



GREATER FALLS CONNECTIONS

ANNUAL REPORT
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021



FROM OUR STAFF

As we look over the pages of our 2020-2021 Annual Report, we are filled with gratitude to be serving this community. You are the heartbeat that inspires our work. Over the past year, we rose up with you to face exceptional challenges and as a result were able to accomplish so much. This snapshot is only a small snippet of the everyday heroism that takes place in homes, schools, businesses, and organizations in every corner of every neighborhood, hamlet, village, and town that make up our Windham Northeast community.

With you, we have made progress on bringing additional attention and resources to address key issues in our community: youth mental health, family resiliency, and the opioid crisis. Our commitment remains to lift up the voices and dreams of those most impacted by generational trauma and substance use disorder by creating more avenues for diverse and inclusive leadership and participation.

Each year we are building on the experiences of the past. You can count on us to continue our work with care and dedication to our shared values and dreams for our community. We look forward to the year ahead!

Laura

LAURA SCHAIRBAUM

Deb

DEB WITKUS

PEER-BASED SUPPORTS

We can't say it enough, because we believe it wholeheartedly: "The opposite of addiction is connection" (Johann Hari). Our relationship-based approach helps youth and families heal from the impact of generational substance abuse and trauma. As a result of our efforts over the past year, we have seen LGBTQ and other youth and young adults make supportive and transformative connections within our community, whether it is with Outright Vermont (a statewide LGBTQ+ youth organization) or by incorporating peer-based mental health supports into our youth programming.

With Friends for Change Youth Club (a program of Youth Services of Windham County), we worked to secure funding for and co-facilitate "A Summer to Remember" camp with 15 youth and three young adult leaders hosted at The Compass School. The camp provided "trauma-transformed" healing and connected spaces through outdoor play, youth-led activities, and community-building.

Another key partner in the peer-based movement is Turning Point Recovery Center of Springfield. This past August, Turning Point opened their first satellite office and community space called "Turning Point South" in the carriage house at Parks Place Community Resource Center. So much to celebrate!

Community-Building Circle with Friends For Change Youth Club





Carmina Garciadealba from Vermont 2-1-1 and Karen Brook from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Vermont helping with April's "Bike to the Box" event during National Prescription Drug Take Back Day at the Bellows Falls Police Department

OVERDOSE RESPONSE

As we all know, the opioid epidemic continues to challenge communities across the country. Several years ago in response, a group of community partners came together to make sure life-saving services are available to community members who are impacted by opioid addiction and their family members. This community collaboration includes Greater Falls Community Justice Center, AIDS Project of Southern Vermont, Turning Point Recovery Center of Springfield, and Bellows Falls Police Department.

Because of these important connections, our community has been able to put the overdose reversal drug Narcan in the hands of those who may need it for a loved one. These efforts have also helped establish harm reduction services in our area through a collaboration with the Windham County Consortium on Substance Use (COSU).

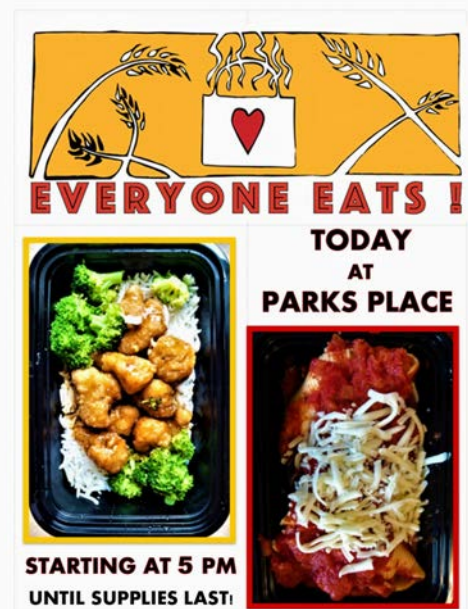
GFC was instrumental in providing support and assistance for the expansion of Turning Point's *Supportive Outreach Project* into Bellows Falls. This dynamic collaboration with the Bellows Falls Police Department pairs trained recovery coaches with individuals and family members within 72 hours of an overdose. This coming year, it has been expanded to surrounding communities through the Vermont State Police - Westminster Barracks.

EVERYONE EATS!

