



National

VOLUNTEER WEEK

Volunteers play a key role at Vermont's state parks

By MARIN HOWELL

VERMONT — Behind each of the 50-plus state parks in Vermont is a team of people helping keep those spaces in good shape and running smoothly. Along with seasonal staff, those teams include volunteers of all ages, from around Vermont and beyond.

Volunteers help out with a variety of tasks at state parks, tackling anything from cleaning campsites to removing invasive species.

"The impact of volunteers in Vermont state parks is vast," said Rebecca Roy, interpretive program manager for Vermont State Parks and coordinator of its volunteer program.

Volunteers help out at the four state parks in Addison County: D.A.R. State Park in Addison, Kingsland Bay State Park and Button Bay State Park in Ferrisburgh, and Branbury State Park in Salisbury.

There are a few different types of volunteer roles with Vermont state parks — long-term campground volunteers, short-term volunteering and volunteer groups.

Roy said there are typically 70-75 campground volunteers living and working at state parks across Vermont each year, representing the biggest cohort in the volunteer program. Individuals taking on that role sign on for a stay of anywhere from several weeks to the entire operating season (May through October). They work around 20 hours a week for one person, 30 hours if a couple is volunteering together, Roy said.

"In exchange they get a full service campsite, and they do all the things that other park staff do — clean bathrooms, check in guests, weed the gardens, mow the lawns, do some educational programming," she said. "They're really invested in the park team and part of the park community, and we rely on those folks to manage a lot of our parks across the state."

Roy noted that parks on average have one or two campground volunteers working throughout the season. It's an arrangement

that benefits not only the parks and their visitors, but volunteers, as well.

Roy shared some of the comments that campground volunteers around the state included in an online survey at the end of the 2025 season.

"Volunteering at a Vermont State park is a great way to experience the beauty of the Green Mountains and provide hospitality to those who visit," one volunteer wrote.

Another comment shed light on the work of volunteers at Quechee State Park in Hartford.

"We helped in the campground with cleaning bathrooms, showers, and emptying fire pits after campers left," they wrote. "It was easy work and left plenty of time to explore the area. The people we met were friendly and enjoyed their visits. The staff were great and we were very sorry to leave."

Community members also have opportunities to volunteer at state parks through short-term stints. Roy said this cohort typically consists of people living in the surrounding community who volunteer at a park throughout the season.

"We do have folks that love their local park, want to contribute to it, and they will work whatever hours they want to volunteer for, and they come in and help with whatever their passions are," Roy said.

For example, helping with gardening.

"We have beautiful gardens in our parks, and it takes a lot

of energy and effort to clean those up and keep them looking nice," Roy said. "When we have volunteers who are really interested in gardening come in, then they can take the gardens under their wings and make them look more beautiful than we can."

She pointed to some of the other ways short-term volunteers can help out based on their interests, such as painting or cleaning up litter on beaches.

State parks also receive support from various volunteer groups, which Roy said are often corporate groups, nonprofits or student groups from around the state.

She underscored the impact such efforts can have at a park, pointing to how school groups have worked to remove invasive plant species at Bomoseen State Park in Rutland County for years.

"You go into (an) area of the park which used to be just an assortment of every kind of invasive plant that you could ever imagine, and now it's just native plant community because of these school groups coming in," she explained. "They've changed the ecosystem in the park to a native ecosystem, and then everybody who visits there gets to see, this is what a natural plant community should look like."

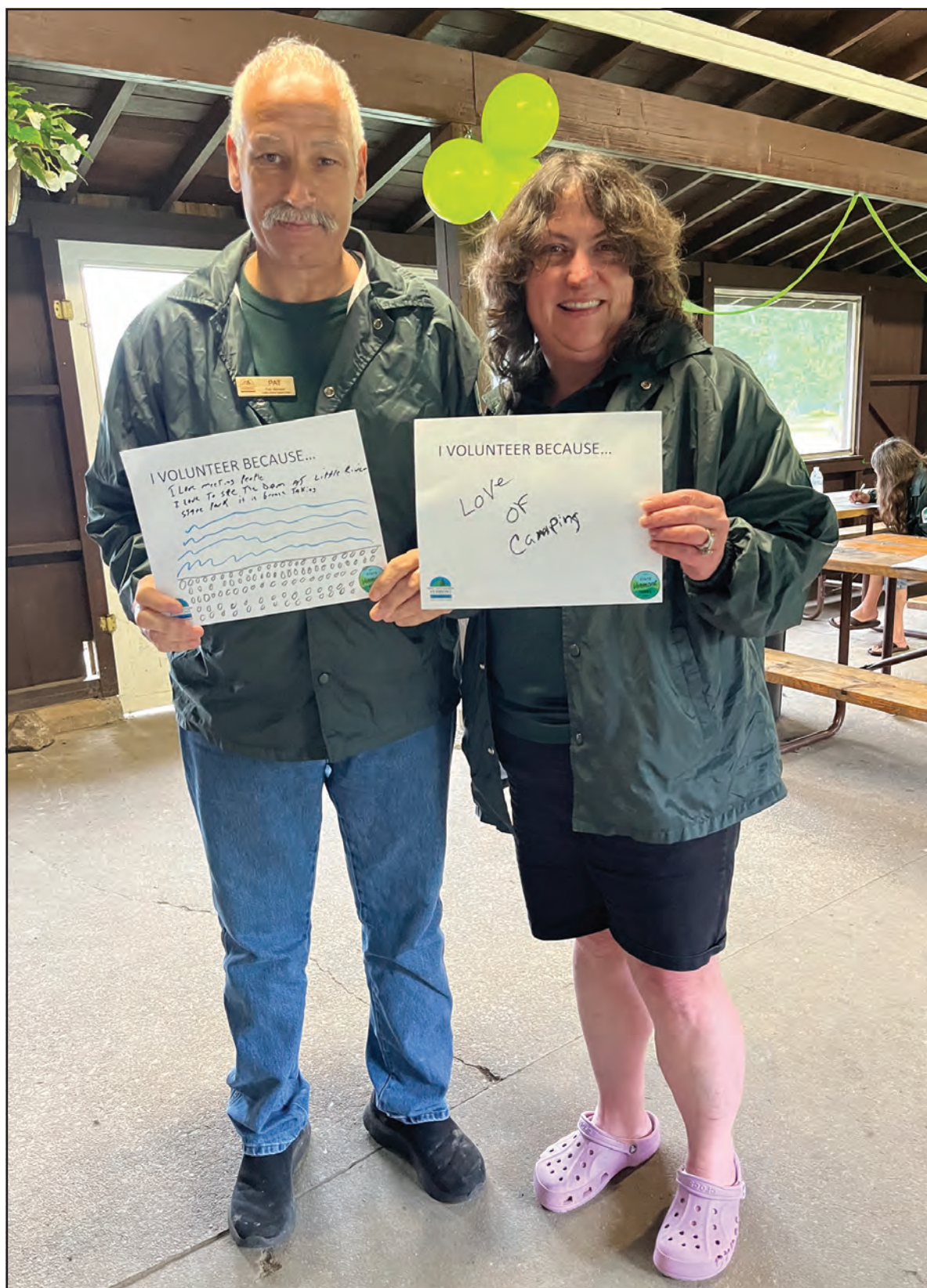
GET INVOLVED

Roy said there's no age requirement for state park volunteers, though there might be some limitations on the kinds of tasks younger volunteers are able to take on.

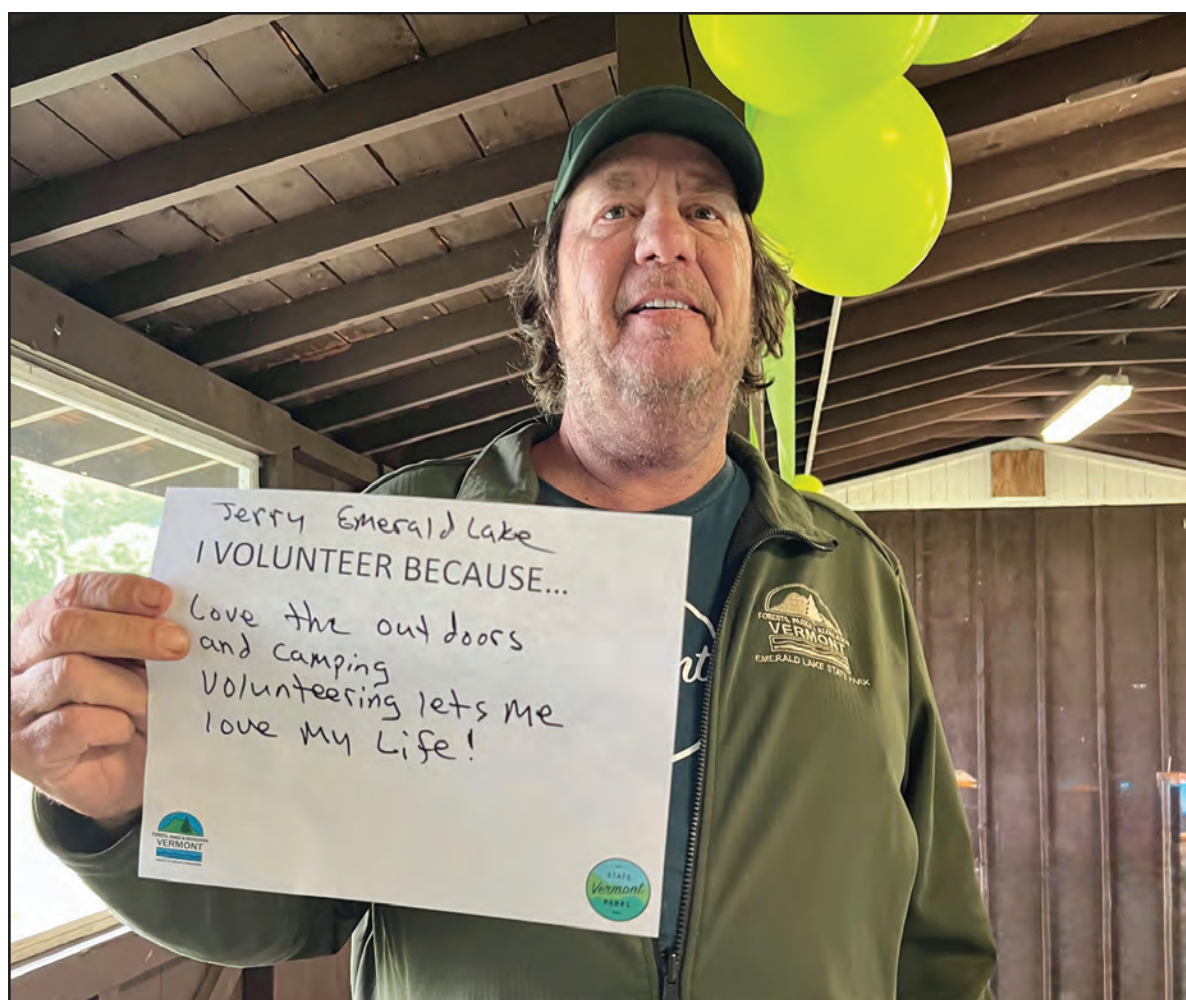
(See State parks, Page 2C)

