



32A Malletts Bay Avenue, Winooski, VT 05404

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vtworksforwomen.org

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VERMONT LEADERS ANNOUNCE INITIATIVES TO “CHANGE THE STORY” – IMPROVING WORK & ECONOMIC LIVES OF GIRLS & YOUNG WOMEN STATEWIDE

WINOOSKI, VT –The *Task Force on Young Women & the Vermont Economy*, composed of business, labor, government, nonprofit and philanthropic leaders from around the state, will announce a series of recommendations and commitments to ***change the story*** for **Vermont’s girls and young women by improving their work, social and economic lives** for the future.

A press conference is scheduled on Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2013, 10-10:30 a.m. at the Vermont State House, Montpelier, Cedar Creek Room.

Gov. Peter Shumlin will join the 29 Task Force members, who have been working together over a tight six-month timeframe prior to the next legislative session to develop a curve-bending campaign entitled **Change the Story**. Task Force leaders have met 20 times, investing more than 125 collective hours to develop action-oriented initiatives that ensure young women play a full and active role in contributing to Vermont’s economic vitality.

The *Task Force on Young Women and the Vermont Economy*, chaired by former Ambassador Linda Tarr-Whelan, of Burlington, a distinguished senior fellow at Demos, was formed last April in response to a sobering report released by Vermont Works for Women about the state of young women related to school, work and becoming adults.

Entitled **Enough Said: Why We Should Listen and What We Can Do** ([summary & full report](#)), the study named barriers young women in Vermont say they face when envisioning their futures, including: few allies and role models; limited exposure to career options; lack of personal finance skills; ongoing peer aggression; and concerns about achieving economic independence ultimately.

“Preparing all young people to make informed decisions about work and money is a no-brainer, but it’s especially critical for women,” said Tiffany Bluemle, executive director, Vermont Works for Women, and the Task Force convener, “because women live longer, bank less earnings over their lifetimes, and are more likely



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to live in poverty at all ages. We are thrilled at Task Force members' investments of energy and wisdom to create collective impact together – to *change the story* for girls and young women once and for all.”

Some of the key Task Force **recommendations** are to include:

- ..that **personal finance be incorporated into state educational standards as a core competency**, with incentives from the State for school districts that do so before 2018.
- ..that leaders in secondary and higher education initiate a **statewide conversation about peer aggression** to build awareness and develop the capacity of youth and adults to mitigate or prevent peer aggression in and out of school.
- ..that employers pursue additional **innovative strategies to recruit young women for internships and jobs** in which they are underrepresented.

Some of the Task Force's **commitments** are to include:

- **The Center for Financial Literacy at Champlain College** will launch a Vermont Financial Literacy Action Plan in the first quarter of 2014. When completed, the plan will include research and public policy recommendations on broadening the personal finance knowledge of Vermont's K-12 pupils, college students and adults. The Center will develop details of the plan with the help of an advisory committee. (Contact: John Pelletier, *Center for Financial Literacy, Champlain College*)
- **Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, PC Construction, Comcast, and Renewable NRG Systems** invite Vermont businesses to take action to increase the number of young women in STEM-related or technical fields – by adopting and partnering with schools, supporting internships, exposing young women and girls to successful female role models, and pursuing new strategies to recruit and support their career advancement. (Contact: Beth Sachs, *VT Energy Investment Corporation*)
- Recognizing that this project is a long run, not a sprint, we will need several strategies over time. One starting point: a day-long conversation open to Vermont's young women across the state on the quality of relationships: how we can reframe them, build new ones, and locate and identify our allies. **Vermont State Colleges** will proudly sponsor, with much input and program planning assistance and volunteers, a 2014 Conference for VT's Young Women – what we need to thrive at home, at work, in our communities. (Contact: Barbara Murphy, *Johnson State College*; Joyce Judy, *Community College of VT*)
- **The Community College of Vermont** will develop an LOOC (Little Open Online Course) on financial literacy within six months. (Contact: Joyce Judy, *Community College of VT*)



