

Mission



The Vermont Humanities Council (VHC) celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2014 and is excited to be looking forward to its fifth decade. VHC strives to make Vermont a state in which every individual reads, participates in public affairs, and continues to learn throughout life.

In one word, VHC is about education. VHC believes that engagement with the world of ideas, in interaction with others, contributes uniquely to richer lives, stronger communities, and a more humane society. Because the humanities and the world of ideas belong to everyone, VHC has developed a broad range of programs that serve Vermonters of all ages and backgrounds. Through humanities-based literacy programs and programs for the general public, we provide literacy, educational, and cultural opportunities that transform lives and strengthen communities. The humanities, which include history, literature, art history, comparative religion, and more, are the tools of self-reflection; they help us better understand ourselves and others, the past and present.

Description of Programs and Appropriations

The State of Vermont's allocation to VHC is essential to the pursuit of its mission by complementing federal funds and enabling it to leverage \$300,000 in private donations each year. These funds pay for the critical programs that contribute toward a literate and engaged citizenry and vital, healthy communities.

In 2014 VHC sponsored nearly 1,000 programs; they occurred in 136 Vermont towns, including communities in every county.

“I've learned the importance of reading to your children, because it's something I never had. It was pleasing to know that it's not too late for me to read to my own children.”

— Never Too Early literacy participant, Northeast Regional Correctional Facility, St. Johnsbury

Children and Families, Department of Corrections, Community High School of Vermont, Adult Education and Literacy centers, Vermont Childcare Resource and Referral Agencies, childcare providers, teen-parent centers, parent-child centers, public schools, and other service providers. And VHC's programs for the general public are conducted in collaboration with schools, libraries, historical societies, museums, hospitals, VPR, and scores of other nonprofit and for-profit entities.

VHC promoted literacy for Vermonters of all ages in a variety of ways:

- **VHC served 903 teen and adult literacy participants and their teachers and service providers in 2014.** At 52 Connections sessions — 26 of them held at correctional facilities — 415 individuals (178 of them offenders) participated in humanities-

- working in correctional centers to help offenders develop critical thinking and literacy skills
- helping to get Vermont's youngest off to a good start
- inspiring at-risk middle-school students to develop a love of learning
- encouraging civility and civic engagement
- helping us both better understand the past and strive for a better future



“Reading isn’t just a requirement of life; it can also be a passion and it is so important to pass on to our children the power of written words.”

– Never Too Early literacy participant, Vermont Achievement Center, Rutland

“I learned that we are not destined for the same fate and future that we grow up with and that we can excel and be the person we want to be. . . .The whole idea of picking yourself up out of a bad situation has improved my outlook and really given me the hope and drive to create my life for the better.”

- participant, Welfare Brat program, Lamoille County

- **In 2014, 216 at-risk middle-school students took part in 13 theme-based, week-long humanities summer camps at middle schools around the state.** Since 1997, VHC has sponsored 168 camps at 41 different public schools. Thousands of at-risk students have benefited. Camps improve students’ attitudes about reading and learning and about themselves as capable learners so that they can thrive more in school by virtue of their

“VHC’s literacy programs are a state treasure. What a great resource for educators and students and the community.”

– Lucinda Smith, Welfare Brat program, Lamoille County

- **353 childcare providers and 460 parents (including incarcerated men and women) took part in 163 VHC early literacy training workshops and received quality children’s books,** thereby helping the thousands of young children who are in their care gain essential early language and literacy skills.
- **Through VHC’s mini-grants program, donated books and literacy mini-grants were given to support other organizations’ literacy projects where a little help can do a lot.**
- **VHC distributed 12,526 free books in 2014.**

VHC also ran hundreds of events and other projects that engaged tens of thousands of the general public statewide:

- **In 2014, Vermont Reads, VHC’s statewide one-book community reading program, reached 119 communities and 12,400 people with *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio.** Palacio’s bestselling, inspiring story about the power, and the importance, of kindness tells the story of fifth-grader Auggie Pullman who on the inside knows he’s like any other kid. But due to a congenital birth defect, he stands out in ways nobody wants to. *Wonder* traces

based reading and discussion programs. These programs help those who may believe that “books have nothing to do with me” to develop critical thinking and literacy skills, and help participants feel a connection to literature as well as to other people, their community, and their world. Through this program VHC also reached pregnant and parenting teens at Vermont’s parent-child centers. VHC’s professional development programs trained adult educators who work at Vermont’s designated Adult Education and Literacy Centers to lead reading and discussion programs, and provided them with books for 361 high school completion and adult students.



