funded across the eight youth councils. Several councils are also looking for local funding and resources to support the remaining unfunded projects in their areas.

Matt and Brianne provided individual technical assistance sessions to any youth council who requested individualized support in moving through their decision-making process, culminating in a Youth Council Project Celebration virtual event on May 12th.

Partnerships and Community Outreach

Matt and Brianne presented a "Crafting Advocacy: How to Share Your Story" workshop at this year's VSAC conference. Matt also presented another workshop at this event "Empowering Our Adolescents Through Understanding the Science Behind Them." Matt also participated in this year's Vocational Rehabilitation Youth Advocacy Council's Annual Youth Summit as a resource provider during the resource fair section of this virtual youth summit event.



Increasing Access Update

American Rescue Plan (ARP)

Signed into law on March 11, 2021 by President Biden (signing pictured above), the historic ARP included \$30.35 billion for afterschool and summer learning programs nationwide with over \$50 million for Vermont dedicated to learning recovery (including afterschool and summer) through 2023. Funds from ARP are being used for the Summer Matters for All Grant Program, and we also know that individual school districts must spend at least 20% of funds on learning recovery strategies, including afterschool and summer programs.

Many 21st CCLC programs that are already partnering with schools have been able to connect with this funding source in order to better support students over the summer and in the coming school year. To see how much ARP/ESSER funds individual districts will receive, visit: www.helpkidsrecover.org.

Universal Afterschool Task Force

Chaired by Rep. Kelly Pajala and Sen. Andrew Perchlik, the Universal Afterschool Task Force issued its official report in May 2021. The Task Force created recommendations for what a state grant program should look like using the cannabis tax revenue and any additional state-designated funding in order to provide universal access to afterschool and summer programs.

One of the key recommendations is the formation of an Afterschool and Summer State Oversight Committee. Duties of the committee would to collect information and data annually to determine the state and extent of afterschool and summer programming in Vermont; and develop all aspects of the state grant program for expanding access to afterschool and summer programs. This is a big ask, as it would allow VT to intentionally plan over the next few years while acknowledging the major state and federal investment at the moment.

Youth Council Bill

Despite the hard work of youth advocates and bill sponsors, the Youth Council Bill never made it out of House Appropriations so we will pick it up again for the next session. In the meantime, we will be meeting with a statewide youth advisory group again this summer with a focus on health equity.

Community Schools Bill

H.106, an act relating to equitable access to high-quality education through community schools, was signed into law by Governor Scott in June 2021. H.106 creates a community school framework that centers student success, well-being, and equity including access to expanded learning opportunities such as afterschool and summer programs. The bill establishes three-year community school demonstration grants for up to 10 Vermont school districts.



Our Staff

Umesh Acharya, Youth Resilience Coordinator
Nicole Miller, Assistant Director
Holly Morehouse, Executive Director
Tricia Pawlik, Program Improvement Coordinator
Erin Schwab, Data Analyst
Brianne Smith, Substance Use Prevention VISTA
Becky Wilcke, Project Assistant
Cassie Willner, Communications Coordinator
Matt Wolf, Youth Voice Coordinator

Our Board

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Virginia Burley, Secretary
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Vicky Smith
Rich Tulikangas
Lauren Wooden, Treasurer



June 16: Power & Potential: A New Era for Afterschool and Summer Learning Zoom Event with the C.S. Mott Foundation

July 12-16: National Summer Learning Week

With thanks to our FY21 funders for supporting and believing in our work:

Afterschool Alliance; Charles Stewart Mott Foundation; J. Warren & Lois McClure Foundation; Northfield Savings Bank Foundation; Overdeck Family Foundation; STEM Education Coalition; STEM Next Opportunity Fund; Vermont Agency of Education; Vermont Child Development Division, Department for Children and Families, Agency of Human Services; Vermont Community Foundation; Vermont Department of Health; Vermont Department of Mental Health; Vermont State Treasurer's Office; Vermont Student Assistance Corporation