



# Central Vermont Adult Basic Education, Inc.

Local Partnerships in Learning

Serving Washington, Orange, and Lamoille Counties

Fall/Winter 2020  
Newsletter

## Message from the Executive Director



Carol Shults-Perkins

The year 2020 will remain forever imprinted in the annals of history. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to deeply impact the lives of individuals, the multi-faceted sectors of our local communities, our state, the nation and the world, CVABE keeps moving forward with strict attention to providing services in a safe, effective and responsive manner.

We are celebrating 55 years as the area provider of Adult Education and Literacy services. Fifty-five years is a milestone worth pausing to acknowledge – it marks the organization’s growth and stability as a long-standing community-based organization providing education services to adults and teens all across the 47 towns and cities of Washington, Orange and Lamoille Counties.

The formation and nurturing of strong local partnerships to promote and provide our services has been key to our success and the successes of those we serve. Board members, staff, volunteers, businesses, public schools, libraries, human service agencies, financial supporters and students alike have worked together in vibrant and evolving partnerships to develop and deliver effective, life changing, personalized education services in:

- \* Basic skills: reading, writing, math and computer literacy
- \* High school diploma and GED credential programs
- \* English Language Learning and preparation for U.S. citizenship
- \* Career and college readiness

All of this effort, over the many years, has led to thousands upon thousands of education and career goals accomplished, dreams fulfilled, and neighbors and friends leading more successful, happy lives.

Carl Rogers, a widely respected psychologist, believed that every person could achieve their goals, wishes and desires in life. Here at CVABE we have always believed this truth, and that belief is actualized in our daily work.

*"The purpose of adult education is to help them to learn, not to teach them all you know and thus stop them from learning."*

Carl Rogers

## Student Work

### The Choice

The skies are gray,  
 The seas are black.  
 Birds sing no more,  
 Flowers cease to show their colors.  
 Fires burn bright and hot,  
 Consuming life on Earth.  
 Plastic islands float about,  
 With nothing but corpses to populate them.  
 And all but man,  
 Seems to suffer.  
 For up in the sky,  
 Above the gray clouds,  
 He sits on a throne of power.  
 Power built from weapons, machines,  
 And all the likes.  
 He is naive to think,  
 That he can survive,  
 For the difference between

Man and Ego,  
 Ego and man,  
 Has become hard to differentiate.  
 The world is ending,  
 But can he see that far below,  
 From his throne up in the clouds?  
 Perhaps one day,  
 He will see,  
 That he too is an animal  
 Of the Earth.  
 Perhaps he too,  
 Will begin to understand,  
 That gray skies,  
 Black seas,  
 Silence,  
 Emptiness,  
 Extreme heat,  
 Death,  
 Decay,

And a world  
 Filled with hate,  
 Is not natural.  
 perhaps one day,  
 He will realize,  
 That he too will die,  
 If nothing is to be done about it.  
 The question is,  
 When will he see,  
 That this is the future,  
 In which we are headed?  
 When will he understand,  
 That time is running out,  
 And that one day,  
 He too,  
 Will perish,  
 If nothing is to be done about it.

Sophia Clark

## ***News from the Road, Kate Nicolet***

When the COVID-19 pandemic reached Vermont in March 2020, and the Governor put into place a stay at home order, CVABE quickly adjusted its service delivery model to enable students to continue learning from home. We followed requirements and closed our learning center doors to in-person services, and transitioned to a fully distance learning model of instruction and student support. This lasted from mid-March until early June. We learned how to provide educational services through video. We designated financial resources to help purchase necessary distance learning technology for students. We continued to engage some volunteers to help learners remotely, and respected the wishes of others to take a pause during the uncertainty.



*Kate Nicolet*

We reached out to students to maintain connections and see how they were doing, to provide accurate information about the novel coronavirus, how to stay safe, to share information about food pickups and other support services, and helped some students understand how to address problems with internet access. No surprise, we found that some students needed and preferred paper learning packets as study tools. We learned that other students enjoyed and preferred distance learning, and we will continue to offer distance learning opportunities to our students into the future. CVABE is especially proud of our 46 learners who obtained their high school diplomas and GED credentials in program year 2020.