“For a short time, our community cheered for, felt joy and anguish for, and had their hearts broken for Auggie. From my experience, not one person was unmoved by this story.”

– Bonnie Stewart, Maclure Library, Pittsford,
Vermont Reads Wonder participant

Auggie’s journey through his first year in middle school. This program engaged students and adults (confident and fragile readers alike) in reading and discussing the book and participating in events related to it. Schools, libraries, and scores of other groups — as well as adult literacy students at AEL centers and prisons — took part.

In 2015, Vermont is reading *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* by Salman Rushdie. This funny and touching story of a father and son is, at its heart, a reflection on the importance of stories, imagination, and creativity. In *Haroun*, Rushdie has created his own fantastic folktale, modern yet steeped in the narrative traditions of world cultures. Vermont Reads brings communities together around stories, ideas, and activities that are important to the life of towns of all sizes.

- **Salman Rushdie’s talk “What’s the Use of Stories That Aren’t Even True” brought a crowd of 931 to Ira Allen Chapel.** VHC partnered with UVM’s Office of the President to bring Rushdie to Vermont. [The talk and interviews are available online.](#)
- **In 2014, VHC hosted 181 free public lectures or living history performances in libraries, schools, museums, and other community centers in 74 different towns. All these events, like the 159 VHC book discussions that libraries hosted in 33 different towns,** promoted lifelong learning, reading, and vital libraries; they fostered community building and contributed to Vermont’s “creative economy” and attractive quality of life. **“First Wednesdays is a terrific example of how the Vermont Humanities Council brings what matters to Vermonters.”**
– attendee, Manchester
- **97 healthcare professionals in 4 Vermont hospitals took part in “Literature and Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care,”** a national award-winning reading and discussion program that has been shown to improve patient care by helping healthcare professionals improve their communication and interpersonal skills while increasing their job satisfaction, cultural awareness, and empathy for patients.
- **In 2014, VHC provided 19 general humanities grants totaling \$36,000** to libraries, museums, historical societies, and other nonprofit organizations for humanities programming.
- **VHC’s annual autumn conference, which in 2014 explored “A Fire Never Extinguished: How the Civil War Continues to Shape Civic and Cultural Life in America, drew an audience of 315.** VHC presented the conference in collaboration with the Vermont Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, with partnership and support from the National Park Service, the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership, Billings Farm & Museum, The Bay and Paul Foundations, Fleming Museum, the Friends of the UVM Special Collections, and the Center for Research on Vermont. C-SPAN covered and broadcast parts of the conference. VHC also recorded the entire conference; a film of conference highlights will be available this spring. [Visit FireNeverExtinguished.org to learn more about the conference.](#)
- **For the Civil War’s 150th anniversary (2011-15), VHC is researching, producing, and publishing the Civil War Book of Days, weekly emails noting events that happened exactly 150 years ago each week.** Installments consider familiar events from unusual points of view, important but less visible issues, and the human face of the war. To date, 227 weekly installments have been published (about ten to go before Appomattox). More than 2,600 people subscribe to this weekly newsletter and in early summer 2014, at the Vermont Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission’s request, VHC launched the *Civil War Book of Days* website so that the information is searchable and continues to be available to teachers and others to use into the future.

