



The Vermont Women's Fund

A Component Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation

Philanthropy Inspiring Vermont Women and Girls Since 1995 Spring/Summer 2010

Investing in Vermont Women

The 2010 Holly D. Miller Awards

At the Vermont Women's Fund we know a good investment when we see one. That's why we invest our donors' dollars in the future of Vermont women and girls. Reports from our grantees consistently show us how our grant dollars are transformed into programs that change individual lives. They also grow our state's social capital as the women and girls who benefit reach out and influence others in their communities.

Each year we honor these women and girls by asking our grantees to nominate an outstanding participant in their program funded by the VWF for the Holly D. Miller Award, named for the Burlington philanthropist and former Women's Fund Council member. On May 13th, at our **Celebration of Vermont Women** held at the Coach Barn at Shelburne Farms, the three awardees clearly demonstrated the rewards of our investments.



Pictured from left: VWF Director, Catherine Kalkstein; award winners Fatuma Malande, Kayla Carter and Brandy Newman; and Holly Miller. Photo—Gillian Randall

"I am no longer that invisible girl. I am strong, confident, independent...a role model and a leader. I am myself, a self-defined woman."

Kayla Carter

Fatuma Malande a Somali Bantu, fled her homeland in Somalia as a child in 1992 and spent the next 14 years in a refugee camp in Kenya before coming to her new home in Burlington in 2006. Last year she joined the **New Farms for New Americans** (NFNA) program developed by VWF grantee, Association of Africans Living in Vermont, in partnership with the Intervale Center. The program offers over 50 Africans from four countries

a chance to use their native agricultural skills as a way to grow healthy food for their families, earn money through selling their produce, and become more connected to their new home in Vermont.

After participating in a 10-week training, Fatuma, a

stay-at-home mother of six young children, planted a 50' by 50' plot at the Ethan Allen Homestead and grew a wide variety of vegetables. According to program specialist Josie Weldon, Fatuma really made her mark as an entrepreneur at the weekly North End Farmers' Market where she sold her vegetables and homemade samosas, the triangular meat, potato and vegetable pies she learned to make while in Kenya.

The NFNA taught Fatuma to weigh the produce, make change and most importantly interact with her American customers. By the end of the season, she needed little assistance at her stand and had acquired enough English to sell on her own. Fatuma, with her bright headscarves and radiant smile became a big hit at the market and was bringing in several hundred dollars a week, a big boost to her family budget. She gained a sense of pride and became an equal partner with her husband as they learned to navigate the complexities of their new life in Vermont.

This year Fatuma, with her new driver's license, is expanding her sales to other markets. She says she is looking forward to meeting new people and learning even more about the business that is giving her the chance to be a role model for her children and gain a strong foothold in her new home. *Continued on page 7*



The Vermont Women's Fund harnesses the collective power of giving to promote leadership, equality, self-sufficiency and philanthropy for Vermont women and girls.

Our grants are made from an endowment built by gifts of all sizes from more than 1,000 Vermonters.

In 13 years of grant making we have invested over \$1.1 million in 129 organizations statewide, working to ensure that all women and girls realize their potential and building strong, vibrant communities throughout Vermont.

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Bridging the Gap

By Lauren Geiger Moye—Council Chair

What separates a young woman who feels invisible from one who can confidently say she wants to be President of the United States?



Lauren (rt) with her daughter, Lizzie

I was especially moved by the speech that one of our Holly D. Miller Award recipients gave at our annual Celebration of Vermont Women event in May. Kayla, age 17, spoke about how Girls Move Mountains, an organization that sponsors a mountain biking program she participated in, changed her life.

She said, "The truth is I was invisible my whole life until I did Dirt Divas. I've learned that it's not okay for me to stand in the shadows and be the invisible girl...Because Girls Move Mountains invested in me I am no longer that invisible girl. I am strong, confident, independent, and secure with myself and my body. I am a role model and a leader. I am myself, a self defined woman."

I thought more about this at our next Council Meeting when I heard a report from one of our Council members who told us about her recent trip to a Young Leaders in Government conference in DC. At one session, participants were asked to reveal the highest level of public office they aspire to. A 19 year old girl said confidently, "I want to be President of the United States."

On my way home, I thought about the gap between all the girls out there who feel invisible, versus the girls who are able to confidently say they want to be President. The Vermont Women's Fund is there to help bridge that gap by funding programs that provide opportunities for young women to develop their voice, make healthy choices and work toward change.

When I woke up the other morning I heard the news that three new women around the country had won their states' primary elections. Although the US still ranks 69th in the world for its representation of women in elected office, it looks like we may be moving slowly in the right direction.