In early June, the six CVABE learning centers carefully opened for one on one, in-person lessons, by appointment only, with health precautions in place including requiring face coverings and frequent hand washing and sanitizing, extra cleaning, temperature and symptom screening, and six feet of distance between individuals. Teachers/ Community Coordinators can now carefully incorporate volunteers into service operations. We continue all of these precautions for in-person services and extend the availability of remote lessons as well.

Students tell us that things are not easy right now: lack of child care while their public schools operate on a reduced or remote schedule, loss of income and other needed supports, weak internet in sections of central Vermont, the need to stagger or share devices amongst household members, difficulty in finding quiet space for studying, feeling higher anxiety levels or more worry than usual, and/or the need to work shifts at supermarkets and other essential workplaces, and more.

CVABE is on track to serve 400+ students this program year. We will continue to use our creativity and expertise to help our students get through this, improve their skills and achieve their goals.

# **Welcome to CVABE**

## **Staff Profile**

We are very pleased to introduce our newest staff member, Cathy Deyo. Cathy started working as CVABE's Operations Assistant at the Barre Administrative Office and Learning Center in September.



*Cathy Deyo*

After earning an Associate's degree in Veterinary Office Assistance from Vermont Technical College in 1986, Cathy began her career with the State of Vermont and put her office skills to work. Cathy returned to college in 2001, when her daughter was two years old, earning her Bachelor's in Business Management, with a Concentration in Accounting, from Johnson State College's Adult Degree Program in 2005.

Once Cathy earned her degree, she was able to switch her career focus to accounting, working in several departments, before retiring, after 30 years, on July 31<sup>st</sup> of this year.

Cathy also has prior experience with CVABE as a volunteer Math tutor in Montpelier for a couple of years.

Cathy enjoys working with and for young people. She and her husband, Brian, were foster parents to several children over the years. She lives in East Montpelier, with her husband, daughter and father. She enjoys camping, sewing, knitting, and spending time with family and friends.

# Student Profile

Please meet Martha, who personifies the positive effects of our programs, from English Language Learning to high school credentialing to career and college readiness. Martha came to us with limited English skills and now has a high school diploma, professional license and owns her own business. We applaud Martha and the hundreds of others just like her.

*"I came from Honduras to Vermont in June of 2003 with my husband. We had lived in Oklahoma for two years and I didn't need to learn English, but in Vermont nobody spoke Spanish. My kid's father had to do everything.*

*My husband left and I was in Vermont with no family and no English. The only way that I communicated was by using Spanish-English dictionaries and pointing at words. A friend suggested that I go to CVABE. When I started there I didn't know any English, not even the difference between "hi" and "hello."*

*My teacher started by teaching me the important words that I'd needed to know. It gave me hope, like there was "light." When I learned the first words, it was like learning to talk again. It was so hard. We worked on phrases I'd need to get a job. All I could say was, "Hi, I am Martha"; "I looking for job." I was starting from the beginning. Within two months I was speaking English, and I didn't even realize it. I thought I'd never "get it," but I did.*



Martha

*My teacher always found a way to explain things to me. She taught me to ask questions, and that if I didn't give up people would help me. She had the time, patience and desire to help me learn. I'm deeply appreciative.*

*The highest level of school I finished in Honduras was 6<sup>th</sup> grade. That was considered a success. I found out that in the US, that wasn't even middle school. When my oldest child was a junior in high school he was working on college applications, and it wasn't something I could help him with. I wanted to be a good example for my kids, and asked my CVABE teacher about the GED and High School Completion program (HSCP). I wanted more education. My teacher explained the differences between the programs. I wanted to challenge myself and decided to get a high school diploma.*

*I always wanted to be a hairdresser, but it seemed a higher standard than I could ever reach. I had even tried to get into the Cosmetology program at the Central Vermont Career Center a few times on my own, but I never got accepted. They said that spots were limited, and they were always taken by enrolled high school students.*

*When I was working on my diploma with CVABE, I was given the opportunity to include career training as part of my high school completion requirements. I decided to go into a Culinary Arts training program because I could never get into the Cosmetology program. I put cosmetology as my second choice. It turns out that the culinary program was full, and I was asked to come in to interview for cosmetology. It felt like a miracle, too good to be true! I got accepted! It was a gift, like touching a star. I was so excited that I showed up for class one day early.*