"The impact of volunteers in Vermont state parks is vast."

— Rebecca Roy



PAT AND JEN Ryan of Starksboro shared their reasons for volunteering at Little River State Park (and Pat even illustrated his offering!). Pat's reason for volunteering — he loves to meet people. Jen is in it for the camping. State parks volunteers are needed in Addison County and in other parts of the state. Photo courtesy of Rebecca Roy



JERRY BOTHER OF Rutland loves camping and being outdoors, so volunteering at Vermont State Parks works well for him. Last year he volunteered at Emerald Lake State Park in Dorset, and he is pictured at a Thank You event at Branbury State Park. Photo courtesy of Rebecca Roy

"When we have volunteers who are really interested in gardening come in, then they can take the gardens under their wings and make them look more beautiful than we can."

— Rebecca Roy

Mentors help foster love of reading through Everybody Wins! Vermont

By MARIN HOWELL

ADDISON COUNTY — As lunchtime unfolds at elementary schools across Vermont, many students and community members supplement to a bite to eat with a good read.

Those individuals are involved in Everybody Wins! Vermont, a literacy-based mentoring program that pairs adult volunteer mentors with students at local schools. Pairs meet for an hour each week to read together over lunch.

It's a program aimed at building human relationships and fostering a love of reading and language in students.

"We often say to mentors, 'Think of it like a bedtime story,' it's like reading to your children, grandchildren or neighbor," explained Beth Wallace, executive director of Everybody Wins! Vermont. "It's not about ... testing their comprehension, it's about reading to them so they get the chance to hear the language and enjoy the story."

Everybody Wins! Vermont was founded in 2000 and is currently hosted in 18 schools around the state. Those sites include the Mary Hogan Elementary School in Middlebury, Bridport Central School and Brandon's Neshobe School.

The program engages well over 100 individuals in and around Addison County, with 76 student-mentor pairs in Middlebury, 15 in Bridport and 18 in Brandon.

"We match (mentors) one-on-one with a child, and they will come in and read with that child for the entire school year, and often they read with the same student for multiple years in a row," Wallace said.

She noted students take part in the program starting in first or second grade until middle school. Mentors read to students during their lunch break or recess, typically sometime in the middle of the

(See Reading, Page 3C)



A special section of the Addison Independent
April 23, 2026

VOLUNTEER WEEK



A SPECIAL GROUP of volunteers from an organization called "A Year to Volunteer" worked at Kingsland Bay State Park in Ferrisburgh this past September. They came as a group with their campers as well as their special skills and tools. They completely renovated some really worn down employee housing in the park in just three weeks.

Photos courtesy of Rebecca Roy

State parks

(Continued from Page 1C)
"We do have some folks that come in and volunteer with their children, so they'll come together and they're all serving as volunteers, which is wonderful, giving back to their favorite places," she said.

When it comes to what makes someone a good fit for volunteering with the state parks, Roy said there's just one thing the team looks for.

"The only thing that we're looking for is just love for the parks," she said. "People who do this love their local park and want to give back. That's the one thing that we're looking for, and whatever interest someone has, we can incorporate it into their service time."

"People who do this love their local park and want to give back."

— Rebecca Roy

Addison County residents have several opportunities to get involved at state parks in the region. Roy said those interested in short-term volunteering can stop by any state park. Parks with openings for campground volunteers include Branbury, Button Bay, and D.A.R. — all in Addison County. Mt. Philo, Half Moon and Bomoseen state parks also have openings for

campground volunteers and are located in neighboring counties.

Those interested in volunteering can visit www.vtstateparks.com/volunteering to learn more and access the campground volunteer application portal. Roy noted prospective volunteers unable to access the website can contact her (rebecca.roy@vermont.gov) to hear about opportunities and get connected to the hiring team.



Since 1925, Porter Medical Center has relied on the kindness and support of its volunteers



University of Vermont Health
Porter Medical Center

Thank you all for your service to our patients & staff and for making our community a better place to live.

UVMHealth.org/PMC  

VOLUNTEER WEEK

A secret power behind library successes: volunteers

ADDISON COUNTY — Libraries are an integral part of Vermont life, with more than 180 public libraries in the Green Mountain State. Many towns in Addison County have a public library, with many as beloved as their local school.

While libraries generally have some paid staff, anyone involved with running these places filled with books, magazine, DVDs, gathering spaces, events and so much more will tell you that they couldn't do so much without volunteers.

Some local libraries have affiliate "friends" organization that take care of fundraising, as well as some of the more nuts-and-bolts aspects of making the institutions run. Libraries that don't have a formal "friends" group — as well as ones that do — generally welcome volunteers to help with a variety of tasks.

One of the more obvious volunteer roles is on a library's board of directors or trustees. Some of these positions are elected, some are appointed. But there are many other ways to give back to the community at your library.

Bixby Memorial Library in Vergennes, for instance, outlines some of the volunteer roles it offers. They include:

- Circulation and Welcome Desk volunteers, who work a



SOME VOLUNTEERS WORK as individuals, and some work together in groups. Local libraries often welcome volunteers, and some, like Middlebury's Ilsley Public Library, have organizations that support the public institutions. Here are the Friends of Ilsley Library volunteer board members, from left, Jan Jafferian, John Murray, Mary Duclos, Cynthia Watters, Beth Kingston, Kathy Sagendorf, Anne Kelley, Amy Mincher, Revell Allen (missing from photo is Sheila House). While the group's numbers have been steady during the big Ilsley renovation, the Friends will make a big push for more members after the library is reopened at the end of the summer, and they are very excited to (hopefully) return its monthly used book sales to the Ilsley in September.

weekly morning, afternoon, or evening shift, helping all who enter the library feel welcomed and supported. They check out

and shelve books and often help with staff projects between serving patrons. •Teen volunteers usually come

to the library after school and/or on Saturday mornings to work closely with the staff on a wide variety of (See Libraries, Page 13C)



REGULAR CITIZEN SCIENTISTS volunteer to take samples of Addison County streams and rivers over the summer, and submit the samples for testing.

Spend time outside this summer ensuring stream water quality

ADDISON COUNTY — Two mornings per month from April to September, teams of volunteers fan out around Addison County to collect water samples in our rivers. These samples are then transferred to a laboratory for analysis and information gleaned from that is distributed to officials, policymakers and the public at large to protect individuals and enhance our natural environment.

It is all managed through the Addison County River Watch Collaborative.

If you have an interest in the health and wellbeing of our local streams and rivers, and would like to assist in collecting water quality samples, come to one of two training sessions this Saturday run by the Collaborative.

The April 25 water sampling field training will take in Bristol at the gazebo on the Town Green from 10 a.m. to noon. Another training that afternoon will be at the Middlebury Recreation Park, 77 Mary Hogan Dr., from 1 to 3 p.m. Water experts will review monitoring protocols and give tips for successful field work.

The Addison County River Watch Collaborative has been monitoring the quality of Addison County rivers, streams and creeks for three decades. River Watch volunteers collect water samples on eight Tuesday mornings from May to September. (Volunteers sample as many times as they can; no need to be there every time.)

If you come to the Middlebury training, please bring tick protection because you will visit a nearby stream.

When volunteers take part in water sampling, the organization stresses that monitoring protocols are rigorous and strictly followed.

"We can only expect our data to be useful if all our volunteers proceed according to our EPA-approved methods," according to acrcw.org. "In order for our data to be considered valid, we file a Quality Assurance Protection Plan with EPA (through the State of Vermont DEC) every year."

For more information email acrcwvt@gmail.com, call 802-434-3236 or head online to www.acrcw.org.

College sends grads to the Peace Corps

MIDDLEBURY — Middlebury College has once again been recognized as a leader in global service. The Peace Corps this month announced that it has ranked Middlebury No. 7 among small colleges and universities on its 2026 list of top volunteer-producing schools, a distinction that reflects the college's longstanding commitment to service, language learning, and global engagement.

