

CENTRAL VERMONT ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

Local Partnerships in Learning

Serving Washington, Lamoille, and Orange Counties



Fall 2017 Newsletter

News and Updates from the Executive Director



Since the publication of our spring newsletter, the CVABE Board of Directors has welcomed four widely-talented community members and also bid farewell to another. This organization enjoys a dedicated, hardworking board with a long-standing and rich tradition of identifying and recruiting new members when the time comes for their individual departures from the CVABE board. These individuals are **remarkable community volunteers and we're pleased to introduce them to you.**

A summary of our strategic plan results for the 2017 program year ending on June 30th follows the board profiles. We celebrate the remarkable progress made by our students along with all we accomplished as an organization toward meeting our goals, objectives and benchmarks during the first year of the CVABE 2017 – 2022 Strategic Plan. **Thank you for your part in ensuring that CVABE's services advance, grow, evolve and open every possible opportunity for eligible adults in Washington, Lamoille and Orange Counties, through an education in 21st century skill.**
~Carol Shults-Perkins

Retired Member



At the September meeting of the CVABE Board of Directors, we celebrated Apple Faulkner's 4 ½ years of dedicated service to the organization. **Apple's ever-ready and consistent attention to CVABE's work, which she always approached with a gentle kindness and thoughtful wisdom, was something her board colleagues and this executive director relied on. We appreciated Apple's voice and guidance related to organizational planning and evaluating, to our financial health and fundraising efforts, to the executive director evaluation process and so much more. With our deepest thanks, Apple. We all wish you joy, health, happiness, peace and contentment into all the days of your future.**

New Members



Peter Mallary from Bradford is a longtime friend of CVABE. He is Vice President for Government Relations and Community Outreach for the Vermont Association for Mental Health and Addiction Recovery and his skills as a writer, editor and former legislator **from the Upper Valley are well known. Peter's family has deep roots in political and civic affairs in the central Vermont community and he has worn several hats in one office or another during his many years of working in state government.**



Nancy McCann is a relative newcomer to Vermont, having moved to Thetford with her husband Steve and their two dogs in 2013. She is happy to be back home in New England after spending more than twenty years in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. During her time in Pittsburgh she worked as an attorney representing public school districts, and later as Manager of Labor Relations at the University of Pittsburgh. She was also an active volunteer with the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, tutoring adults in both basic literacy and English language learning. She is grateful to have the opportunity to serve on the CVABE Board and to learn more about adult literacy programs in Vermont. Nancy works at Dartmouth College as Director of Labor Relations in the Office of Human Resources.



Miccal McMullan has lived in Central Vermont for 25 years, first as a Norwich University student, now as a local business owner. He is a partner at TiMic Drafting & Design, LLC, a Vermont based company that provides residential design and support to regional architectural firms. His work in architectural design allows him to meet people from all over the region, where he enjoys **problem solving and finding creative solutions to fit people's needs**. Miccal's children, now ages 21 and 18, were both students at Orchard Valley Waldorf School where he served as a board member and led the creation of design **guidelines to assist in the planning of the school's growth**. Miccal has had

experience with personalized education both first hand and helping family members. When approached to **consider serving on CVABE's board he was immediately interested and is honored to give back to the local community**. Miccal lives in Montpelier with his wife of 24 years and children.

Kim Swasey, born in Montpelier and a graduate of Montpelier High School, earned a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education from The University of Vermont. Kim was commissioned into the United States Army and served in various assignments around the world.



Kim is married to Norman Hill and together they reared three daughters. In 1994, Kim and her family came to Norwich University for her assignment as an ROTC Instructor. Kim left active duty in 1996 but continued to serve in the Vermont National Guard until her retirement in 2012 as a Lieutenant Colonel. In 2014, Kim **earned a Master's of Public Administration, Leadership Focus, from Norwich University** and is currently working as a contracted course developer and quality assurance evaluator for the Army.

Kim has served on the East Montpelier Select board since 2012 and is a member of The Old Meeting House in East Montpelier. She also belongs to Johnson Post 792 of the Veteran of Foreign Wars in Montpelier. Kim is pleased to continue contributing to her community through the CVABE Board of Directors.