VermontHumanities.org

CivilWarBookofDays.org

Vermont Humanities Programs at a Glance

Program	Audience	Number Served in 2014	Location
Reading and Discussion			
VERMONT READS			
Brings Vermonters together for activities related to one book (2015: <i>Haroun and the Sea of Stories</i> by Salman Rushdie; 2014: <i>Wonder</i> by R.J. Palacio)	General public and intergenerational audiences, as well as audiences at correctional facilities, literacy centers, and humanities camps	Estimated 12,400 people in 119 towns participated; 28,000+ people listened to broadcasts on VPR; VHC distributed more than 3,600 free books	Schools, libraries, community centers, and other nonprofits statewide; author visits to schools and communities
LITERATURE AND MEDICINE: HUMANITIES AT THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE			
A hospital-based reading and discussion program open to all hospital staff	Hospitals/health care staff	97 people at 4 hospitals	Copley Hospital (Morrisville), Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital (St. Johnsbury), Rutland Regional Medical Center, White River Junction VA Medical Center
READING AND DISCUSSION			
Led by a VHC-trained scholar, participants make connections with neighbors by reading and talking about books	General public and intergenerational audiences	2,281 attendees took part in 159 discussions in 33 Vermont towns	Statewide, hosted by libraries or other nonprofits
ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE			
Explores a topic in depth (2015: <i>Why Do Stories Matter?</i> 2014: <i>A Fire Never Extinguished: How the Civil War Continues to Shape Civic and Cultural Life in America</i>)	General public	315 attendees	Held at a central location; at University of Vermont Dudley Davis Center in 2013, 2014, 2015
Talks and Living History			
FIRST WEDNESDAYS			
Once-a-month public lectures featuring nationally renowned speakers, October through May	General public within reach of nine regional centers	6,243 people attended 70 talks at nine locations	Brattleboro, Essex Junction, Manchester, Middlebury, Montpelier, Newport, Norwich, Rutland, and St. Johnsbury
SPEAKERS BUREAU			
Speakers and living history presenters are made available for public lectures	General public	3,789 attendees at 111 programs in 68 towns	Hosted at libraries and other community centers statewide
VERMONT PUBLIC RADIO COMMENTARIES			
Commentaries about humanities-related subjects by Peter Gilbert	General public	10,000–14,000 listeners about every three weeks	On VPR and at vpr.net and vermonthumanities.org

Vermont Humanities Programs at a Glance, continued

Program	Audience	Number Served in 2014	Location
Grants			
GRANTS TO COMMUNITIES			
Grants to nonprofits for humanities programming	General public	19 grants totaling \$36,000 and serving tens of thousands of Vermonters	Museums, libraries, and performing and community venues statewide
Exploring the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War			
CIVIL WAR BOOK OF DAYS			
E-newsletter marking events of each week in the Civil War	General public, schools, teachers	2,600 weekly	Weekly via e-mail and at CivilWarBookofDays.org
READING FREDERICK DOUGLASS			
Annual public readings of Frederick Douglass's 1852 Fourth of July address, The Meaning of the Fourth of July for the Negro	General public	4 events with 194 attendees of all ages	Brattleboro, Burlington, Montpelier, and St. Johnsbury in pilot year with 11 community and social justice organizations
Humanities-Based Literacy			
NEVER TOO EARLY			
A professional development opportunity offering early literacy workshops for childcare providers, as well as family literacy trainings for parents	Childcare providers and parents, especially low-income households and teen parents	353 different providers and 460 different parents at 163 events (6,506 free books distributed)	Childcare centers and home care settings, parent-child centers, Head Start, correctional facilities, and low-income family programs statewide
CONNECTIONS			
A reading and discussion program in collaboration with the Community High School of Vermont and the Vermont Department of Corrections, and community organizations	Corrections inmates and probationers, teen and adult literacy students, social service organization clients	539 individuals were served; 52 group events were held, including 26 in correctional facilities (574 free books distributed)	Correctional facilities and probation and parole sites, social service organizations, and adult education centers statewide
HUMANITIES CAMPS			
Week-long summer day camps for at-risk middle-school students. The camps strengthen literacy skills, build positive peer groups, and nurture a love of reading	At-risk middle-schoolers ages 11 to 14	216 students in 13 Vermont public schools (1,199 free books distributed)	At 13 schools statewide*
VOICES			
Professional development program for Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) staff to facilitate book discussions	Adult educators and students, including refugees and immigrants	361 adult educators and students served (647 free books distributed)	Adult education centers statewide: Barre, Bennington, Bradford, Burlington, Hardwick, Middlebury, Montpelier, Morrisville, North Springfield, Rutland, Waterbury, and White River Junction