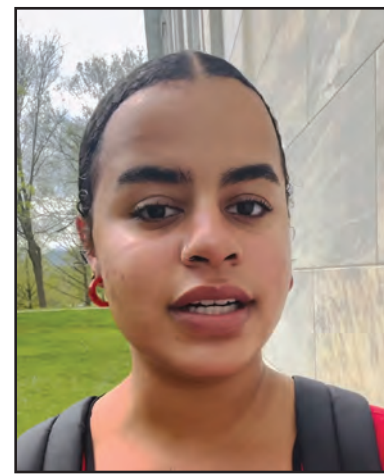
Even more exciting for the Middlebury community, three members of the class of 2026 have been chosen to serve in the Peace Corps: Grace Mtunguja, Clay Rosser and Zane Barnwell.

Mtunguja is a Spanish and Political Science double major and CCI Ambassador. She said in a LinkedIn

post that she will be volunteering in the South American nation of Colombia.

"Growing up hearing about my Mom's experience as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Côte d'Ivoire, I knew early on this was the path I wanted to take post-graduation," Mtunguja wrote. "I deeply believe in Peace Corps' mission to promote world peace and friendship through community-based development and intercultural understanding, and I will use my skills and dedication to contribute meaningfully to this work."

Like Mtunguja, Barnwell's parents served as Peace Corps volunteers — his father in Sierra Leone and his mother in Jordan. He told (See Peace Corps, Page 13C)



SENIOR GRACE MTUNGUJA is Middlebury College's latest Peace Corps volunteer. She will be stationed in Colombia after graduation.

WHERE ARE THEY GOING?

Middlebury graduates are serving in the Peace Corps in:

- Armenia
- Colombia
- Dominican Republic
- Kyrgyzstan
- Mongolia
- North Macedonia
- Philippines
- Thailand
- Togo

Reading

(Continued from Page 1C)

day for 45 minutes to an hour.

"It's not a tutoring program, the job of the mentor is not to teach kids to read," Wallace clarified. "The job of the mentor is to befriend the child and share books and languages with them in a joyful way."

She said the program is very child-led, with students often picking out the books they'd like to read. In addition to reading, mentor-student pairs might play a game together or do other activities.

"There's a book cart full of books and games, and a bunch of other activities Everybody Wins! brings to the school," Wallace said.

She pointed to research showing that reading to a child one-on-one can improve their comprehension

and expand their vocabulary.

"Reading mentoring is really about nurturing them, nurturing that love of story and language and helping kids get a lot of words in their word bank," she said.

Another aim of the program is for mentors and students to form connections.

"When kids read together with someone who cares about them, it's really powerful, it's much more powerful than just reading with someone who might come for the day," she said. "The relationship between the mentor and child is really important."

The pairing also offers benefits for participating mentors.

"60% of our mentors are retired or seniors, and one thing that we know for people who are older is

"Reading mentoring is really about nurturing them, nurturing that love of story and language and helping kids get a lot of words in their word bank."

— Beth Wallace

that isolation is an issue," Wallace said.

"We hear from mentors who work about how leaving their office for an hour in the middle of the day, doing something completely different, going to read to a child, is really refreshing," she added. "They come back with a clearer head, they come back and are more productive in the afternoon."

Local mentors shared some of the highlights from their experiences in a survey last year.

"The coordinator brought in some wonderful books by Ibtihaj Muhammad, the Olympic fencer. My student, who didn't like to read, loved those books," one Brandon mentor wrote.

Survey responses also included reflections from local teachers and

families.

"Giving the students a chance to connect and read with an adult and have another positive experience when reading greatly increases their willingness and excitement to read," a Bridport teacher wrote.

Students responding to the survey said they've enjoyed reading with their mentor.

"My mentor is so funny and kind! I loved meeting up with her every week," said one student in Middlebury.

What makes someone a good fit for mentoring with Everybody Wins! Vermont? Wallace said prospective mentors should enjoy being around kids and reading.

"Our mentors are really, really

diverse. In Middlebury, we have anybody from Middlebury College students to people who are retired and everybody in between," she said. "The most important thing is that you want to do it and that you have the time and energy to hang out with a child during the day."

She noted Everybody Wins! Vermont always welcomes new mentors. While this school year's program is coming to an end, those interested in mentoring are still encouraged to apply. That'll give them a chance to get screened and go through the application process before next year's program takes off in October.

To learn more about Everybody Wins! Vermont visit everybodywinsvermont.org.



EVERYBODY WINS VERMONT! Mentor Emily reads to Dalia at the Mary Hogan School in Middlebury. The literacy-based mentoring program pairs adult volunteer mentors with local students to read together once a week over lunch.

Photo courtesy of Beth Wallace



4-H Leaders Who Are Shaping Our Future

If you see them say Thank You!



The University of Vermont Extension wants to thank our 4-H leaders, volunteers and Addison 4-H Foundation directors who dedicate hours of time and energy to the 4-H Youth Program in Addison County. These volunteers are the core of the 4-H Youth Program: the very reason for over 100 years of success!

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Becky Allen | Sonya Barber | Jacqueline Chase | Lise Fifield | Bailee Layn-Gordon | Ashley Severy-Audet |
| Joe Allen | Gavin Bicknell | Warren Chase | Tricia Foster | Karissa Livingston | Karri Smith |
| Janelle Ashley | Victor Bolduc | Kylie Chittenden | Susan Gilmore | Sadie Moulton | Shelly Smith |
| Ariel Audet | Louise Bowdish | Elaine Desforgues | Pam Gevry | Kathy Nisun | Samantha Sturtevant |
| Ashley Audet | Kelsey Bradford | Melinda Devoid-Siel | Scott Gordon | Diane Norris | Wendy Swanson |
| Nancy Audet | Jonathan Chamberlin | Tina Evens-Wright | Melanie Harrison | Bethany Orvis | Brittany Trudo |
| Courtney Banach | Jason Charest | Erin Farr | Jeanette Hill | Barbara Palmer | Jill Wade |
| | | | Kendra Hutchins | Sharlena Payne | Katie Welch |
| | | | Jake Jacobs | Cheri Petrin | Katherine Whipple |
| | | | Brian Kayhart | Scott Petrin | Kristy Whipple |
| | | | Cindy Kayhart | Janet Piper | Cady White |
| | | | Cassandra Kennett | Becky Plouffe | Maureen Whitney |
| | | | Jennifer Kennett | Michael Plouffe | Anna Willenbaker |
| | | | Kathy Kennett | Abby Reen | Kristy Wood |
| | | | Wendy LaClair | Maggie Rollins | |
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VOLUNTEER WEEK



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Phoebe Barash
MAUSD Mentors

Phoebe Barash of Bristol has been volunteering with MAUSD Mentoring for four years. “It is such a gift for me to be connected with a young person and to learn from her perspective the ins and outs of this world through the eyes of an almost thirteen-year-old,” Phoebe says. As a mentor, she is offered an irreplaceable education on music, trends and an invaluable window into what kids are talking about. In turn, Phoebe says she gets to offer a window into a very different world than her mentee’s because of their 63-year age difference. “I get to share what life was like in the ‘olden days’ and we get to laugh heartily about the differences,” she says. “Sharing of ourselves is the foundation — the basis of that foundation is trust and I so cherish that level of trust.”



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David Bishop of Goshen has been proud to serve as a volunteer driver at Tri-Valley Transit for over 10 years. “I find it very rewarding to help provide safe transportation for our community,” he says. “We provide transportation for many reasons and meeting our community members from Addison County has been a remarkable experience.”




Dave Bishop
Tri-Valley Transit



Peg Bolton
Porter Palliative


Peg Bolton of Addison has been a volunteer at Porter Palliative Services since 2020. She is a companion, Death Cafe facilitator, and sits vigil. Peg enjoys the people she meets while volunteering. “I enjoy being with people, sometimes hearing about their lives, sometimes laughing, sometimes crying.” She has also volunteered with Addison County Home Health and Hospice since 2020 and as a Gather host for Breadloaf Mountain Zen Center since 2025.



Vermont Adult Learning
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Gail Borden of Middlebury has been nominated as a spotlight volunteer by Vermont Adult Learning (VAL). Gail has been teaching reading skills at VAL for the past year, but also taught art with the organization several years ago. In addition, Gail volunteers weekly with Addison Allies, Everybody Wins and the Sewing Lab at the PAHCC Makery. There are many reasons why Gail says she volunteers. First, love. Gail says she is fortunate to have time to volunteer and always end up getting more than she gives. Gail also recognizes that many of her role models were active volunteers. “My mother volunteered for so many things, which I witnessed while growing up and was impressed with, what she was doing. But I suspect I also saw how much the connections she made through volunteering energized her.” Gail says she has many other role models in Middlebury who also inspire her to volunteer and be active in the community. Finally, Gail says that she recognizes how Vermont Adult Learning and many other vibrant non-profit organizations in Addison County do vital work.



Gail Borden
Vermont Adult Learning


“It is my pleasure to do what I can to support some of them,” she says. “Volunteer management is real — it takes some effort and skill to match up a volunteer with a person, project, or a task that can last. Vermont Adult Learning met me where I was, made me part of their team and working with them is one of the highlights of my week.”



Without volunteers, Homeward Bound would be up the creek without a paddle!

Thank you!