Please consider supporting The Vermont Women's Fund as we work to build the next generation of leaders one woman at a time. Your gift is a powerful tool for change. It is more than a donation; it is an investment in women who are working to improve their lives, and build a stronger future for themselves, their families and their communities.

Collective Power

Instead of adding another spring appeal to your mailbox we've included a convenient envelope in this newsletter. Or, you can also visit our web site at www.vermontwomensfund.org to make a secure online donation.



As always, your partnership is what makes our work on behalf of Vermont women and girls possible.

With a gift to The Vermont Women's Fund you'll join women and men from all walks of life working to ensure a strong and vibrant future for Vermont!

2010 Grant Awards

In 13 years of grantmaking, The Vermont Women's Fund has awarded over **\$1.1 million** to 129 organizations around the state. We are Vermont's only grantmaker dedicated to investing in our state's women and girls by supporting programs that offer them the tools they need to build strong, healthy, empowered lives.

For 2010, our grant awards totaled \$122,315 to 17 organizations. Their vital and innovative programming, along with that of countless others around the state, has a direct impact on our communities and is helping to ensure a vibrant future for Vermont. We are proud to support the following grantees who share our vision for Vermont women and girls.



Association of Africans Living in Vermont

"New Farms for New Americans"

Chittenden County

\$6,500

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 in business development, financial skills, English language, production, marketing, and local culture; access to land, water, and other farming infrastructure; and marketing support for women who are developing farm and food microenterprises.



Photo credit—George Wright

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.

Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mtns

"Girls Rock the Capitol"

Statewide

\$7,500

This internship program for girls in grades 9 to 12, pairs women mentors from the Vermont legislature with teenage girls to 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.



Northeast Kingdom Community Action

"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. Up to 50 women will be served through the program in the coming year.

Congratulations to our
2010 Grantees!

2010 Grant Awards

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

\$10,000

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.

Rosie's Girls—Rutland

"Rosie's Girls"

Rutland County

\$6,000

Now in it's second year, this two-week summer program based on the Rosie's Girls ® curriculum, infuses girls age 11 to 13 with a strong sense of self and provides hands-on opportunities for positive risk-taking, self-reliance and leadership. Through partnerships



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 world view, develop a sense of community, realize their potential and build a vision for their 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.



Umbrella, Inc.

"The Dance — Outreach to Older Adults Confronting Abuse"

Caledonia, Essex and Orleans County \$3,374

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.

United Counseling Service of Bennington

"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 life-

style choices, positive self-worth, and positive peer supports. Program staff will provide 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.

Vermont Humanities Council

"Women Empowered — Shared Stories New Horizons"

Bennington and Rutland County \$4,736

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, in 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 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.

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps

"Female Leadership Development Crew"
Statewide

\$5,500

This intensive 8-week program provides young women, age 18 to 24, with the 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, teamwork, self-confidence, goal-setting, 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.



Winooski Department of Recreation and Community 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.

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.

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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.

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.

Congratulations to our 2010 Grantees!

In Their Own Words...

Reflections from Girls on the Run

"I learned not to judge others and that you are good just how you are."

Amanda, GOTR participant, age 9

"Everyone was so worried that 'Annie' wouldn't make it through the ten weeks of the program because she's challenged with learning. I knew it would be different doing something cool after school, so I really encouraged people to support her. It was a little tricky, but most days she would be at our practices smiling. She really LOVED being part of Girls on the Run, and she finished with a smile. She was so proud!

Thank you for making it possible for so many disadvantaged girls at our school to participate. I can tell you that this experience will change them, for sure. They now know the power of trying something new, setting a goal and achieving it!"

Sally Hayes, Coach

"I like that we dealt with real things that can help us succeed in real life, and that the program made me feel proud of what I can do."

Mariah, GOTR participant, age 10



"They taught me how to think about my inner self."

Katie, GOTR participant, age 10

"She said that Girls on the Run was the very first sport that her daughter, 'Lori', has ever participated in. Cost was always an obstacle for their family, and their car wasn't reliable. She was nervous that Lori wouldn't be able to keep up as she was overweight. I told her that there were girls of all shapes and sizes that participated and that everyone could go at their own pace. I emphasized that we were a team, that everyone fit it.

She told me Lori came home yesterday exhausted and proud of herself! She couldn't stop talking about the program and how much fun it was. It brought tears to my eyes to hear what an impact Girls on the Run was having after only a few sessions."

Anne Rogers, Coach

"I like how we all respected each other and ourselves."

Jenny, GOTR participant, age 9

Girls on the Run Vermont (GOTR) received a \$5,000 grant from the Women's Fund in 2009. The program strives to prepare girls for a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living, and reaches more than 2,000 girls, in grades 3 to 8, of all fitness and income levels from around the state. To learn more about GOTR call Nancy Heydinger, Director, at (802) 246-1476 or visit www.girlsontherunvermont.org.