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- **The VT Agency of Education** has launched the STEM Equity Pipeline project to boost the number of girls enrolled in and completing STEM related programs in partnership with pilot initiatives at four Vermont career and technical centers. Pipeline goals and priorities have been informed by what was reported in the *Enough Said* report. (Contact: Jay Ramsey, *VT Agency of Education*)
- **The Rutland Regional Workforce Investment Board** has recruited executives from leading regional employers to provide career coaching and mentoring to participants in “Three Steps Forward,” a program for young women at risk of failing to find their way to economic independence. It is developing support among key stakeholders in education, business, human resources, and youth-serving organizations to advance Task Force recommendations regionally and will develop hands-on opportunities for students in grades 7-12 to explore STEM and nontraditional careers and develop personal finance skills with representatives of the Supervisory Union. (Contact: Nancy Burzon, *Rutland Regional Workforce Investment Board*)
- The **Vermont Commission on Women** and the **Vermont State Treasurer’s Office** will collaborate to feature and promote online financial literacy resources for women and girls. (Contact: Cary Brown, *Vermont Commission on Women*; Beth Pearce, *VT State Treasurer’s Office*)
- The **Vermont Department of Libraries (VTLIB)** will sponsor the 2014 “Fizz, Boom, READ” and “Spark a Reaction” statewide summer reading programs for young readers at public libraries statewide, encouraging girls in elementary and middle school to explore the world of science through reading and attending STEM-related library programs. (Contact: Martha Reid, *VT Department of Libraries*)
- **Navicate** and **Vermont Works for Women** are partnering with Seventh Generation, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, VT Energy Investment Corp., Dealer.com, Burton Snowboards to pilot Lead In!, a semester-long program that will engage 23 young women in internships and seminars that explore careers in non-traditional fields. (Contact: Lindsey Lathrop, *Navicate*; Kelly Walsh, *VT Works for Women*)
- **Newport** leaders have initiated a call-to-action to recruit 100 women to combine forces with schools, businesses, young women, and the Supervisory Union to *change the story* for our young women and advance the positive changes envisioned by the Task Force. (Contact: Trish Sears, *Newport City Renaissance*)

At the Dec. 3rd press conference, speakers will include:

- *Task Force Charge*: Linda Tarr-Whelan, Chair, Task Force on Young Women & the Vermont Economy
- *Impacts to VT Economy*: Gov. Peter Shumlin
- *Build Personal Finance Skills*: Mike Smith, former Vermont State President, FairPoint Communications
- *Promote Supportive Relationships*: Barbara Murphy, President, Johnson State College



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- *Expand Exposure to Careers & Role Models*: Alex MacLean, Project Manager, NE Kingdom Economic Revitalization Initiative
- *A Young Woman's Response*: Annalee Beaulieu, Senior, Mount Mansfield Union High School
- *Q & A*: Tiffany Bluemle, Executive Director, Vermont Works for Women

Press conference visual: Task Force members (alongside invited business and community partners) will hold individual “talk bubbles” scribed with their personal and/or organizational commitments to *change the story* for girls and young women in Vermont.

TASK FORCE ON YOUNG WOMEN AND THE VERMONT ECONOMY:

Linda Tarr-Whelan, Task Force Chair –*Distinguished Senior Fellow, Demos; former Ambassador*
Cary Brown, Vice Chair, Financial Literacy Team– *Executive Director, Vermont Commission on Women*
Joyce Judy, Vice Chair, Career Exposure & Role Models Team – *President, Community College of VT*
Barbara Murphy, Vice Chair, Peer Aggression Team – *President, Johnson State College*

Jan Blomstrann – *President/CEO, Renewable NRG Systems, Inc.*
Tiffany Bluemle – *Executive Director, Vermont Works for Women*
Nancy Burzon – *Executive Director, Rutland Region Workforce Investment Board*
Kim Coe – *Director of Residential and Community Treatment Programs, Lund*
Steve Dale – *Executive Director, Vermont School Boards Association*
Lisa Falcone – *Community Impact Manager/Income, United Way of Chittenden County*
Dolly Fleming – *Executive Director, Mercy Connections*
Cheryl Hanna – *Professor, Vermont Law School*
Nancy Heydinger – *Executive Director, Girls on the Run*
Retta Huttlinger – *Manager of Major Gifts, Vermont Public Radio*
Lindsey Lathrop – *Assistant Director, Navicate*
Marian Lawlor – *Manager, Corporate Citizenship & Corporate Affairs, IBM*
Pam Mackenzie – *President/CEO, DeckerZinn, LLC; Chair, South Burlington City Council*
Alex MacLean – *Project Manager, Northeast Kingdom Economic Revitalization Initiative*
Sandy Mayotte – *Senior Vice President & Corporate Secretary, Deringer*
Beth Pearce – *Vermont State Treasurer*
John Pelletier – *Director, Center for Financial Literacy, Champlain College*
Jen Peterson – *Vice President for Community Grantmaking, Vermont Community Foundation*
Kesha Ram – *Representative, Chittenden 3-4 District, Vermont State Legislature*
Jay Ramsey – *Career and Technical Education Workgroup Coordinator, VT Agency of Education*
Mark Redmond – *Executive Director, Spectrum Youth and Family Services*
Beth Sachs – *Founder, Vermont Energy Investment Corporation*
Trish Sears – *Executive Director, Newport City Renaissance Corporation*



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Michael Smith – *Former Vermont State President, FairPoint Communications*

Tom Torti – *President, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce*

Vermont Works for Women is a nonprofit organization founded in 1987 to help women and girls recognize their potential, and explore, pursue, and excel in work that leads to economic independence. Through innovative programming, VWW assists women and girls in thinking about their lives in the broadest terms and helps them develop skills and capacities critical to their long-term economic self-sufficiency. For more information: www.vtworksforwomen.org. #