Homeward Bound
Addison County's Humane Society



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Kristy Bright
Bristol Family Center

Kristy Bright of Middlebury has been volunteering at Bristol Family Center for 6 years. She most enjoys the chance to learn about education from the experience of kids, early educators, and the natural worlds they interact with. Kristy believes that early education is one of the most under-recognized areas of labor in our state. “As volunteers, we have the chance to help out with practical stuff like fundraising, but the other dynamic piece is to show the leadership of Early Childhood Educators, social workers, and caregivers,” she says. “Local media (and better pay!) are a great way to protect these leaders. Since my first job with Cheryl Mitchell at the Parent Child Center in the ‘80s until now, this work has always been about learning from early educators and social workers, because that is literally where community starts and sticks with it through the most gnarly times.”



Wendy Bruso
Meals on Wheels

Wendy Bruso of Addison has served for two years as a Meals on Wheels volunteer and a Friendly Visiting volunteer for Age Well. “When my mom was alive, she enjoyed someone stopping by for a visit or to bring her a cup of soup,” Wendy recalls. “Now I enjoy doing this for someone else’s mom.” Additionally, Wendy serves as the treasurer and trustee at the Addison Community Baptist Church and has been serving in that role for about 15 years.



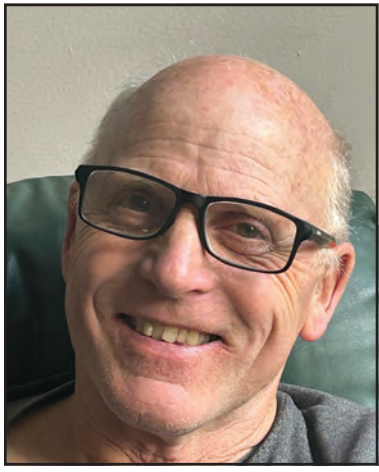
Bip Brown
Helen Porter

Bip Brown of Middlebury has been volunteering for the past six months as a Newspaper Delivery Volunteer at UVM Health – Helen Porter Rehabilitation & Nursing. Each week, she delivers the local newspaper to residents. “I love talking with the residents and building meaningful connections,” she says.





VOLUNTEER WEEK



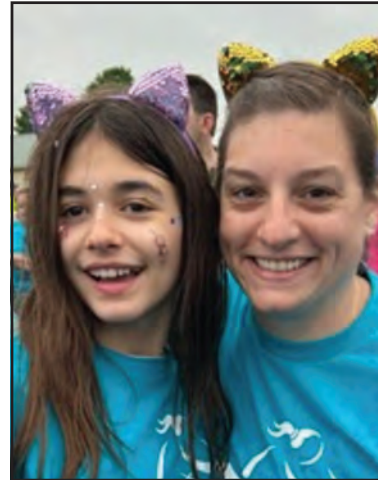
Alex Carver
Habitat for Humanity

Alex Carver of Ripton has been working with Habitat for Humanity in Addison County since 2010. His early days were spent on site with a member of his own construction crew roofing the houses. He worked alongside Harold Strassner on several houses before assuming a leadership role when Middlebury College Students began designing the local houses in 2019.

“Volunteering for Habitat comes naturally,” Alex says. “I have 40 years of experience being a carpenter and, as one of nine children, hard work and dedication are part of my fabric. Luckily, as a redhead, I come with plenty of energy to bring to the team!”

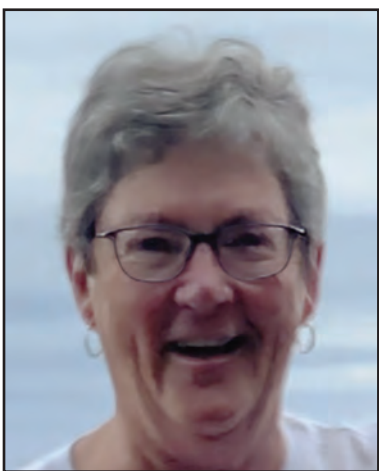
Alex says he most enjoys the people, especially witnessing volunteers as they hone their skills and feel successful. “Building alongside the families who are the owners of the houses is a gift I am honored to be a part of,” he says.

Lisa Charest
Girls on the Run



Lisa Charest of New Haven is a valuable volunteer for Girls on the Run Vermont. For the past five years, Lisa’s dedication and support for students across Addison County has helped inspire young people to build confidence, develop resilience, and believe in themselves. She creates a positive, encouraging environment where every participant feels seen, valued, and empowered. Her enthusiasm and compassion leave a lasting impact that extends far beyond the program. Lisa was a coach for Girls on the Run Vermont at Mary Hogan Elementary School but is now coaching her niece at Monkton Central School. Over her time coaching, she has impacted the lives of 106 girls in Addison County.

Lisa is truly exceptional, and her positive impact on students and the community is both meaningful and lasting.



Elaine Coon
Homeward Bound

Elaine Coon of Middlebury has been volunteering at Homeward Bound since the end of the pandemic. She enjoys being part of the fantastic team that cares for the animals that find their way to Homeward Bound.

“I love animals and enjoy walking dogs or just hanging out with them, depending on what their needs are. If it’s helping to prepare mailings or volunteering at Woodstock, it’s always fun and rewarding!”

Recently, Elaine started helping with a program, PetCORE. Each week she stocks the pet food pantry at HOPE. This provides supplemental pet food for those who are struggling to provide for their pets.

Beverly Darling
Meals on Wheels

Beverly Darling of Bridport has been a Meals on Wheels volunteer for Age Well for five years. Beverly loves meeting the clients and developing a relationship with them, engaging in short conversations. “I hope the interactions bring a smile and brighten their day!” she says.



Scott Darling
Meals on Wheels

Scott Darling of Bridport has served as a Meals on Wheels volunteer for Age Well for six years. Scott most enjoys the opportunity to meet new people and contribute to the sense of community that is so important in Vermont.

Barb Davis
Monkton Mentors



Barb Davis of Monkton has been a Monkton Mentor for 5 years. Barb says she has served on various boards of directors and done other volunteering, but she finds mentoring the most rewarding.

“I have enjoyed getting to know my mentee since she was in first grade, and soon goes on to middle school! We have had lots of new experiences together, and I love her creativity and zest for life. Her intelligence and sense of humor keep me on my toes. The program has been great for us both.”

Meghan Dishaw and Kathleen McCope
ACSD



Meghan Dishaw and Kathleen McCope of Middlebury serve as classroom volunteers for ACSD. Meghan joins a weekly math block and is incredibly helpful to the classroom teacher and students. She is willing to do anything asked — whether it’s something as simple as sharpening pencils or something more complex like leading a small group or working one-on-one with a student. It’s clear that she truly understands teachers and knows how best to support both us and our students.

In addition to her weekly help, Meghan visits classrooms with her mother, Kathleen McCope to lead a storytelling activity. Every classroom they visit looks forward to these special guests, who bring the world into the classroom through their captivating storytelling. By sharing beautiful narratives from diverse cultures, they broaden the students’ horizons and foster a genuine appreciation for global traditions. Their expertly planned sessions are always a hit, perfectly blending “spot on” educational activities with a delicious thematic snack for the children to enjoy.

This is no small task — she finds or creates a story that connects to our curriculum, plans a related craft, and even provides a special food treat for every child in the grade.

Meghan is generous, thoughtful and incredibly dedicated. She is a natural teacher and an exceptional volunteer.



We are grateful for all volunteers who help our community grow strong!



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Middlebury College



VOLUNTEER WEEK



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COURTNEY BANACH
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TANYA BASHAW
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JOLYON LARSON
MATT LAVALLEY
SARAH LAWRENCE
PATRICK LAWRENCE
LARRY LAWSON
JANET LAWSON
DIANNE LAWSON