CVABE's 2017 – 2022 Strategic Plan – First Year Progress

Fiscal Year 2017 ended on June 30th, **marking the completion of year one of the organization's five year strategic plan**. We celebrate the remarkable progress made toward meeting our goals, objectives and benchmarks identified for attention during the year. Our efforts are aimed at supporting the members of our communities seeking to gain academic literacy, English language skills, high school credentials and career **and college preparedness so they can reach their full potential in life**. **The Plan's four major goal areas**, corresponding objectives and a summary of our results follow:

Goal I. Increase the number of students to whom we provide accessible and effective adult education and literacy services, with a special focus on Adult Basic Education (ABE) level students 25 years and older.

A. Expand outreach and services to core students

- ◆ CVABE set a benchmark to serve 450 eligible adult learners in 2017 and surpassed that number, providing services to 460 students, a 7% increase over the number of students served (431) the prior program year.
- ◆ Focused outreach was targeted to adults 25 and older. Of the 460 served, 47% were 25+ as compared to 42% in that category the prior year.
- ◆ The total number of students enrolling for basic skills instruction (grade levels 0-8) increased by 8% over the prior year.

B. Improve retention and persistence of core students

- ◆ Additional evening and weekend services were made available for students at our learning centers and off-site locations. This included more evening/weekend GED testing services, academic and/or computer literacy offerings, and English language learning services.
- ◆ Through a local business funder, CVABE launched an Access to Education Fund to assist students with **barriers to participation in CVABE's services**. **While all CVABE instruction is free to the student, this fund helps students with needs related to transportation, childcare, GED exam fees, etc.**

Goal II. Ensure that adult learners with diverse needs are aware of and can access CVABE's resources to improve their lives.

A. Update and expand our communications plan, with information targeted to different audiences, including potential students at places where they are, and through modern communication media that does not involve reading (i.e. broadcast, social media).

- ◆ CVABE's staffing profile now includes additional time dedicated to expanding and coordinating student outreach. All staff are responsible for expanded student outreach and recruitment, including posting CVABE flyers and distributing brochures throughout our 47 town service area.
- ◆ CVABE worked with WCAX TV to develop and air a statewide Public Service Announcement promoting our adult education and literacy services.
- ◆ A three month advertising campaign was launched on two of the Great Eastern Radio stations, Frank FM and Froggy FM. Additional stations have been added and the campaign is now continuing into the 2018 fiscal year.
- ◆ CVABE's website, www.cvabe.org, is being redesigned on a modern Web platform to allow ease of content management that is mobile-enabled, meets accessibility standards, is more user friendly and allows for videos and easy connectivity with social media. The new site is scheduled to launch in the late fall, 2017.

Goal III. Strengthen CVABE's long-term sustainability and grow organizational capacity to extend our reach and impacts.

- ◆ Annual fundraising priorities have been aligned with the strategic plan and program service needs. In 2017, CVABE experienced a 13.8% increase in funds raised over the prior program year, helping to support our student enrollment growth in a time of decreasing government funding. Funds raised supported strategic plan priorities and student services.
- ◆ CVABE continued to engage a strong and active force of 127 community volunteers during 2017. Consistent with the prior year, 42% were brand new volunteers and 58% continued their service with the organization.

Goal IV. Prioritize and cultivate strategic partnerships to achieve our mission in an evolving Social context.

- ◆ CVABE initiated partnerships with three local employers last year, with the goal to best align our student instruction with current workforce needs in central Vermont. We began providing on-site instruction to employees at one of these businesses, helping individuals succeed at their jobs and prepare for future advancement. CVABE, the Vermont Department of Labor, and Vocational Rehabilitation created and began using a unified referral system for better information sharing about our services and shared clientele.
- ◆ CVABE continues to expand outreach to non-profit organizations, agency partners, libraries, faith leaders, public school staff, etc. We are frequently making presentations, distributing materials, and encouraging partners to refer individuals in need of our education services.

CVABE is well on its way to achieving the ambitious goals set forth in our five year strategic plan. These first year accomplishments would not be possible without the dedicated work of the many members of our community. Together, we are moving forward, empowering more central Vermonters to achieve in life through education.

Thank you!



Brian Kravitz - CVABE Celebrates Adult Education & Literacy Week
 September 24-30 marked National Adult Education and Literacy Week. On behalf of the four AEL providers in Vermont, CVABE drafted a proclamation for Governor Phil Scott to sign. On September 12, Governor Scott declared September 24-30, "*Adult Education and Literacy Week in Vermont.*"



On Friday, September 29, CVABE celebrated Literacy Week by inviting FROGGY-FM (100.9) to join us for a live radio remote. Sarah Costa, Director, allowed us to set up tents in the lawn of the Aldrich Public Library, and Allison Palmer and the Vermont Humanities Council (VHC) very generously donated stacks books for a raffle. Over the course of two hours, many people stopped by to provide live and on-air testimonials.