In March 2020, GFC became a core member and fiscal agent for Rockingham Help & Helpers (RHH), the local Covid-19 response group. Over the course of this collaboration RHH, in partnership with Chester Helping Hands and Springfield Family Center, coordinated 550 restaurant-quality meals per week at the peak of the program through the Vermont Everyone Eats! Program. Participating restaurants in our area included Jamaican Jewelz, Grafton MKT, Leslie's Tavern, Moon Dog Cafe, Wunderbar, and Allen Brother's Farm Stand.

Many, many thanks to the core team who organized Rockingham Help & Helpers over the course of the project: Parks Place Community Resource Center (Megan Applegate and Julie Cermola), Our Place Drop-in Center (Lisa Pitcher and Sarah Campbell), Town of Rockingham (Gary Fox), Rockingham Free Public Library (Sam Maskell), Laurel Green, Leslie Goldman, Lyn Parker Haas, Amy Howlett, and Diana Jones. And many other donors, volunteer drivers, and mask-makers!

Members of the Everyone Eats planning team gathering at the RHH wrap-up celebration





Ron Bos-Lun and Aurelia Critchfield work on a craft during a past year's Park-a-Palooza

FAMILY RESILIENCY & ACES

In response to generational trauma in our community, GFC applied for and was awarded a competitive FY 2021 Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) Local Drug Crises Grant in the amount of \$50,000 per year for five years by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

We are thrilled to be focusing on activities that will address and reduce the impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Greater Falls Connections will support training and technical assistance for employers, health care providers, schools, mentoring and “third space” programs. Our vision is to foster partnerships that help us create a trauma-informed community where families heal and thrive.

Youth from GFC’s Above the Influence, co-facilitated with Friends for Change, will also learn and apply Restorative Practices to create community healing, resiliency, and increase peer support. Youth and family members most impacted by generational trauma and substance use disorder will be directly involved in project planning, outreach, and leadership.

THE NUMBERS

FY2021 FINANCIALS

July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

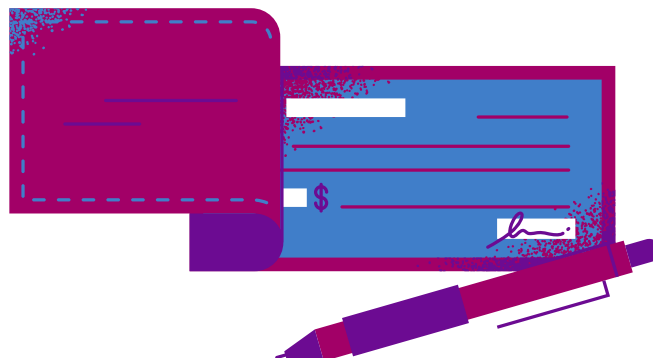


INCOME

Federal Grant (Drug-Free Communities)	\$ 96,756
Vermont Dept. of Health (Federal sources)	\$ 103,243
Subcontracts	\$ 13,214
Towns (Rockingham & Westminster)	\$ 6,500
Donations & Other Funds	\$ 6,806
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TOTAL INCOME	\$ 226,519

EXPENSES

Staff Salary & Benefits	\$ 154,941
Contractual Services	\$ 17,358
Operating Expenses	\$ 27,964
Fiscal Agent	\$ 23,320
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TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 223,583



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to all the wonderful people who have worked tirelessly over the past year to move our work forward.

Partners and Donors

We could not do this work without the overwhelming support and dedication of our community: over 200 individuals, organizational partners, or donors who give their time and resources to make our vision a reality.

Advisory Board

Shelby Bixler, Friends for Change YA leader
Katrina Bostwick, Friends for Change YA leader
Kiernon Galandak-Cochran, Friends for Change YA leader
Marty Gallagher, Greater Rockingham Area Services
Meghan Licciardi, Youth Services, Inc.
Alex Stradling, Falls Area Community Television (FACT-TV)
Doreen Stoodley, Edward Jones Investments

Staff

Laura Schairbaum, director
Deb Witkus, outreach coordinator
Temporary staff in 2020-2021: Ginger Driscoll, Kelly Regan,
Joshua Goodwin, Hailee Galandak-Cochran, and Billie-Jo Wilder

Annual Report Design Work

Scott Sharland, Sustainable Action Consulting

CONTACT

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