*With only six months left in my high school completion and cosmetology programs, I needed money and felt that I needed to work full-time. My decision was made easy when my boss fired me. He did it to force me to finish school. I cried because I'd never been fired, but I knew that he was doing me a favor. He told me that I'd regret it the rest of my life if I quit school. The opportunity was presented to me and I couldn't quit. I had to finish my education and career goals.*

*I wanted the opportunities that a diploma gave. It kept me going. I knew that I would be a better example for my kids. "DON'T GIVE UP! LOOK FORWARD!" That kept me going, as well as all the people around me who were helping. I couldn't have done it without CVABE. I got my high school diploma and Cosmetology license.*

*I wanted my own salon, where I could give back by hiring people and paying them well, and also have cosmetology students come and cut hair in a real salon. I started collecting equipment and furniture, and in a year I had my own space in Montpelier. It's my salon! It was like a dream come true!*

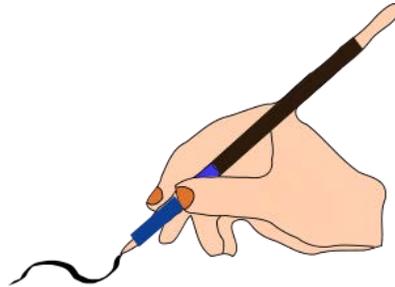
*I couldn't have done it without CVABE and the opportunities they gave. It was like I was lost in the dark, with no hope, and CVABE was a light. It opened opportunities for my life. Without school I wouldn't be where I am, able to provide for my kids. I feel very grateful for everyone I worked with. They made my life better. Not only me, my kids too. Because of CVABE I am able to be self-sufficient and provide. My family has hope. I now ask myself, "What is the next opportunity that will come to me?"*

# More Student Work

## in response to ee cummings

This man torments me  
This man that is intelligent  
Emotional  
Empathetic  
Layered  
Sensual  
And talented beyond his time  
But I have shut him out of my heart  
At least until  
He correctly uses an oxford comma

CS



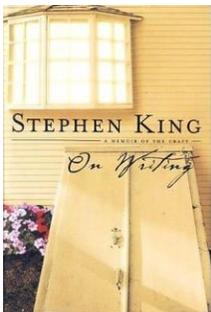
## Stephen King On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft

Stephen King's *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* is a two part book about his early writing career and the things he has learned from it. While I find there is a lot to learn from the memoir half of the book, I personally like the half where he shares his insight and knowledge. He has had a long and successful career and has a lot of wisdom to pass on to new writers. King shares his advice in two key parts: write with the door closed and rewrite with the door open.

Now there are many ways to interpret what this means. King even gives a few of his own, one being figurative and one literal. I think in my own words, it means to first write without fear or judgement. The 'door' is closed so no one will see if you make any mistakes: you should just write. Then after you are done and rewriting, you can open the 'door' and then worry about things like grammar and spelling mistakes.

For when you're writing with the door closed, he gives you a lot of helpful tips. One is to write quickly to avoid getting caught up in your head. "If I write rapidly, putting down my story exactly as it comes into my mind... I find that I can keep up with my original enthusiasm and at the same time outrun the self doubt" (210). Also relating to that, "One of the really bad things you can do to your writing is to dress up your vocabulary" (110). He says that we should use the first word that comes to mind because it's usually the best. If you get caught up trying to pick the perfect word, you won't be writing; you will be stuck googling synonyms for a word that was perfect as is. The whole idea is to just write and stay distraction free with the door closed.

When you rewrite with the door open, you are finally allowed to edit and change your writing. King says, "When you write a book, you spend day after day scanning and identifying the trees. When you're done, you have to step back and look at the forest" (200). So step back and look at your writing. He has a lot of helpful and colorful tips for editing your writing. My favorite is his thoughts on adverbs. He says, "I believe the road to hell is paved with adverbs, and I will shout it from the rooftops" (118). He also has strong opinions on using passive verbs. "I think timid writers like them for the same reason timid lovers like passive partners. The passive voice is safe" (116).



This book isn't just a writer's manual: do this, not that, and always dot your I's. It's not just about doors and if they're open or closed. This book teaches you to have both perseverance and confidence not just in yourself but in your writing, too. King teaches you that one rejection or a thousand nailed up on the wall should never stop you in writing or in life. You should just write and keep writing no matter what.