The information on this grid pertains to the 2014 calendar year. * Barre Town Middle School, Brattleboro Area Middle School, Edmunds Middle School (Burlington), Irasburg Village School, Newark Street School, Northfield Middle High School, Poulney High School, Richford Jr.-Sr. High School, Rutland Town School, St. Albans City School, Stowe Middle School, Waits River Valley School (East Corinth), West Rutland School

Vermont Humanities Council Approved 2015 Budget

Ordinary Income/Expense	PROGRAM TOTALS	2015 Proposed Budget
Income		
4010 - Contributions Unrestricted		155,000.00
4020 - Contribution Restricted		132,000.00
4220 - NEH Grant		693,737.00
4230- State Funds		217,959.00
4300 - Program Svc Fees & Book Sales		82,655.00
4900 - Miscellaneous Operating Income		8,300.00
4901- Interest Income		36,760.00
Total Income		1,326,411.00
Expense		
5000-Salaries		544,771.00
5100-Benefits		170,000.00
6000-Professional Fees		79,700.00
6050-Honoraria		144,250.00
6100 - Supplies		9,425.00
6200-Telephone		6,600.00
6300 - Postage and Shipping		41,115.00
6400 - Occupancy		11,000.00
6500-Equip Maint & Rental		4,000.00
6650 - Books		72,687.00
6660-Capital Improvements		23,500.00
6700 - Travel		29,545.00
6800 - Conferences, Conventions, Mtgs		39,405.00
6900-Membership Dues		13,145.00
7000 - Awards		69,450.00
7300 - Miscellaneous		12,200.00
8000 - Printing & Publications		54,534.00
Total Expense		1,325,327.00
Net Ordinary Income		1,084.00



**Vermont
Humanities**
Because Ideas Matter

Underwriter

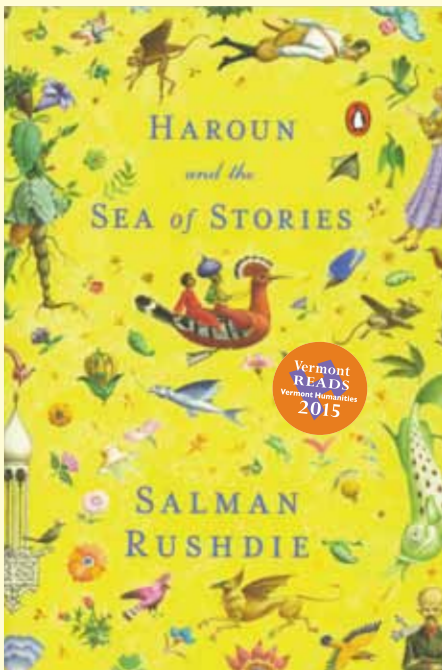


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An Invitation to Vermont Communities



vtreads.org • 802.262.2626



A Statewide One-Book
Community Reading
Program

Vermont Reads *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*

A Novel by Salman Rushdie

**“What’s the use of stories
that aren’t even true?”**

–Haroun



Haroun and the Sea of Stories

A Novel by Salman Rushdie

Vermont communities are invited to participate in the statewide read of Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. This funny and touching story of a father and son is, at its heart, a reflection on the importance of stories, imagination, and creativity.

In *Haroun*, Rushdie has created his own fantastic folktale, modern yet steeped in the narrative traditions of world cultures. The story features storyteller Rashid Khalifa and his young son, Haroun. A great upheaval in their family causes Rashid to lose his voice, his stories, and possibly, the family's livelihood. Haroun's challenge — complete with water genies and talking fish — is to unplug the Sea of Stories and restore his father's storytelling abilities.

Discover with others the power of reading, and of reflecting on the importance of stories and imagination. Libraries, schools, and other nonprofit organizations may apply; collaboration among town organizations and businesses is strongly encouraged.