Sarah Costa/Alison Palmer

We wish to thank everyone involved, from the Aldrich Library to the VHC to the students and volunteers to our Board member to the Agency of Education, and even Mayor Tom Lauzon. You are all our partners in adult education and literacy, and together, with your partnership, we help our students to DREAM, BELIEVE, LEARN and ACHIEVE.

State of Vermont Executive Department: A Proclamation

Whereas, over 2600 adult Vermonters receive Adult Education and Literacy Services annually through Central Vermont Adult Basic Education, Inc., Northeast Kingdom Learning Services, The Tutorial Center and Vermont Adult Learning; and



Whereas, these four Adult Education and Literacy organizations provide services in every town and county throughout Vermont in order to empower Vermonters to build better lives **through education, training and employment, and to strengthen Vermont's workforce and economy;** and

Whereas, these four Adult Education and Literacy organizations provide nearly 100,000 hours of literacy and adult education services a year; and

Whereas, these four Adult Education and Literacy organizations provide basic skills instruction in reading, writing, math and digital literacy; and

Whereas, these four Adult Education and Literacy organizations support the roles of parents and caregivers with family literacy activities related to the learning needs of children under their care; and

Whereas, these four Adult Education and Literacy organizations ensure that adults have the opportunity to obtain a high school credential; and

Whereas, these four Adult Education and Literacy organizations provide adults with the skills necessary to attend and be successful in post-secondary education and job training programs; and

Whereas, these four Adult Education and Literacy organizations support adults in building skills to receive Industry Relevant Credentials to better their careers; and

Whereas, these four Adult Education and Literacy organizations support adults in obtaining and retaining jobs; and

Whereas, these four Adult Education and Literacy organizations **provide Vermont's adult immigrants and refugees** with the opportunity to learn English language skills, to obtain citizenship skills and U.S. citizenship, to get jobs and to integrate successfully into their new communities,

Now, therefore, I, Philip B. Scott, Governor, do hereby proclaim September 24-30, 2017 *as* Adult Education and Literacy Week in Vermont.



Kate Nicolet - News from the Road

Promoting Persistence - In service of our learners and in support and supervision of our teaching staff at our six Learning Centers, I spend time at each location on a regular basis. In between, on the scenic roads of central Vermont, I get a little time to ruminate and reflect on what makes our programs tick. This season has me focused on learner persistence.

It's important to consider learner persistence from the student's point of view. Some years back, practitioner researchers spoke to adult learners throughout New England and defined persistence as "adults staying in programs for as long as they can, engaging in self-directed study when they must drop out of their programs, and returning to programs as soon as the demands of their lives allow."

For some students in central Vermont, it is an ongoing struggle to find the time and focus necessary to **persist in studies at CVABE. Think of any challenge in life, and it's likely to be familiar to our learners.** Though CVABE offers many supports including confidential educational services at no cost to the student, flexibility of scheduling, individualized attention, and access to some childcare and transportation support through the generosity of private donors, still some life challenges do present significant barriers to studying **at points in their lives. CVABE's message to students who must take a break from their studies is, "You are most welcome back when you are ready."** Though CVABE's current radio ad campaign is aimed to recruit new students, I believe it will also serve to reawaken the drive to persist within our prior students as well.

CVABE teachers work with students to help them articulate their own goals for their future whether educational, professional or work-related, personal, or all of the above, and then to establish learning objectives and assessment measures in support of these life goals. This is the basic armature of each **learner's Personal Education Plan.**

Two very interesting questions posed in the goal-setting and plan development phase are embedded in **each student's plan, and the questions are structured to promote student persistence; they are "What can support my success in achieving my goals?" and secondly "What may make it difficult for me to achieve my goals?"** With this, **we've begun talking about persistence, and it's proactive. I like to see how learners have considered their responses, and there are really no right or wrong answers.** With the diversity amongst our students, the responses run the gamut. Importantly, students have reflected on their own factors **supporting and hindering their persistence, and named for themselves what will help them "stay the course."** Promoting learner persistence will always be an active effort at CVABE.