VOLUNTEER WEEK

Thank you to our local volunteers

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MEGAN LEACH	JOY MINNS	BOB POIRIER	ABIGAIL SESSIONS	BRITTANY TRUDO
TOM LEARMONTH	JEFF MINNS	DENNIS POOLE	ROBIN SEVERY	TVT DRIVERS
ALICE LEEDS	KEITH MINTZ	CHUCK POST	ASHLEY SEVERY-AUDET	IOANA URICARU
BRIAN LEFF	DEDE MISHKIT	BARB PRATT	PAMELA SHAFER	RENEE URSITTI
BERT LEGGETT	TIM MISHKIT	CAROL PRICE	RICK SHAPPY	CAROLYN VAN VLECK
ZOE LENKER	JUTTA MISKA	KRISANDRA PROVENCHER	JIM SHAW	JOHN VANN
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MARGY LEVINE YOUNG	CHRIS MONJE	LINDA PUNDERSON	LARRY SHEPARD	HELEN VAUGHAN
DAVE LEWIS	RON MONROE	EBEN PUNDERSON	GRACE SHERRILL	PHOEBE VAUGHAN
ROB LIOTARD	DON MONROE	KATHY PURCELL	BARBARA SHINEHOUSE	NANCY VELEZ
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SUSAN LOCKWOOD	ERIC MONTGOMERY (WITH	JILL QUACKENBUSH	CAROLYN SICCAMA	SUSAN VIGNE
MARY LONGEY	MAYOR TELA)	KATHY QUESNEL	JUDITH A. SIEGEL	JANELLE VINCENT
MATT LONGMAN	ESSA MOODIE	SANDY QUESNEL	BEN SIEGFRIED	MARISA VOLINO
EBBE LONGSTRETH	GREG MOORE	DIANE QUIET	WELLSPRING SINGERS	STEPHANIE VOLK
JACKIE LORE	DAVID MOORE	STACEY RAINEY	ALLAN SIROTKIN	LIISA VONENDE
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ASHLEY LOVEN	PAULA MOORE	AUTUMN RAKOWITZ	CINDY SLATER	BOB WAHL
LEVI LOVEN	NANCY MORGAN	TRUETT RAMSEY	PAUL SMITH	MIKE WAKEFIELD
MICHELE LOWY	JOHN "CHIP" MORGAN	TOM RANDALL	KARRI SMITH	ANNE WALLACE
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JEFF LUNSTEAD	LENORE MORSE	LIZ REEDY	LAURA SMITH	NANCY WARD
CHRISTY LYNN	JANET MOSURICK	ABBY REEN	ANNA SMITH	SARAH WARNER
MADELEINE M LYTTLE	SADIE MOULTON	KRISTINA REEN	JUNIPER SMITH	SKYLAR WASHBURN
ELLYN MACK	MARGARET MOUSSEAU	ROB REIBER	ROXY SMITH	LINDA WATERMAN
LIZ MACKEY	ALICIA MOYER	NAN REID	DUTTON SMITH	JACK WATTS
PETER MACKEY	BELINDA MUCKLOW	STEVE REIGEL	KATHLEEN SMITH	GALE WATTS
KATHY MACKEY	LORRIE MULLER	KEN REMSEN	SAM SMITH	BEN WEATHERS-LOWIN
NEIL MACKEY	DOROTHY MUMMEN	ERIK REMSEN	TOM SMITH	BENJAMIN WEISS
DANIELLE MADISON	ANDREA MURNANE	SHEILA RHEAUME	KATHERINE SMITH	KATIE WELCH
ELIZABETH MAHER	ETHAN MURPHY	GABRIELA RHODES	SUE SMITHSON	PETER WELCH
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DOROTHY MAMMEN	SUE MURRAY	LLYN RICE	JOHN SNYDER-WHITE	BOB WEST
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LIZ MARKOWSKI	CHRIS NAYLOR	WENDY RINGER	PAT SPIEGEL	ROB WHELAND
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CARROLL MAXWELL	FLORA NORRIS	LARRY ROWE	DON STRATTON	RHONDA WILLIAMS
EMILY MAY	ANNETTE NORRIS	KIMBERLEE ROY	PETER STRAUB	LINDA WILLIAMS
DENNY MAY	KAREEN OBYDOL-DARR	TERRY RUBLEE	BRIAN STRUHAMMER	MELINDA WILLIAMS
PAULA MAYER	BETH OGDEN	RON RUCKER	LAURA STURDEVANT	KATE WILLIAMS
CHIP MAYER	DONNA OLIVER	NANCY RUCKER	SAMANTHA STURTEVANT	MARTHA HEIDI WILLIS
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AMY MAYER	SONJA OLSON	PAIGE RUSSELL	SHERRI SULLIVAN	DIANA WINARSKI
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NOREEN MCDONOUGH	BETHANY ORVIS	LIZ RYAN	CHRISTIE SUMNER	JO-ANNE WISNIOWSKI
KAREN MCEACHEN	NANCY ORVIS	AMEY RYAN	SCOTT SUTOR	MATTHEW WITTEN
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ED MCGUIRE	BARBARA PALMER	JANICE SABETT	JON SWEENEY	DAVE WOLNIEWICZ
LYNN MCKENNA	JANE PALMER	STEPHANIE SABUKEWICZ	STEPHANIE SWEENEY	IZAACK WOLNIEWICZ
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CAMERON MCMAHON	LINDA PASKIEWICZ	EVE SARTI	VALERIE SZYMKOWICZ	KRISTY WOOD
KELLY MCQUADE	SHARLENA PAYNE	MARY SAUDADE	JIM TALBERT	EVELYN WOOD
JEFF MELLER	CANDIS PEARSON	MOLLY SAUNDERS	"T" TALL	LAUREN WRIGHT
MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH	DAVID PEARSON	TAMMY SAUVE	CAROLYN TALLEN	ROBERT WUAGNEUX
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MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE	CHERI PETRIN	CANDY SCHMIDT	CAROLYN THOMPSON	CARRIE ZENO
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MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE	TERRI PHELPS	JULIE SCHROEDER	VAL TILFORD	
FOOTBALL TEAM	NETTIE PICHER	MICKEY SCHWARZ	KATE TILTON	
MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE	JOSH PINCUS	ANDREA SCOTT	ELIZABETH TODER	
RUGBY TEAM	JANET PIPER	JOSIE SCUPP	ANN TOMLINSON	
MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE	GEORGI PISTILLI	MAGGIE SEARLE	LIZ TORREY	
STUDENTS	INGRID PIXLEY	MARTHA SEIFERT	REBECA TOTU	
ADAM MILLER	PENNY PLOOF	DORIS SEILER	SILAS TOWLER	



VOLUNTEER WEEK



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Brooke Dolan
Middlebury Skatepark

Brooke Dolan of Middlebury is a passionate volunteer with the Middlebury Skatepark Project, serving as a member of the Board of Directors. Brooke has helped organize mural painting sessions that bring together community members of all ages to contribute to a mural at a future public skatepark. Through this work, (which began during a course at Middlebury College and has continued beyond the semester), Brooke has loved seeing how art can create connection, amplify community voices, and build excitement for a shared space. “It’s been especially meaningful to witness how important this project is for local youth, to provide a welcoming ‘third space’ that supports both physical activity and mental well-being,” she says.

In addition to her service with the Middlebury Skatepark Project, Brooke has volunteered with the Charter House Coalition for 3 years, where she leads Saturday Dinners with a student group, and as a Spanish interpreter for the Open Door Clinic. Additionally, she has volunteered at Porter Medical Center for 2.5 years as a Patient Care Assistant in the Emergency Department. In this role, Brook supports the nursing team by helping patients access resources, documenting food intake, sanitizing equipment, restocking supplies, and serving as a patient companion and sitter. “Overall, I most enjoy the opportunity to make a difference in somebody’s day, whether that be by making it a little easier or a little happier,” Brook says.

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bixbylibrary.org/volunteer

Colin Donaghey
Lake Champlain Maritime Museum

Colin Donaghey of Vergennes and his dad, Bob, started volunteering at Lake Champlain Maritime Museum in the fall of 2025. Colin and Bob volunteer in the Collections Department and have been crucial in organizing and digitizing the Museum’s library. Colin is pictured here dusting off a floor timber of the row galley Congress, which was engaged in the Battle of Valcour Bay in 1776.



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Steve Duclos
Energy Navigators

Steve Duclos of Weybridge serves as a volunteer for the Energy Navigators. With a PhD in Physics from Cornell University and experience working for GE Research in Albany, NY for 32 years, Steve brings valuable experience and knowledge to the local field. “In the last few years, my wife Mary and I electrified our home by installing solar, a ducted heat pump for heat, and a heat pump water heater,” Steve says. This experience convinced Steve that these modifications to a home can be complicated, so he became trained in home weatherization and electrification to help his neighbors reduce costs, increase comfort, and reduce carbon emissions.

Wanda Dwy
Helen Porter

Wanda Dwy of Sudbury has been volunteering for the past year as a Patient Companion at UVM Health – Helen Porter Rehabilitation & Nursing. She spends time visiting with residents and helping with activities like games, painting nails, and sending cards to family. Wanda enjoys hearing about residents’ families and their past work, and she offers comfort by praying with them when they’re feeling down or in pain. “I love spending time with these beautiful people,” she says.



SWEET CHARITY

Thanks for helping us pull this all together—our volunteers keep the wagon rolling!

Deanna, Sabrina, Maggie, Lisa, Deb, Peggy, Kibel, Ann, Julie

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Dwight Everest
Meals on Wheels

Dwight Everest of Addison serves as a volunteer for Meals on Wheels with Age Well. He says the most meaningful moments of this time are when he gets to talk with the clients and make connections with others in the community.

Holly Fulton
Middlebury Area Land Trust

Holly Fulton of Middlebury is an extraordinary volunteer whose energy, leadership, and generosity of time have made a lasting impact on the Middlebury Area Land Trust (MALT) and the Middlebury community for many years.

Holly contributes across many aspects of MALT’s work. She routinely comes into the office to support staff with administrative tasks, helping keep day-to-day operations running smoothly. At the same time, she is a dedicated conservation steward in the field. Holly has played a leading role in organizing and mobilizing community members to tackle invasive plant species at sites like Hurd Grassland, and she is coordinating several additional invasive removal efforts this summer.

Most recently, Holly has stepped into a volunteer leadership role with Friends of TAM – Chipman Hill, a new volunteer initiative that MALT is piloting. This volunteer group brings people together for guided walks and hands-on stewardship activities, with the goal of fostering connection to each other and to the land. MALT has high hopes that this emerging volunteer model will grow into a long-term stewardship force multiplier for MALT and our partners. Holly’s leadership is at the heart of that effort.





VOLUNTEER WEEK



Lisa Godfrey
Vergennes Partnership

Lisa Godfrey and her husband, Ted Godfrey of Ferrisburgh first became part of the Vergennes community over six years ago as new building owners. They transformed the long-neglected 135 Main St. into a beautifully renovated space — now home to an apartment with some of the best views downtown and their retail shop, Gather Vermont. Lisa is truly a renaissance woman, bringing an impressive range of knowledge and skill to everything she does. She is not only a carpenter and master potter, but also an accomplished gardener and florist. Through her volunteer work with the Vergennes Partnership over the last few years, she has devoted hundreds of hours — and personal resources — to enhancing and maintaining the downtown gardens. She helps lead the huge task of naturally beautifying all of downtown.

She is a founder and host of the Partnership’s annual CommuniTEA Fundraiser, which has raised nearly \$5,000 for the gardens over the past two years. In addition, Lisa serves on the Vergennes Partnership Board, where she contributes significant time and energy to a wide range of initiatives. She also shares her expertise as a member of the Vergennes Planning Commission.