- Receive FREE books and programming support.
- Host readings, discussions, and community events in your schools, libraries, and local businesses.
- Listen to Vermont Public Radio's Vermont Reads feature.

Apply: December 5, 2014 or June 5, 2015.

Applications are online at vtreads.org or call 802.262.1355



**Vermont
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Because Ideas Matter

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Montpelier, Vermont 05602

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An Invitation to Vermont Communities



A Statewide One-Book
Community Reading
Program

Vermont Reads

WONDER

A Novel by R.J. Palacio

**“Courage. Kindness. Friendship. Character.
These are the qualities that define us as human
beings, and propel us, on occasion, to greatness.”**

– Mr. Tushman, the principal at Beecher Prep,
the middle school at the center of *Wonder*

vtreads.org • 802.262.2626



Vermont Reads
WONDER
A Novel by R.J. Palacio

Vermont communities are invited to participate in the statewide read of *Wonder*, R.J. Palacio's bestselling, inspiring story about the power, and the importance, of kindness — in everyone's life.

On the inside, fifth-grader Auggie Pullman knows he's like any other kid. But due to a congenital birth defect, he stands out in ways nobody wants to. *Wonder* traces Auggie's journey through his first year in middle school, where he experiences the challenges of being shunned—and the satisfactions of belonging—in a world where differences can both set us apart and bring us together.

Discover with others the power of reading, and of reflecting on the ways we can choose kindness and inclusion in our communities. Vermont Reads unites communities around reading, ideas, and activities. Libraries, schools, and other nonprofit organizations may apply; collaboration among town organizations and businesses is strongly encouraged.

- Receive FREE books and programming support.
- Host readings, discussions, and community event nights in your schools, libraries, and local businesses.
- Listen to Vermont Public Radio's Vermont Reads feature.

APPLY: December 6, 2013 or May 16, 2014.

Applications are online at vthreads.org or call 802.262.2626 x304.



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Civil War Book of Days

150 Years Ago — This Week in the Civil War

A Weekly E-newsletter and Blog Marking Events in the Civil War

“I am so grateful for the *Civil War Book of Days*! The daily march of secession activity leading to the war itself is fascinating — and horrifying in the parallels of polarization recognizable today. Thank you for making this history available in such a format.”

– Mary Leahy, Middlesex, Vermont

“Just a quick note to tell you how highly I think of the *Civil War Book of Days*. Above and beyond the text, the pages are very slickly produced (and I mean that as a compliment). The links to full-text images of the sources and the illustrations make these short notes highly pleasing to the eye. Do you have any plans for publishing a compilation of them at the end of the Sesquicentennial? Good work!”

– David Schütz, Vermont State Curator

“Thank you so much for the piece on Emilie Todd Helm — once again bringing to life the struggle and anguish of human conflict. Thank you. Please continue my education.”

– Jeff King, Montpelier, Vermont

“These pieces are just fascinating. This one I actually felt as a blow to my stomach . . . I can’t believe how much I have learned about Civil War period history from these short columns. Thank you!”

– Esther Mackintosh, President, Federation of State Humanities Councils

Sign Up
Today for
Weekly
E-mails!

H Vermont
Humanities
40 YEARS Because Ideas Matter

With this weekly e-newsletter and blog, the Vermont Humanities Council seeks to tell what may be America’s greatest story — the Civil War — in new, personal, and compelling ways that promote greater and deeper understanding for all. The story is both inspiring and heartbreaking.

VHC marks the 150th anniversary of the Civil War with this e-newsletter and blog that uses personal letters, poetry, speeches, photographs, and news stories to bring Civil War events to life exactly 150 years after they happened.



Civil War Book of Days.org

Frederick Douglass, National Archives; Edmund Ruffin, Confederate soldier who fired the first shot in the Civil War, Library of Congress; Abraham Lincoln, February 5, 1865, Alexander Gardner, Library of Congress; Vermont couple, 3rd Vermont, Vermont Historical Society; Unidentified African American Soldier and Family, Library of Congress