



## The Vermont Women's Fund 2010 Grant Awards

### Invest in Women ❖ Build Strong Communities

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**The Vermont Women's Fund** (VWF) harnesses the collective power of giving to promote leadership, equality, self-sufficiency and philanthropy for Vermont women and girls. A member of the International Women's Funding Movement and a component fund of the Vermont Community Foundation, we are Vermont's only grantmaker dedicated to supporting programs that offer women and girls the tools they need to build strong, healthy, empowered lives.

Over the past 13 years The Vermont Women's Fund has provided over \$1 million to 129 organizations throughout the state. We are pleased to announce our 2010 grant awards totaling \$122,315 to 17 organizations, and proudly support the work of the following organizations that share our vision for Vermont women and girls.

#### Economic Security and Self Sufficiency

**Association of Africans Living in Vermont** \$6,500

*"New Farms for New Americans" Chittenden County*

New Farms for New Americans offers a workforce training and microenterprise development program that works with 30 African refugee women and their families in the Burlington area. The program provides training for the women in business development, financial skills, English language, production, marketing, and local culture, as well as providing access to land, water, and other farming infrastructure for the women as the work to develop farm and food-based microenterprises.

#### **Mercy Connections**

*"POWER Initiative" Chittenden County* \$10,000

The Pathways Organized With Engagement Results (POWER) Initiative comprehensively organizes Mercy Connections' best practices in women's empowerment of those living in poverty into three transformative phases. Beginning with Phase 1 curriculum, women emerge from learned helplessness with newfound self confidence and support. In Phase 2, participants study economics and learn to take an active role in setting their life course toward self-sufficiency with curriculum designed to help them to build their resources for a better life. Finally Phase 3 provides a community leadership training curriculum where women can gain essential skills to become fully engaged citizens able to help address the issues of poverty in our communities.

#### **Northeast Kingdom Community Action, Inc.**

*"CARS Program for Women" Caledonia, Essex and Orleans County* \$8,000

CARS for Women addresses the combined need for financial literacy education and reliable transportation in the Northeast Kingdom. The program teaches women to advance their lives financially through credit repair and education. Upon completion of a 6 week financial literacy course, the program assists participants in obtaining a low interest auto loan through a local partnered credit union, after which they must continue to meet with program staff for monthly budget check-ins and support for the duration of their vehicle loan.

**Orange County Parent Child Center**

*"Families Learning Together" Orange County*

\$6,055

This intensive, holistic program seeks to equip young mothers with the confidence and skills to acquire and maintain gainful and rewarding employment; set and achieve educational goals; and better navigate parenting and financial decisions. An education plan is developed with each participant based on need and interest, as well as opportunities for soft skills and work training experience. In addition, parent education classes are offered to increase the mother’s knowledge of best-practice parenting and improve outcomes for their children.

**Project Against Violent Encounters**

*"Project New Start" Bennington County*

\$6,500

This successful, ongoing project offers coordinated and comprehensive transitional housing and case management to victims of domestic and sexual violence. Services include budgeting and financial literacy training; workshops on self-image and self-esteem; nurturing parenting classes; and housing advocacy and landlord/tenant mediation to secure safe, affordable housing. In addition, guidance and support is provided for those women wanting to move forward with their education and/or employment.

**United Counseling Service of Bennington County**

*"Teens in Life Transition (TiLT)" Bennington County*

\$10,000

The TiLT project will help provide young women, age 16 to 21, from low-income backgrounds with the tools needed to live and succeed independently. Over the course of a year, participants will attend a ten-week Life Skills Class, including training around budgeting, credit, and banking; a six-week Cooking for Life for Youth class, emphasizing the importance of nutritious meals and how to shop and cook on a budget; and a 25 weeks of group discussion focusing on healthy lifestyle choices, positive self-worth, and positive peer supports. Program staff will provided ongoing one-on-one guidance and support, and work with the young women to develop and achieve a personal goal by the project’s end.

**Development of Leadership Skills**

**Girls Scouts of the Green and White Mountains**

*"Girls Rock the Capitol" Statewide*

\$7,500

An internship program for girls in grades 9 to 12, Girls Rock the Capitol pairs women mentors from the Vermont legislature with teenage girls to encourage their voice and help them better envision themselves as full members of their state with the power and skill to affect change. Through this hands-on experience, girls learn about activism, leadership, public policy, civic engagement, critical thinking, and women’s political history.

**Rosie’s Girls Rutland**

*"Rosie’s Girls" Rutland County*

\$6,000

Now in its second year, this program will engage 24 girls, age 11 to 13, in a two-week summer program based on the Rosie's Girls curriculum that aims to infuse young adolescent girls with a strong sense of self and provide opportunities to find positive ways of taking risks, becoming self-reliant and exercising leadership. Partnering with local tradeswomen, the program builds self-esteem, perseverance, and independence through learning and applying basic skills in non-traditional trades. Other special components of this year's program will include "woman of the day", "women in media" and "challenge by choice."