At the core of all her work is a clear passion: creating beauty in shared spaces and helping to cultivate a vibrant, welcoming community. The City of Vergennes is so lucky and honored to have her in our corner.

Donald Guptill
Porter Medical Center

Donald Guptill of Cornwall has been volunteering for three years as a Greeter and Patient Companion at UVM Health – Porter Medical Center and Helen Porter Rehabilitation & Nursing.

At Porter, he welcomes visitors and helps them find where they need to go. At Helen Porter, he spends time visiting with residents. In his role, he enjoys seeing people he knows in the community and staff members he’s enjoyed working with in the past.

“I enjoy visiting with residents. They have a lifetime of experience that they share with me which is very interesting,” he says. “As a Greeter, I like to think that a friendly greeting goes a long way with reducing anxiety for people with their hospital experience.”



Anna Hardway
HOPE

Anna Hardway of Middlebury has been volunteering at the HOPE food shelf for 14 years. She has certainly seen many changes and responded to many diverse needs!

Sarah Harrison Lynn
Town Hall Theater

Sarah Harrison Lynn of Middlebury has been a volunteer at Town Hall Theater since they reopened in 2008. Sarah is an usher and front-of-house volunteer and says she loves seeing people from around town and saying a quick hello before she shows them to their seat. “It’s a fun and quick way of doing something for the community!” she says.

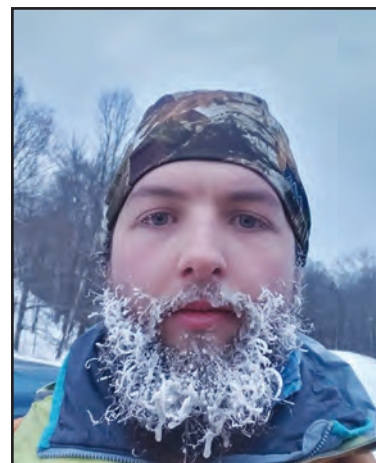


Susan James
ACSD

Susan James of Middlebury volunteers at Mary Hogan Elementary School and has been a volunteer reader in Miss Kim’s preschool classroom for the past five years. She started volunteering in preschool when her granddaughter was in the class and continues to come back each year. Susan, known as Nana to the children, enjoys the snuggles and energy that the preschoolers offer. Susan is loved and appreciated by teachers and children alike for her time, spirit, and kindness. She is a very special person and our favorite volunteer!

Rowan Kamman
Willowell Foundation

Rowan Kamman of Lincoln has served the Willowell Foundation selflessly and with loyal dedication for many years. As an alumnus of a Willowell program, he came back to serve as an AmeriCorps member from 2019 to 2021. During his service, he mentored youth, revamped the Willowell garden, led summer camps and helped with grant writing. After his service, Rowan joined our Board of Directors, where he has been a steady guiding force as Board President for the past four years.



Jenn Larocque
Better Middlebury Partnership

Jenn Larocque of Middlebury is nominated by the Better Middlebury Partnership Board as a super star volunteer. For more years than is recorded, Jenn has contributed to the Santa Claus visits during Very Merry Middlebury by organizing and showing up with a load of elves to help Santa. But the BMP aren’t the only folks who appreciate Jenn. She was selected as a 2025 Outstanding Educator for the State of Vermont. Jenn currently teaches at the Salisbury School, and she spent many years teaching at Mary Hogan Elementary School in Middlebury.

Marie Lennon
Porter Medical Center

Marie Lennon of Middlebury has been volunteering for three years as a Greeter at UVM Health – Porter Medical Center and Helen Porter Rehabilitation & Nursing.

At Porter, she greets patients and guides them to Registration, Radiology or the lab. At Helen Porter, she answers phones, greets families and directs them to rooms.

“I enjoy making patients and families smile,” she says.



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Rosie Lovshin
Quarry Hill School

Rosie Lovshin of Middlebury is a long-time early educator and has volunteered at Quarry Hill School for the last seven years, as her grandchildren have attended the program. We love when Rosie is at school with us. The children found out recently that she loves to play pickleball and likes salty snacks.

Larry Maier
Henry Sheldon Museum



Larry Maier of New Haven is part of the core set of train volunteers at the Henry Sheldon Museum. In the early 1950s, Larry Maier received a Lionel train set for Christmas — a gift that would set him on a lifelong path (pun intended) toward mechanics and electronics. What began as a childhood hobby grew into a passion that led to a college degree, service in the Coast Guard, and ultimately a career in aerospace engineering.

After retiring, Larry found himself with a wealth of knowledge and skills and was looking for a meaningful way to put them to use. Having seen the Sheldon Museum's holiday train display in the past, he reached out in 2014 to see if they might need a volunteer to help keep the trains running. They did — and Larry has been an essential part of the tradition ever since.

Each year, he returns to his Lionel roots, helping to set up, maintain, and operate the museum's Christmas train display. While the work requires a great deal of time and energy, Larry finds it deeply rewarding.

For him, the true joy comes from the visitors. The smiles on the faces of children and adults alike make every moment worthwhile.

Thanks to Larry's dedication, the magic of the holiday train display continues to delight our community year after year.



Dorothy Mammen
Tri-Valley Transit

Dorothy Mammen of Middlebury serves as a volunteer driver for TVT and a host for Gather, the community living room. In both cases, she enjoys the connections she is able to make with people she may not otherwise know, and says she learns so much.

"Whether driving or hosting, I am energized by a day of being fully present, letting my other worries and obligations slip away for the day. When I drive seniors and we get to chatting, I feel like I am driving around a precious slice of history. When I scramble up some eggs at Gather, I know it's more than just physical sustenance. In these challenging times, simple kindness goes a long way. And in volunteering I have always found, without exception, that I get back more than I give."

Ed McGuire
Henry Sheldon Museum



Edward McGuire of New Haven is part of the core set of train volunteers at the Henry Sheldon Museum. In 2013, Ed McGuire was invited by T. Tall — one of the Museum's original train engineers — to take on the role of Train Coordinator. Since then, Ed has been at the heart of the Museum's annual train display, returning each November to help transform stored pieces into a magical experience for visitors. From hauling boxes down from the attic to assembling layout tables from the basement, Ed helps lead the effort that brings the train exhibit to life. Within just a week or two, the dedicated train crew has the layout up and running.

One of Ed's most meaningful contributions has been recruiting fellow volunteer Larry Maier to join the team. Larry's background as an electrical engineer has proven invaluable, helping enhance both the function and creativity of the display. Together with the crew, Ed has helped introduce new features each year, including the ski mountain — one of the most memorable additions — built several years ago.

Over the years, Ed has worked with a wide range of volunteer engineers, from middle school students to grandparents, creating a truly multigenerational team. For Ed, the most rewarding part of volunteering is simple: watching the faces of young visitors light up with excitement as the trains begin to run.



Liana Merrill
Porter Palliative

Middlebury's **Liana Merrill** has been a Palliative Support Services volunteer at Porter Medical Center for two years. In her role, she helps facilitate Death Cafes, sings with the Wellspring Singers, visits weekly with a matched companion at Helen Porter, sits vigil with people near the end of life, and helps with craft activities.

Liana says she enjoys many aspects of volunteering, but especially singing with community care home residents. She values the joy and emotional connection that music brings, and the way residents respond to familiar songs.

In addition to this work, Liana has volunteered at the Dead Creek Visitor Center since 2018, has been an outings leader with the Breadloaf section of the Green Mountain Club on and off since 2017, is a Friends of International Students host since 2023, and volunteers through the Weybridge Congregational Church, where she has been a member since 2018.

Adam Miller
Homeward Bound



Adam Miller of Monkton has been a volunteer at Homeward Bound for more than 10 years.

"It's such a special place!" he says. "Not only are they serving multiple amazing and necessary roles in our area, they have created the most wonderful community of people to support the work via employment and volunteering, and being around that group is such a gift."

Homeward Bound offers Adam an avenue to directly impact the lives of animals and their eventual families in such a positive way — which he says can be a very hard thing to find.

"I mean, come on, who doesn't like snuggling a cat or walking a dog?" he says. "The fact that I get to do all of this stuff AND get gratitude from the folks at the shelter for doing it makes my time there the highlight of my week." Adam says he hopes more people take advantage of this opportunity to help others — and themselves — by volunteering.

"Homeward Bound is a truly special organization which we're so lucky to have in Addison County, and I'm both proud and grateful that I'm able to help them do their crucial work."



Bill and Gail Miller
HOPE

Bill and Gail Miller of Middlebury volunteer together at HOPE, sorting and preparing clothing for the resale store (Marion's Place.) They started this two months ago as newly retired individuals looking for new ways to give back to the community.



VOLUNTEER WEEK



Beth Nelson
Lincoln Mentors

Beth Nelson and her young friend, Lena, have cultivated a fun-loving and adventurous mentoring connection over the past four years as part of the Lincoln Mentor program. While it is fun to track their many shared activities — journaling, hiking, sewing, theatergoing, dog walking, baking and, most recently, line dancing — it is the joyful, honest way they interact and face the world together that is most inspiring. They are magnetic and bring others into the fold with their contagious congeniality. We are grateful to celebrate this duo among our many wonderful Lincoln Mentor matches.