Graduation Ceremony

On June 21, 2017, CVABE held a graduation ceremony for our students who had earned a high school credential, a diploma or GED. The Pavilion Auditorium, Montpelier, was at full capacity with family and friends who had come out to celebrate this momentous rite of passage. Congratulations to all of our graduates!

When she spoke to them, CVABE's Executive Director reminded students what Harriet Tubman had said "Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars and to change the world."



We will let pictures paint thousands of words!

Perspective from a student named Doug

I first came to CVABE just to keep my partner company while she studied for her GED. I couldn't really read, write or do math, but I wasn't going to join up. I got to know a teacher, Doris, and she talked me into joining up and taking classes myself.

I dropped out of high school in 11th grade – **it just wasn't for me. I saw what my partner was doing at CVABE, and realized that it was nothing like school.** I decided to better myself, for my kids, my partner, my life, my career and my future. I wanted to open doors.

I started doing basic math. I learned how to set up budgets, pay bills, and even how to write a check properly. I learned volume and area, which I use all the time in building, and also how to properly read measurements. After that, I moved on to a special reading program called Orton-Gillingham. I could barely read, and I had to learn how to do things by following steps through pictures. I can now read and understand, and I enjoy reading books!

I had never really thought about finishing high school. CVABE offered me the opportunity, and a **pathway to a diploma that could also get me a better job or career. I'm now looking into opening my own business with all the skills I've learned at CVABE.**

Some Student Work - Melvin Reyes, 2017

BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAINS OF VERMONT
YOU LIVE EN MI CORAZON
EVERYDAY I WAKE UP THE FIRST THING I SEE
IS YOUR IMMUTABLE POWER
SUN RAYS WARMING MY SKIN

Dark coming at night
Sadness is holding my hand
Happiness is gone

Pencil, you are the most powerful weapon
Humans have invented
With you at my side.
I can do whatever I want
In this LIFE

Waterbury Learning Center Finds a New Home



In April, Central Vermont Adult Basic Education's Waterbury Learning Center moved.

"A much larger space, at 31 North Main Street, opened up, and we jumped at the opportunity," says Carol Shults-Perkins, Executive Director. "The new space offers more opportunities for our adult learners in the Waterbury Learning Center. We can now hold small classes and can even offer "drop in" times, something that we have wanted to do but just didn't have the space for. We are excited for the opportunities that the space at 31 North Main opens up!"

CVABE's new Learning center is in the Rowe House, directly across the street from the new Waterbury library. "It's now like there's a corner of literacy and learning," says Shults-Perkins. "It's natural for CVABE to be so close to the library. It opens up so many opportunities and resources, all right there. We couldn't be more pleased." The new Learning Center is also ADA compliant and fully handicap accessible.

CVABE's Waterbury Learning is staffed by Teacher/Community Coordinator David Busker, as well as CVABE's Outreach Coordinator, Brian Kravitz, who works out of the office part-time.



Volunteer Profile - Ann Spearing – Volunteer Extraordinaire

Ann has worked with students in the Morrisville Learning Center since retiring in 2009 – primarily with students seeking to improve their English language skills but also those seeking science and math proficiency. Students from Thailand, Peru, Quebec, Vanuatu, Chile, India and China have been fortunate to receive her tutelage. A few years ago, Ann also worked with a teenaged student adopted from India at age 10. She tutored him to meet requirements for receiving his diploma at his local high school graduation. Currently Ann teaches a student from China who wishes to improve her verbal and reading skills for her employment.

Ann is Professor Emerita from Sterling College, where she taught for 10 years after serving as a professor at several colleges and universities and also as a Graduate College Dean at UVM. Education and learning have **been central to Ann's life.** After earning a BA in Biology and Chemistry, Master's degree in Plant Ecology, and Ph.D. in Plant Biophysics, she went on to take many graduate courses in French and earned a graduate certificate in Theology. She held a secondary science teaching certificate to facilitate grant writing for science funds for public schools. Ann also served as the New England manager for a high school student exchange program, supervising coordinators throughout the region and working with students from South America, Europe and Asia. As Graduate Dean, Ann participated in the AFRAD program, which brought students from African countries to US colleges and universities to pursue graduate degrees in fields important to their countries. Ann spent time each fall in Francophone African countries, interviewing applicants to the program. While in Africa, she learned basic communication in Lingala (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Swahili, the *lingua franca* of Africa. Now her interest has turned to learning Spanish since her daughter, a medical doctor, will be moving to Colorado.