### **Three River Valley Regional Business Education Partnership**

*"Starfish Mentoring Initiative" Windsor County*

\$5,150

The only program of its kind in the Springfield area, the Starfish Mentoring Initiative provides positive adult role models and consistent, one-on-one relationships to at-risk youth. These vital relationships help children build self-esteem, improve their academic performance, expand their view of the world, develop a sense of community, realize their potential and build their own vision for the future. In turn, the child is able to make better life-long decisions and contributions to their school, work and community. Though the program serves both girls and boys, about 60% of the mentees are female with over 40 girls currently being served.

### **Vermont Humanities Council**

*"Women Empowered: Shared Stories – New Horizons"*

\$4,736

*Bennington and Rutland County*

This collaborative program will engage women in poverty and other challenging circumstances served by four social service and educational organizations in the Rutland and Bennington areas. Participants gain a better understanding of themselves and their future possibilities by reading, discussing, writing, and meeting with the author of, "Welfare Brat", a powerful childhood memoir that illustrates the causes of welfare dependence, generational poverty, and submission to a popular culture that values sexuality more than self-esteem and self-sufficiency. By reflecting upon their shared experiences, giving voice to their stories and real-life challenges, and considering better possibilities for their future, this project seeks to help participants grow in self-confidence and self-esteem, and gain a greater understanding of themselves, their circumstances, and their potential.

### **Vermont Youth Conservation Corps**

*"Female Leadership Development Crew" Statewide*

\$5,500

The Female Leadership Development Crew (FLDC) is an intensive, 8-week experience that provides young women, age 18 to 24, with an opportunity for growth and leadership development through high-priority conservation work. In a challenging and supportive all-women environment, participants gain a deeper understanding of leadership, responsibility, goal setting, self-confidence, teamwork, and professional etiquette while learning from dynamic leaders in the conservation field. Currently, only 20% of the workforce in the conservation and natural resource field is women, with only 2% in a leadership role.

### **YWCA of Vermont**

*"Girls Leadership Initiative" Statewide*

\$10,000

This program provides a series of four weekend leadership retreats for girls in 9th and 10th grades from across Vermont that emphasize Civic Leadership and Community Service, Environmental Leadership, and Leadership for Social Equity. The curriculum and activities build self-awareness, experiential learning and skill development, with an emphasis on the principles of community organizing.

## **Access to Healthy Lives**

### **Winooski Department of Recreation and Wellness**

*"Girls Only!" Chittenden County*

\$3,000

This project will allow the Underground Teen Center in Winooski to offer specific programming that has been requested by area girls, in a safe and inspiring "Girls Only" space. Activities will be held twice a week, and will include jewelry making, dance classes, and cooking lessons, as well as homework assistance. The girls will also have access to Kids Cafe, a partnership with the Vermont Foodbank that provides a free dinner to kids at the Teen Center several nights a week.

## **Safe Environments and Freedom from Violence**

### **Umbrella, Inc.**

*"The Dance – Outreach to Older Adults Confronting Abuse"* \$3,374  
*Caledonia, Essex and Orleans County*

Through a film presentation and group discussion, this collaborative outreach will engage individuals and communities at local senior centers about the challenges faced by older women who are survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. The program is designed to help older women gain a better understanding of abusive relationships, come to terms with conflicted feelings about abusive partners who have died or who now require care, and understand the resources and support available when dealing with past or current victimization.

### **Vermont Law School – South Royalton Legal Clinic**

*"Vermont Immigrant Assistance" Statewide* \$10,000

This ongoing, specialized program provides pro bono legal services on behalf of low-income immigrants and refugees, with special expertise in serving battered immigrant women and their children who are in danger of deportation if they leave their abuser. Under direct attorney supervision, Vermont Law School student clinicians work with clients to support them in moving away from a life of abuse, while retaining their legal status.

### **Women's Crisis Center**

*"Access to Legal Representation" Windham County* \$10,000

This project will provide direct funding of legal consultation and representation for women who have experienced domestic and/or sexual violence, and are unable to obtain such support on their own in matters of Relief from Abuse hearings, child custody and divorce. By providing vital access to legal representation, the project removes barriers to justice for women and their children who might otherwise opt to remain in abusive relationships for fear of negative consequences, and offers very real and necessary options for safety and self-determined legal goals.

### **Women's Rape Crisis Center**

*"Parenting for Safe Environments in the Next Generation" Chittenden County* \$10,000

Based on previous successful curriculum, this project will redevelop and implement on-going educational support groups at three expanded locations, reaching 50 at-risk pregnant and parenting teens residing at Lund Family Center and 50 adult mothers residing at Northern Lights and COTS. In a peer support group setting, participants will learn awareness, personal and community safety, and intervention and sexual violence prevention skills with a goal of ensuring a safer environment for themselves and their children.