

Vermont Humanities Council Program Narrative, 2/8/2019

Mission Statement

The Vermont Humanities Council (VHC) seeks to engage all Vermonters in the world of ideas, foster a culture of thoughtfulness, and inspire a lifelong love of reading and learning.

In a word, the Council is about **education** – lifelong learning for *all* Vermonters of *all* backgrounds and ages. The Council believes that engagement with the world of ideas, in interaction with others, contributes uniquely to richer lives, stronger communities, and a more humane society. In 2018 VHC sponsored over 840 talks, book discussions, literacy programs, and other humanities events in 117 Vermont communities, including towns in every county.

Note: Our fiscal year is the calendar year, and so our 2019 budget relates to the State's 2020 budget.

Literacy Work

The Humanities Council promoted literacy for Vermonters of all ages in a variety of ways:

- In 2018 VHC served 549 **adult literacy students** in two ways: first, through 61 reading and discussion events, 29 of which were held in correctional facilities in partnership with the Department of Corrections and the Community High School of Vermont. (One hundred and forty-three adults participated in these corrections-based programs.) Second, our programs gave adult literacy and high school completion educators the skills to lead reading discussions as part of their classes. Participants included teachers at correctional facilities and at Parent Child Centers. These programs make a dramatic impact on adult literacy students, and help professional development educators be more effective in their work.
- In the 2018 program year, VHC sponsored 26 **Never Too Early** trainings for childcare providers, and 15 **Read with Me** trainings for parents. 282 caregivers and 254 parents took part in these programs, helping an estimated 2,200 children in their care gain essential early language and literacy skills. Through these programs, VHC distributed 5,159 free books to families and professional child care providers. (Incarcerated parents' books were mailed home to their children to help maintain parent-child relationships during incarceration.)
- In the summer of 2018, 221 at-risk **middle school students** took part in week-long humanities day camps at 14 schools in eleven Vermont counties. Camps improve students' attitudes about reading and learning, and enhance crucial skills. Teachers, students, and parents report that these week-long programs cause many students to view themselves as more capable learners, and raise their academic, personal, and employment goals. The need for these camps is enormous. The Vermont Community Foundation says that Vermont ranks last in the nation for the percentage of low-income children who participate in academic and enrichment programs outside of school. Without out-of-school learning opportunities like Humanities Camps, at-risk children can fall further behind their better-resourced peers with each passing year.
- The Council distributed **7,463 free books** to children and adults through all of its literacy programs.

Community Programs for the General Public

The Vermont Humanities Council also provided hundreds of literacy and education events that enriched the lives of tens of thousands of Vermonters. These events strengthened communities and supported key community organizations such as libraries, schools, and hospitals.

- In 2018 the Council facilitated five **book groups for veterans** in four sites: the Lakeside V.A. Clinic in Burlington (for women), The Veterans Place in Northfield, Northern Vermont University at Lyndon, and two at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in White River Junction (one for women veterans, and one for combat veterans.) Fifty-five different veterans took part in a total of 38 sessions.

- Fifty-two health care professionals at three hospitals took part in ***Literature and Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care***. This is a national reading and discussion program that has been shown to improve patient care by helping health care professionals improve communication and interpersonal skills while increasing job satisfaction, cultural awareness, and empathy for patients.
- ***Vermont Reads***, the Council's statewide one-book community program, featured *Bread and Roses, Too*, by celebrated Vermont author Katherine Paterson. This novel about the 1912 mill strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts describes how thirty children of strikers were put on a train to Barre, Vermont, where they lived out of harm's way until the strike was over. The book tells the story of several of those children. Schools, libraries, and other community groups in an impressive 106 Vermont towns took part in *Bread and Roses, Too* programs in 2018, the second-highest number of participating towns since the program began over 15 years ago. Adult literacy students at AEL centers and prisons also took part in Vermont Reads programs. VHC distributed over 4,000 free copies of the book during the year.
- In our ***First Wednesdays public humanities lecture series***, one of our signature programs, nine participating libraries across Vermont hosted 66 talks during 2018 with 6,324 attendees. With an average of 96 people per lecture, the program is one of our most well-known and popular programs.
- In 2018 the Council ran 104 ***Reading and Discussion program events*** in 24 towns. These programs engaged 1,339 people and contributed to Vermont's creative economy and quality of life by promoting lifelong learning, reading, libraries, and community-building. VHC also hosted 152 ***free public talks*** in libraries, schools, museums, and other community centers in 81 different towns. These Speakers Bureau talks were attended by over 5,000 people, and some of the talks were broadcast on public access television.
- In 2018 VHC gave ***21 grants totaling \$40,000 to other Vermont non-profits presenting humanities-based programs***. These included the Vermont International Festival of Abenaki Culture at the Champlain Valley Expo Center, and the Vermont Music History Exhibit by Big Heavy World, which contextualized music experiences in Vermont with audio interpretation by live music photographers, and interactive documentary footage of Vermonters whose lives were shaped as teenagers by a historic Burlington music venue.
- For the fourth year, full scholarships allowed Vermont public school humanities educators to attend the Council's 2018 ***annual Fall Conference***, "The Ebb and Flow of Optimism through American History," held on November 16 and 17 at the University of Vermont. More than 250 people attended this conference, which featured a variety of accomplished and engaging speakers exploring the ways that technology has shaped society. Twenty-one educators attended on full scholarships, and another seven educators received partial scholarships. Seven full or partial scholarships were awarded to members of the public. On Friday evening, Dr. Ibram Kendi of American University gave a free public talk at the Ira Allen Chapel about "Racist Ideas in America." Three hundred and fifty people—a mixture of conference attendees and the general public—came to the talk.
- Also for the fifth year, we helped 29 Vermont towns host participatory ***readings of Frederick Douglass's 1852 Fourth of July address***. Nine hundred and fifty-two people of all ages took part in these readings. An additional event was held at the Northern State Correctional Facility.
- VHC and the Vermont Principals' Association have co-sponsored the Vermont competition for the ***Scripps National Spelling Bee*** since 2005. (Before that year, Vermont didn't participate in the national competition). In 2018, VTDigger was the media sponsor for this event.
- Finally, we bring the humanities into people's schools and homes through ***print and web-based resources***. Two printed newsletters are sent to around 7,500 addresses, and bi-monthly email bulletins are sent to around 9,000 subscribers. In 2018, we produced ten ***Before Your Time podcast episodes***, which were streamed or downloaded about 13,000 times. We currently have 2220 followers on Twitter, 2365 followers on Facebook, and 725 followers on Instagram. Our tweets had a combined reach of about 612,500 impressions in 2018. In 2018, our website was visited by over 39,000 users, with 133,000 page views.