Anonymous

## CVABE's Community Partnerships – A Perspective About the Work of CVABE

~ ~ ~

*I am an Employment Advisor for Reach Up, working through the Family Center of Washington County. I have clients without high school credentials, and it's a major barrier for many, many jobs.*

*I had a client with the goal of "obtaining a high school diploma" on her Family Development Plan. Historically, though, she never followed through. Her experiences in high school were extremely negative, and she believed that CVABE was going to be just like school. After much time and cajoling, I finally got her to try it out. I drove her to the first meeting, and even went in with her. CVABE staff were extremely accommodating.*

*Once this person started the process, her attitude towards being in school completely changed. The 1-on-1 instruction made all the difference. It was a challenge that she actually looked forward to, and she eventually earned her GED. Most importantly, her time at CVABE and her GED helped her self-esteem. It not only opened doors for employment, it changed her relationship with her family. They had done all that they could to help her over the years, and were tired of supporting their adult daughter. They were frustrated, had done all they could to help her, and it negatively affected their relationship.*

*Once my client started going back to school, it instilled their confidence in her. She had been unemployed for a very long time, and was finally able to get a job that afforded independence and stability. As a result of her success, we were able to close her case.*

*Most people don't realize the fear involved for an adult to go back to school. Many of my clients have very low reading, math and comprehension levels. CVABE understands their fears and how to work with my clients. Their "customer service" and relationship-building is a huge part of the student success that we see.*

Gwen S

### Outreach – We Need Your Help!

CVABE's purpose is to provide free adult education and literacy instruction to adults age 16+, in Washington, Orange and Lamoille counties, and to engage the entire community in our students' efforts.

We are often the first step in *career and college readiness*, and as a result of COVID-19, our services are needed by more people now than ever. Unemployment is currently just below 5%, over twice the rate a year ago. Thousands of Central Vermonters have low literacy skills or are undereducated. They are in the lowest paying jobs, and are the most susceptible to the societal effects of pandemics. They need the skills to move from jobs to careers, or to make the bold move to go to college or other post-secondary schools. Our doors are open and we are here to help people reach their goals.

We need your help to get the word out about our *career and college readiness* services. In different times I'd be out and about, educating our community partners, both in the private and public sectors. We are, however, in a bit of a conundrum. At the time when the need for community outreach is the highest, I'm unable to "pound the pavement" and get the word out. Thus, we need to *engage the community*, and I respectfully ask that you help us out.



Brian Kravitz

It's really quite simple. Please keep our *career and college readiness* services mind, and let people know that we are here. We are so much more than basic literacy, high school credentialing and English Language Learning. We work with businesses to give their employees necessary skills in writing, math and computers. Perhaps someone has dreams of going to college, but it has been years since they've written a paper or read a textbook. We can help with those skills. We are often able to work with people who already have high school diplomas, or even some college under their belts. If you know anyone who may benefit from CVABE's free adult education programs, just let them know that we are here. Support of our students and mission takes many forms. It can be volunteering and financial donations. It's also helping us get the word out about *career and college readiness*. If every reader of this newsletter tells only one person, hundreds of our most vulnerable community members will learn about CVABE and have the opportunity to better their lives and become insulated from the current and future effects of natural disasters and pandemics. Thank you!

### There's No Better Time Than Now to Support CVABE's Students' Efforts

With high unemployment and increasing enrollment, your kindness will ensure that most vulnerable adults in your community have the opportunity to reach their career and college goals, to DREAM, BELIEVE, LEARN and ACHIEVE.

In honor of CVABE's 55<sup>th</sup> birthday, please consider becoming a sustaining donor. Visit [www.cvabe.org/donate](http://www.cvabe.org/donate), or contact Brian Kravitz for more information: [bkravitz@cvabe.org](mailto:bkravitz@cvabe.org) or (802) 476-4588



# 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 Main Office)**  
46 Washington St. – Ste. 100  
Barre, VT 05641



**BECOME A VOLUNTEER.**  
To inquire about opportunities contact us at 802-476-4588 or [info@cvabe.org](mailto:info@cvabe.org)  
Visit us at [www.cvabe.org](http://www.cvabe.org)

## 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](mailto:info@cvabe.org) or visit our website at [www.cvabe.org](http://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. – Ste. 1  
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 and Financial Literacy
- English Language Learning and Preparation for U.S. Citizenship
- High School Diploma and GED Programs
- Career, Technical Training 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.