Fleeing an abusive relationship, **Brandy Newman** of St. Johnsbury, and her two young teenage daughters, came to **Umbrella's Horizon House** seeking safe haven. During her six-month residency at the shelter, Brandy showed her true colors as a strong, generous mother and friend even in a time of crisis. She was determined to build a new life for herself and her children, even as she reached out to help others in the shelter.

According to Advocacy Program Coordinator Zoe Gascon, Brandy kept her daughters in school, supporting their extra-curricular activities and keeping them on track academically, while at the same time finishing her own bachelors degree in business. In addition, Brandy maintained a work placement with a local community action group and volunteered to help the shelter staff with cleaning and daily tasks. As if that were not enough, Brandy also became an advocate and supporter of the other women at Horizon House; helping with their academic studies or meal preparation, providing a listening ear whenever they needed to talk, and using her experiences to help them with their own recovery.

It is no surprise that when Brandy left the shelter in February, she took Umbrella's 20-hour Volunteer Advocacy training, qualifying her to be a Domestic and Sexual Violence Advocate. She continued to help out at Horizon House until she found full-time employment, and in her spare time now serves as a volunteer for their 24-hour hotline. Clearly, Umbrella's investment in Brandy's gigantic heart and generous spirit has paid huge dividends, giving her the strength and confidence to help not only herself and her family, but also other Vermont women as they work to change their lives.

Kayla Carter, of Barnet had to be dragged by her mother to her first day of **Dirt Divas** mountain biking camp six years ago. As a shy 11-year-old, Kayla considered herself "an invisible girl," but camp director Nadine Budbill knew there was more beneath her quiet exterior. She hoped the week-long intensive program of mountain biking enhanced by journal writing, self-reflection, group dynamics and discussions on building healthy female relationships would bring Kayla out of her shell and help her to shine. Though that first year took Kayla way beyond her comfort zone, she kept coming back for more.

Now six years later, the vivacious 17-year-old is entering her third year as a junior instructor, helping a new set of girls to get on their bikes, power through obstacles and cheer each other on even after spills and set-backs. Kayla has grown into a strong, vocal young woman just as the Dirt Divas program itself has grown into the statewide, year-round organization, **Girls Move Mountains**. Beyond mountain biking, Kayla now excels in other sports and is actively involved with the Future Business Leaders of American program. She is on the Reparative and Community Service Resource Board at her school and has developed a strong interest in women's issues, currently doing her Junior research project on the media's influence on young women.



Award winner, Kayla Carter
Photo—Gillian Randall

At the Celebration of Vermont Women event in May, a very confident Kayla stood up in front of 200 people and delivered a moving testimonial declaring, "Because Girls Move Mountains invested in me I am no longer that invisible girl. I am strong, confident, independent, and secure with myself and my body. I am a role model and a leader. I am myself, a self-defined woman."

While women's funds have long known that investing in women is a powerful tool for change, others are now beginning to see that power. The White House established a Council on Women and Girls, renowned journalists are writing books about it and world leaders are issuing statements. They recognize what the women's funding movement has known for years: Empowering women is one of the most effective and positive forces for improving conditions in your local community and around the globe.

The recipients of the Holly D. Miller Award illustrate that transformational power. Looking at this year's award winners, it's easy to see how an investment in The Vermont Women's Fund is an investment in the women and girls who make Vermont strong. Through the Celebration on May 13th, the VWF's one large fundraising event of the year, we were able to raise over \$30,000 in support of Vermont women and girls. This is a shining example of the collective power of philanthropy, and we're very grateful to everyone who helped to make this inspiring event a success!

To learn more about the annual Celebration of Vermont Women and read stories of past Holly D. Miller Award winners, please visit our website: www.vermontwomensfund.org

We would like to extend a special thank you to our lead sponsors for the 2010 Celebration of Vermont Women — Community National Bank and National Life Group.



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Invest in Women ❖ Build Strong Communities

Did you know...

This Year Marks the 90th Anniversary of Suffrage!

The 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote, was certified on August 26, 1920 — 144 years after the Declaration of Independence.

August 26th, the date of this historic success, is now designated as **Women's Equality Day**.

We should take great pride in all that's been accomplished in those 90 years, but also recognize that more work needs to be done to truly achieve gender equality.

Consider the facts...

- Vermont women still earn an average of just 82 cents for each dollar earned by a man.
- In 2010, more women were elected Congress than ever before yet they still only hold 17% of the seats.
- While Vermont ranks 3rd in the nation for number of women in the legislature, that amount is only 37%.

Celebrate Women's Equality Day with an investment in Vermont Women, for a stronger, more equitable Vermont!

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