Ann uses literature for teaching students. Depending upon their abilities, they often begin reading picture books, progress through primary and young adult level books and proceed to adult fiction and non-fiction by authors such as John Grisham and James Michener. Reading provides exposure to new vocabulary, colloquial expressions and societal cultures. Ann says that several books featuring immigrants resonate with all the **students.** Katherine Paterson's [The Day of the Pelican](#) and Betty Smith's [A Tree Grows in Brooklyn](#) raise issues of concern to immigrants from all countries. Reading also provides the perfect exposure to various **cultures, from childhood in the rural South in Paterson's [Bridge to Terabithia](#), to the Iroquois Seneca nation in Thomas Perry's murder mystery [A String of Beads](#), to Polish Jews' experiencing extermination by Nazis in Krystyna Chiger's [The Girl in the Green Sweater](#), to America's Southern white women and the black women they employ during the troubled years of the 1950s and 1960s in Kathryn Stockett's [The Help](#).**

To document student success, Ann keeps detailed records of each meeting with her students. Every lesson contains components of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. She often assigns a culminating reflective writing assignment for students after completing a book. Ann also uses crosswords and other word games to help in building English vocabulary.

Ann enjoys kayaking, cross-country skiing, hiking through the woods with her dog, going to concerts with her husband and friends, cooking and reading. She sings with various choral groups, including church choirs and the Mountain Choraleers. She is a mentor at an elementary school and is on the planning committee for the Lamoille Valley Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, through UVM, bringing speakers to local groups of retired persons.

When asked why she volunteers at CVABE, Ann replied that she enjoys working with the students. She said she has learned so much from them. For example, she heard first-hand of a **Chilean student's terror when her mother did not return on time from work one evening during the time of the "disappearings,"** when the Chilean government was imprisoning or killing thousands of citizens. Thankfully, the mother did return home, though she had had to find an alternate route because of soldiers in the streets.

Ann also mentioned that it is always gratifying to see the progress each student makes. One thing that she **will never forget is a student's telling her that the most important lesson she learned from Ann is always to have a book she is reading.** She will take this lesson with her throughout life, long after she leaves the classes here. Mission accomplished!

Ann continues to have a great love for learning. CVABE is so fortunate to have her as a volunteer in Lamoille County!



Central Vermont Adult Basic Education, Inc.

Local Partnerships in Learning
Serving Washington, Orange and Lamoille Counties

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 61
Montpelier, VT

Barre Learning Center
(and Administrative Office)
46 Washington St. – Ste. 100
Barre, VT 05641



Central Vermont Adult Basic Education, Inc.

CVABE has learning centers throughout the three-county region. Please call your local learning center for more information about student services or volunteer opportunities. You can email us at info@cvabe.org or visit our website at www.cvabe.org.



Learning Centers

Washington County

**Barre Learning Center
(and Main Office)**
46 Washington St. – Ste. 100
Barre, VT 05641
(802) 476-4588

Montpelier Learning Center

100 State St. – Ste. 3
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802) 223-3403

Waterbury Learning Center

31 North Main St.
Waterbury, VT 05676
(802) 244-8765

Orange County

Bradford Learning Center
24 Barton St. – Ste. 1
PO Box 917
Bradford, VT 05033
(802) 222-3282

Randolph Learning Center

10 South Main St.
PO Box 84
Randolph, VT 05060
(802) 728-4492

Lamoille County

Morrisville Learning Center
52 Portland St. – 2nd Fl.
PO Box 478
Morrisville, VT 05661
(802) 888-5531

Programs & Services

- Basic Skills: Reading, Writing, Math, Computer Literacy
- English Language Learning and Preparation for U.S. Citizenship
- High School Diploma and GED Programs
- Career and College Readiness
- Volunteer opportunities for community members

In our learning centers, community locations, workplaces and homes, CVABE teachers and volunteers work with adults and teens to meet their basic education needs. All tutoring and classes are free to the student.

We believe that a person who is literate has the essential key for self-understanding and for full and active membership in the world.

Ours is a two-part strategy for the realization of full literacy:

1. Providing basic education for adults and teens and
2. Involving the entire community so that the hopes and efforts of our students will be championed every step of the way.