

2013 Vermont Economic Justice Grants



Living Well Residential Community Care Home

\$10,000

Farm to Care Program

Living Well is a residential community care home addressing health disparities in our greater community through innovative approaches and programs that help break the cycle of chronic illnesses often faced by low- to moderate-income elderly Vermonters. Living Well is the first nonprofit healthcare facility in the country to use Dynamic Governance, a style of management based on co-creative input from all levels of the organization — including residents. Living Well is committed to giving more seniors access to a client-centered approach to care provided in residential care facilities. Living Well has efficiently kept operational and programmatic costs under budget while constantly improving the physical and mental health of its residents.

Living Well's Farm to Care program provides fresh, nutritious, local foods to elderly residents of its community care facilities. This project connects local food producers and elderly Vermonters with the goals of improving residents' health, supporting local farmers, providing opportunities to educate staff and residents on nutritious foods, reducing the costs of meals, and building strong community connections through long-term collaborations.

Post Oil Solutions

\$10,000

Greater Falls Community Garden Collaborative

Post Oil Solutions is a community organizing, grassroots organization operating primarily in Windham County, Vermont. Their projects are focused on creating a community-based food system in response to climate change, the decline of oil production, and the social inequities of the current industrialized food system. In response to the ongoing food crises that separates more and more people from access to healthy foods, POS has responded with a variety of initiatives aimed at teaching people to re-learn to feed themselves and their neighbors, to increase access to healthy local food, and creating communities that are just, accessible, and sustainable.

The purpose of GFCGC is to develop greater food security in the region. POS believes that a truly sustainable and resilient community-based food system is grounded in the active participation and inclusion of all citizens. The project's mission is *to be a community in southeastern Vermont that achieves greater food security through the development of a garden-based local food system resulting in an enhanced civic pride, a stronger local economy, and a more sustainable environment.*

Salvation Farms

\$18,000

Salvation Farms (SF) works to reduce food waste on Vermont farms and increase access to wholesome, regionally produced foods by vulnerable populations statewide by increasing resilience in Vermont's food system through agricultural surplus management. By fostering collaborative cross-sector partnerships that create efficient management practices for Vermont's farm surplus, Salvation Farms is creating innovative programs to capture the 85% of available farm surplus that is currently going unused annually and making it available to those who need it most.

Funding was provided to help Salvation Farms 1) build the competency and professionalism of gleaning initiatives statewide; 2) create an in-state commodity type system designed to proactively manage Vermont's surplus farm foods; and 3) support, through citizen engagement, the burgeoning food system development in Vermont by increasing the understanding and appreciation of our state's agricultural heritage and future.

Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition

\$10,000

General Support

VAHC is a statewide membership organization dedicated to ensuring safe, decent and affordable housing, particularly to Vermont's low- and moderate-income residents, elders, and people with disabilities. The Coalition's 80-plus organizational members represent most of Vermont's non-profit affordable housing developers, community land trusts, homeless shelters, public housing authorities, resident associations, community action agencies, funders, regional planners, and housing, disability and tenant rights advocates. Together, VAHC's members provide housing and services to tens of thousands of low-income Vermonters. VAHC pursues its mission through education and advocacy, outreach, trainings, community education and research on housing issues.

Funding was provided in support of three of VAHC's core activities: (1) education and policy development at the federal and state levels; (2) collaboration with the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH) around communication, outreach and capacity building; and (3) low-income resident/community organizing and leadership development. These activities will help create fundamental change for low-income Vermonters by increasing access to safe and affordable housing, reducing homelessness, and giving voice to disenfranchised low-income residents living in existing affordable housing developments, some of which may be at-risk of losing their affordability.

Green Mountain Farm to School

\$18,000

Local Food for Healthy Communities

GMFTS is a nonprofit organization, located in Newport, Vermont, that fosters the health and wellbeing of communities in the Northeast Kingdom. GMFTS creates healthy communities by aggregating and distributing local food and giving consumers the knowledge and skills they need to make healthy food choices through GMFTS' school gardens, Farm to School Programs, food hub, and mobile farmers market. GMFTS partners with each community they

serve to develop a comprehensive approach to improving access to healthy food and to build a network of individuals, schools, businesses, and organizations rebuilding their local food systems and creating healthy communities.

Green Mountain Farm-to-School (GMFTS) is addressing the economic, social, and environmental impacts of poverty by increasing access to healthy, affordable foods in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. In our work this past year, we have not only experienced success and promoted growth, but we have also identified new stakeholders, entry-points and strategies for increasing access to healthy, affordable foods. Over the next year, GMFTS will increase access to healthy, affordable foods in the Northeast Kingdom by 1) aggregating and distributing local food to schools, institutions, and individuals; 2) educating consumers about healthy food choices; and 3) sharing best practices and increasing shared learning in the Northeast Kingdom and Vermont.

Vermont Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health **\$16,000**
Family to Family Peer Support and Leadership

VFFCMH is a family-run, family support organization supporting families of children, youth and young adults in transition experiencing or at risk to experience emotional, behavioral or mental health challenges. Nationally, Parents with Disabilities lose custody of their children up to an 80% rate. Results of their 6 year statewide Peer Navigation program which ended in 2010, showed a custody loss rate of under 2%. Funding was provided to expand their programming to Addison County, as a demonstration project to show how Peer Supports and empowerment can bend the curve for families in complex situations.

Vermont Works for Women **\$18,000**
FRESH Food, a Social Enterprise

VWW’s programs address the needs of women seeking self-sufficiency: those interested in pursuing a career in fields nontraditional to women; those leaving public assistance and seeking work for the first time; and those re-entering the community after serving time in prison. VWW also offers programs for middle and high school girls to help them develop the capacities and confidence to meet life’s challenges and opportunities with persistence and pluck.

FRESH Food provides job training for women while also addressing an important community need: increasing access to nutritious meals for children from low and moderate income families. FRESH Food currently provides meals for sixteen childcare centers and youth programs in Chittenden County and has served 90,000 wholesome meals since its inception in 2011. This program serves multiple bottom lines: providing critical on-the-job training for women, improving the quality of nutrition for children in daycare, and supporting local agriculture (using an average of 30% of food from local growers).