Elizabeth Oettinger
Porter Palliative



Elizabeth T. Oettinger of Middlebury has been a hospice volunteer and singer at Porter Palliative Services for the last fourteen years (including with the previous organization, Hospice Volunteer Services). In her roles, she sings with those nearing death and at community care organizations. She also sits vigil with dying patients. She enjoys that she can make a difference in people’s lives through volunteering. Elizabeth also volunteers with Addison County Restorative Justice (COSA Teams – 1 year, Court Diversion and Restorative Justice Panels – 4 years), St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church (choir, lay pastoral ministry, creation care ministry, etc. for 19 years) and has been a member at another charitable foundation for 42 years.



Shawna Ploof
Bristol Family Center

Shawna Ploof of Lincoln serves as a volunteer board member for the Bristol Family Center, meeting bimonthly to support the organization’s mission. She joined the board in October 2025 after finishing fifteen years of employment with BFC. “As a parent of two children who had the privilege of learning from the incredible teachers, I feel deeply connected to the important work happening there,” Shawna says. She values the opportunity to stay engaged with the organization and help support its continued impact in the community.

Spence Putnam
Energy Navigators



Spence Putnam of Weybridge has lived and served as a volunteer in the area since 1978. With a professional background in business and education, Spence has been active in numerous roles in his community and is currently chair of the Weybridge Energy Committee. He was a founding board member of CEAC and has been a part of the Energy Navigator program since its inception. Political and environmental activism has been central to Spence’s life for many years and drives him to make a difference in his community.



Pam Rushton
Porter Medical Center

Pam Rushton of Brandon has been volunteering for two years as a Greeter at UVM Health – Porter Medical Center. She works at the front desk, greeting everyone who walks in and helping them find where they need to go. “I feel so good when I volunteer at Porter Medical Center—everyone is so nice. It is so wonderful to help people smile!” she says.

Linda Schiffer
Porter Medical Center



Linda Schiffer of Middlebury has been volunteering for four months as a Patient and Family Centered Care Advisor and Care Assistant in the Emergency Department at UVM Health – Porter Medical Center.

As an advisor, she shares her experiences to help improve care. In the Emergency Department, she supports patients and helps ease their fears. “I enjoy people and enjoy helping people. If I can provide even a brief moment in support of that, I’m happy,” she says.



Darla Senecal
Bristol Family Center

Darla Senecal of Bristol has served on the Bristol Family Center board for the past seven years. The Center is a warm, welcoming place where young children can explore, learn, and grow in an environment that nurtures curiosity, connection, and a sense of community. Families are supported not only through high-quality early childhood education, but also through meaningful connections to resources that help them thrive. The Center’s dedicated, well-trained staff and thoughtful leadership create a gentle, inclusive space where families feel seen, supported, and valued. It’s a true community asset that makes a real difference in the lives of local families.

“Supporting children and families has been a passion of mine for a long time,” Darla says. “Volunteering with the Bristol Family Center allows me to contribute to a space that reflects the values I care about most—gentleness, inclusion, and opportunities for every child to thrive. Being part of this work, alongside the dedicated educators and community members, is very fulfilling.”

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VOLUNTEER WEEK



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Judith Siegel of Middlebury has been volunteering for two years as a Greeter at UVM Health – Porter Medical Center. She directs people to Radiology, the Lab, and the Registration area.
“I enjoy people contact and assisting those who may need a wheelchair, but primarily greeting people with a smile,” she says.

Judith Siegel
Porter Medical Center



Jim Talbert
Helen Porter

Jim Talbert of Middlebury has been volunteering for one year as a Greeter at UVM Health – Helen Porter Rehabilitation & Nursing. He welcomes people as they enter the facility and helps direct them to where they need to go. He enjoys interacting with the staff and residents and says he likes “keeping it light-hearted!”

Phoebe Vaughan
Helen Porter



Phoebe Vaughan of New Haven provides companionship to people who have reached the final days of their lives at the Helen Porter Nursing Home, and she also facilitates Death Cafes in and around Middlebury. She has been volunteering in those roles for over two years. On her volunteerism, she says that “sitting with people at the end of their lives is incredibly humanizing and life-affirming. It’s also deeply rewarding to be a supportive presence for people when their loved ones are unable to be with them. I also love facilitating Death Cafes, which bring people together to talk about a topic that can stir up a lot of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty. Creating a space for those thoughts and feelings to be shared openly helps people feel lighter and less alone.”
Since 2022, Phoebe has also served as the VP and President of the Bridge School board and is a mentor at Beeman Elementary.



Anne Wallace
Meals on Wheels

Anne Wallace of Bristol has given tirelessly to her community for decades. A social worker by trade, she has dedicated her life to helping others and continues to open her heart to everyone she meets. Even in retirement, Anne remains remarkably active, whether she is delivering for Meals on Wheels (as she has for nearly twenty years), signing up for a local meal train, ushering at Town Hall Theater, or marrying someone as a Justice of the Peace. From caring for a friend with dementia to reading to children so their parents can have a break, Anne simply does not sit still. She is always the first to volunteer whenever there is a need in the community.

Allen and Paula Wilson
Meals on Wheels



Allen and Paula Wilson of Salisbury have been volunteering for 4 years with Age Well, delivering Meals on Wheels. “We love working with the team at Age Well,” they say. “A very caring and professional team focused on their clients and volunteers. We continue to volunteer because of our clients and love to make them smile. That is better than any recognition you could ever receive.”



Steve Webb
Porter Medical Center

Steve Webb of Middlebury has been volunteering for 24 years as a Greeter at UVM Health – Porter Medical Center.
He greets people, helps them feel welcome and comfortable, answers questions, and gives directions to where they need to go.
“I try to make people feel at ease because sometimes it can be terrifying to come to the hospital,” he says. Meeting people — patients, staff and volunteers — is his favorite aspect of volunteering.

Evelyn Wood
HOPE



Evelyn Wood of Middlebury has volunteered at HOPE for two years. Evelyn handles sorting and hanging of textiles and measuring and packaging fabric. This volunteer work allows her to contribute to the sharing of resources and helps reduce waste.

VOLUNTEER WEEK



High school students who volunteer can win a scholarship

ADDISON COUNTY — United Way of Addison County (UWAC) fosters community service for all community members, especially our youth in Addison County. In that spirit, the organization will honor a local high school senior through the UWAC Youth Volunteer Scholarship.

On behalf of a generous donor, one Addison County student is chosen annually for the Youth Volunteer Scholarship, recognizing a high school senior who volunteers in their community and is interested in advancing their education. This scholarship comes with a \$3,000 cash award for post-graduation education (college, trade school, Adult Education, etc.).

Local high school seniors are invited to apply by April 30.

ELIGIBILITY

Applications for the Youth Volunteer Scholarship Award can be submitted to the United Way of Addison County if the nominee meets the following criteria:

1. Is a senior in High School (or equivalent).
2. Is 21 years old or younger.
3. Has volunteered in Addison County anytime within their high school years (grades 9-12).
4. The volunteer service has made an impact on the community and their own personal learning.
5. Must be applying to or enrolled in an accredited post-graduation site. This could be college, trade school, or Adult Education (minimum 6-credit semester or the equivalent).
6. Participation in this scholarship award shall be on a voluntary basis.
7. Applicant must not be employed by UWAC or be a dependent of UWAC staff or board members.

Applications are due by April 30. No applications will be accepted after this date.

Seniors who apply will receive a confirmation email upon receipt of your application/resume. The scholarship recipient will be notified by United Way of Addison County. All applications will be judged by a selection panel. The scholarship will be awarded based

on the applicant's volunteer work and letter of reference.

UWAC reserves the right to withhold scholarship awards if there are no qualified applicants. Scholarship funds will be made available to the educational institution in which the student is enrolled. Payment will be issued by United Way of Addison County. Submit an application online at tinyurl.com/SeniorVolunteerUWAC.

Don't forget that a letter of reference is also required. If the reference would prefer, a formal letter that answers the questions that UWAC is asking in the application about the applicant may be emailed to Amy Hoekstra at amyh@unitedwayaddisoncounty.org. Please be sure to include the student's first and last name in the letter.

Questions should be directed to Hoekstra at amyh@unitedwayaddisoncounty.org.

2025 YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP

The 2025 UWAC Youth Volunteer Scholarship Award recipient was Vergennes Union High School grad Jing Williams of Waltham. Jing was introduced to volunteering at a young age, growing up in a service-oriented household and often attending community events. As a sophomore, Jing made a weekly commitment to volunteer at Homeward Bound: Addison County's Humane Society. That same year, Jing attended the first meeting of a new youth service group, the LEOS Club, under the Vergennes Lions, and she never looked back!

"It has been really nice to be part of a group of like-minded individuals who want to get involved in our greater community," Jing said. "Through the LEOS Club, I have been part of several volunteer efforts, including reading to elementary schoolers, making bird cages at the Otter Creek Wildlife Rescue, and administering eye tests to children. This past year, I had the opportunity to create my senior project with the Club at the Vergennes Community Food Shelf."

Jing's senior project with the



JING WILLIAMS

Food Shelf involved improving energy efficiency in the Food Shelf's space. Working closely with Director Paul Vachon, she helped coordinate the installation of heat pumps, improved insulation, new windows, and painting the floor. In addition, Jing helped write grants and find money to support the project. As a result of her efforts, the Leos established a long-term partnership with the Food Shelf, hoping to return every year for service projects.

Cookie Steponaitis, the Adult Mentor for the Vergennes LEOS Club, said Williams was deserving of the scholarship.

"What sets Jing apart from many

her age is her willingness to jump in and learn from the ground up," Steponaitis said. "Before joining us, she was already a leader, but her work in LEOS kicked her skill set into high gear. She has been a part of every major project we have undertaken since 2022. We are honored to have been a part of her early years of community work. I know she will continue to lead as a Lion, community advocate, and teenager who already knows the power of many hands making light work."

After graduating from VUHS, Williams is attending Lehigh University and plans to major in Journalism and English.

Peace Corps

(Continued from Page 3C)
of the Middlebury Campus that this shaped his early understanding of international service. Barnwell was accepted into the Peace Corps' Mo-rocco youth development program; he told the *Campus* that his interest in service abroad deepened at Middlebury, where studying Arabic led him to see language as a gateway to cultural understanding.

Rosser is headed to volunteer for the Peace Corps in Cambodia, where he will serve as an educator. Rosser told the *Campus* that, while the current job market played some role in his thinking, his decision ultimately centered on what he would gain from the experience itself.

Over the past year, nine Middlebury graduates served in nine countries, including Armenia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, North Macedonia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Togo. Since the Peace Corps was founded in 1961, 549 Middlebury alumni have served as volunteers around the world. Peace Corps Acting Director Richard E. Swartz emphasized the impact of partnerships with colleges and universities that inspire students to pursue meaningful service after graduation. Volunteers work alongside local communities in agriculture, education, health, youth development, the environment, and community economic development. The organization's mission continues to resonate decades after its founding. As Swartz noted, Peace Corps service remains "the toughest job you'll ever love."

For many students and alumni, the path to Peace Corps service begins in the classroom. Alumna Summer Eaton '25, currently serving in Viet Nam as an English education volunteer, credits Middlebury's liberal arts approach with shaping her journey.

"Middlebury College emphasizes developing well-rounded global citizens. This academic flexibility exposed me

to diverse cultures and fields of study and nurtured my curiosity about languages and global communities," Eaton said.

Her experience reflects what makes Middlebury a strong Peace Corps partner: a culture that encourages students to explore broadly, learn deeply, and serve thoughtfully.

This year's ranking feels especially meaningful for the Center for Careers and Internships. Mtunguja, who works as a CCI Ambassador, has been accepted as a Peace Corps recruit. Mtunguja's academic interests in Spanish and Political Science, and her commitment to supporting fellow students through her work at CCI, make Peace Corps service a natural next step. She joins a global network of volunteers dedicated to cross-cultural collaboration and community-driven change.

Since the Peace Corps' founding in 1961, 549 Middlebury alumni have served abroad as volunteers.

The Peace Corps' annual rankings highlight schools that consistently produce graduates committed to service and global impact. For Middlebury, the No. 7 ranking among small schools underscores the college's deep-rooted culture of civic engagement and international connection. As the Peace Corps looks ahead to its goal of supporting 8,000 volunteers in service by 2030, Middlebury students and alumni continue to play a meaningful role in advancing that mission.

For students considering their own post-graduation paths, Mtunguja's journey is a powerful reminder: your Middlebury experience can take you anywhere, and make a difference everywhere.

The U.S. government's premier international volunteering agency, the Peace Corps sends passionate and skilled Americans abroad to collaborate on projects that advance both American and host country priorities. This year, the agency commemorates 65 years of promoting world peace and friendship through volunteer service.

Libraries

(Continued from Page 3C)

projects ranging from preparing crafts for the kids, to book reviews, to research projects, to helping with the ongoing quest of getting all of our spaces organized and tidy.

•Building Maintenance volunteers help main the Little City's beautiful, beloved, old library building. Bixby welcomes those who enjoy small repair projects, wood refinishing, making a trip to the transfer station, and advising on larger improvement projects.

•Historical Collections volunteers: Bixby Library has a highly experienced core volunteer team helping to organize and make more accessible our archives, objects, and artifacts reflecting the fascinating and inspiring local history of our area.

•Fundraising Event Planning and Staffing volunteers. Every dollar raised for the library goes a long way to providing programming, services, books, and digital resources. When the library creates fundraisers, like next month's Bixby Gala, volunteers and staff work to have them as enjoyable and convivial to organize as they are to attend.

•Programming and Expertise Sharing volunteers. Part of the Vergennes library's community-based sustainability model is to be a place where we can come together to share and exchange knowledge, expertise, skills, and ideas. Local people who have something that they love doing and are willing to share with and/or teach others should reach out.

•Information Technology Support volunteers help Bixby deal with tech issues that staff members know someone out there in the community could easily troubleshoot and maybe even fix. Is that you?

•Special Populations and Outreach And, of course, there is the Friends of the Bixby Library group that raises funds in support of the

library through used book sales and plant sales and provide monies for special programs, services and activities. The Friends meet monthly at the Bixby Library.

Formally, the purpose of the Friends of the Bixby Library is to:

- Develop and maintain an association of library supporters.
- Heighten awareness of library services and facilities.
- Promote public support for the enhancement of library resources.
- Engage in fundraising activities, through appropriate means, to benefit the library.
- Provide, sponsor or support programs that further library objectives.

The Friends are members of the community who volunteer to help with special projects and ongoing programs that serve the library's mission of spreading learning and education. The fundraising and volunteer activities of the Friends help provide "extras" for the library beyond what is covered under regular operating costs.

SAME NEED IN BRISTOL

Similarly, at the Lawrence Memorial Library in Bristol, volunteers help library staff accomplish some of the core tasks required to provide high-quality service. Without assistance from volunteers, library staff would not be able to achieve the same results. The library staff works hard to make the Lawrence Library a fun and rewarding place to volunteer by providing meaningful work assignments, training, ongoing support, and a respectful work environment. In turn the library seeks committed, dependable volunteers.

Some standard volunteer opportunities include helping with shelving and merchandising of materials, assisting with circulation desk services, supporting outreach and programming, and caring for the collection.

Smaller libraries need volunteers. And not just day-to-day, but for oversight, too. In Salisbury, the Salisbury Free Public Library has

moved out of its building while big repairs are underway, but who do you think is keeping the institution going? Well, certainly Librarian Alissa Shethar is playing a key role while the library is in temporary space. But she also pointed to others that deserve some credit.

"We'd like to nominate our Board of Trustees, who are all volunteers, for recognition this year," Shethar told the *Independent*. "They have worked for years to make our big renovation happen, get the library moved and are continuing to have Big Vision for the library's future!"

Over at the Orwell Free Library, there are two part-time paid staff so the institution relies on volunteers to handle a host of other tasks that must be done to keep the library open and functioning smoothly.

"Volunteers get to know the community in a way few people do," the library posted on its website. "And best of all, you'll be surrounded by books! All you need is a few hours a month (or more) to devote to library work, a pleasant manner and a willingness to help your neighbors check out a book, use the library's resources, or conduct research. We'll teach you the rest."

Library supporters are looking for a volunteer to support a current need: crafts for kids.

"We would like to start a Saturday drop-in craft for families who stop by the library," the website said. "We need someone willing to help come up with crafts and prepare the projects. This volunteer work can be done from home!"

More typical jobs that volunteers do for us include assisting with the Summer Reading Program, staffing the library when staff are out, straightening the shelves, assisting with publicity and helping with book sale and with mailings.

MANY VOLS NEEDED AT BIG LIBRARY

In Middlebury, the Friends of Ilsley Library is a non-profit organization working to extend the library's services and facilities. Organized in 1967, the Friends



THE SALISBURY FREE Public Library board has been a force behind the big renovation of the historic Maple Street home of the library. Pictured, with a few friends, are members of the volunteer board, including Janet Mosurick, Alison Metcalfe, Sam Smith, Gay Truax, Deb Brighton, Chris Naylor, Kathy Clarke and Lisa Durst.

now number over 200 members. Funds raised by membership contributions and book sales have provided nearly \$20,000 in support in the past year and a half.

Their invaluable assistance has allowed the library to host innovative programming, purchase and implement new technology, develop staff competencies, assist low-income non-residents obtain borrowing privileges, initiate building improvements, and countless other things.

The most high-profile thing that most people know the Friends of Ilsley for is its monthly book sales, which are held on the first Saturday of the month. During the Main Street library's renovation/expansion project, the Friends of Ilsley Public Library has been operating out of Middlebury United Methodist Church, 43 N.

Pleasant St., where it has its book sales.

The next book sale is Saturday, May 2, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. The group accepts donated books on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. - noon and on Saturdays from noon - 2 p.m. Due to the temporary space, donations are limited to four boxes per drop-off.

Volunteers work hard to sort through your donations of hard-backed and paper-backed books for children and adults in good condition. They have to turn away textbooks, dictionaries, condensed books, encyclopedias, magazines, periodicals, records/LPs, audio cassettes, DVDs/CDs, catalogues, puzzles and sheet music.

"During construction, we were fortunate to be able to rent the basement space at the Middlebury United Methodist Church for our

book donations, sorting, storage and monthly sales," said Friends of Ilsley board member Kathy Sagendorf. "While our sales have not been as profitable as when we were at Ilsley, we do make enough each month to cover rent and expenses, and even provide money towards library programs (most of which are covered with membership monies)."

Sagendorf is thankful that the Friends group has been able to maintain its membership numbers, but she said they'll be putting out a call for more volunteers once the work on the library is done late this summer.

"We will do a big push in the fall to try to add new members, or have lapsed members rejoin," she said. "We are truly looking forward to Ilsley's Grand Opening this August."

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In 2025, so many of you joined us in harvesting thousands of pounds of produce for those facing food insecurity. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our athletic partners at Middlebury College field hockey and football, MUHS cross country team, along with a special thanks to HOPE, CSAC, and Home Health and Hospice for all of your hard work and compassion. We hope to see you all again this summer for an even bigger harvest for our community!

THANK YOU