2:00 PM
2/8/2019

Vermont Humanities Council Approved 2019 Budget

Approved 2019 Budget

Ordinary Income/Expense

Income

4010 · Contributions Unrestricted	185,000
4020 - Contribution Restricted	185,000
4220 - NEH Grant	700,000
4230- State Funds	217,960
4300 · Program Svc Fees & Book Sales	86,170
4700 · Temporarily Restricted	19,185
4900 · Miscellaneous Operating Income	2,000
4901- Interest Income	50,520

Total Income

1,445,835

Expense

5000-Salaries	627,210
5100-Benefits	162,061
6000-Professional Fees	58,060
6050-Honoraria	164,900
6100 · Supplies	22,190
6200-Telephone	7,500
6300 · Postage and Shipping	31,040
6400-Occupancy	28,000
6500-Equip Maint & Rental	10,650
6650 · Books	80,815
6700 · Travel	48,635
6800 · Conferences, Conventions, Mtgs	50,274
6900-Membership Dues	14,650
7000 · Awards	96,650
7300 · Miscellaneous	0
8000 · Printing & Publications	43,200

Total Expense

1,445,835

Net Ordinary Income

0

How much did we do?

LITERACY PROGRAMS

Our literacy programs include Never Too Early, Connections, Humanities Camps, and Voices.

The programs serve low-income parents, childcare providers, at-risk middle school students, teen parents, adult basic education students, and men and women in Correctional Facilities.

117 events (including 29 in correctional facilities)

922 individuals took part in these events.

We distributed **7,463 free books** through these programs.

BROADCAST OUTREACH

Ten new episodes of our Before Your Time podcast series were downloaded or streamed **13,000 times**.

Many of our **66 First Wednesdays talks** were broadcast by public access television channels across Vermont.

A Vermonter from Middlebury wrote to the Council: "Whenever old out-of-state friends tease me about living in Vermont—'Isn't that the place that has more cows than people?'—I have a question in return. 'Do you have any organization that comes even remotely close to doing what the Vermont Humanities Council does for Vermont?'"

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

A total of seven kinds of programs, including Vermont Reads, First Wednesdays, and Speakers Bureau.

723 events in **113 different towns** across Vermont

18,566 Vermonters from a wide range of ages and backgrounds took part in these events.

We distributed **4,000 free books** through these programs.

OTHER PROGRAMS FOR SPECIFIC AUDIENCES

Veterans Book Groups:

55 veterans in five book groups attended **38 events**.

Literature & Medicine: Humanities at the Heart of Health Care: **52 care providers** attended events at three hospitals.

GRANTS

We gave **\$40,000 in grants to 21 Vermont nonprofits**.

How well did we do it?

In August 2015, the Vermont Humanities Council received the report of a three-person National Endowment for the Humanities team that had examined us and our work earlier in the year. Such reviews are conducted every five years. The report concluded:

"Whether one looks at public appeal, the fulfilling of community needs, imaginative leadership, organizational effectiveness, or collaboration with other forces for humanity, the Vermont Humanities Council ranks among the best organizations in the nation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities can proudly point to it as exemplary of its national mission."

Is anyone better off because of our work?

From a co-director of one of our **Humanities Camps** (week-long summer day camps for at-risk middle school students):

"I wish education could always be like this. It's intensive, it's immersive, it's experiential, it's project-based. The campers love the experience. It is truly one of the most remarkable weeks of our entire summer, if not our entire school year."

From a participant in our **Read With Me** literacy program:

"I learned that it is so important to read to my daughter. It is the best gift that I can give to her."

From a female participant in one of our **Veterans Book Groups**:

"This group was fundamental to giving me a smoother transition into the civilian world."



Program Participants 2018

Participants	2018 Totals	Humanities-Based Literacy Programs
Adult education and other educators	22	Voices Training in how to facilitate book discussions
At-risk middle school students	221	Humanities Camps Week-long summer day camps
Childcare providers and low-income parents	536	Never Too Early Family literacy training
Corrections inmates and probationers, adult and teen literacy students, and social service organization clients	143	Connections Reading and discussion sessions
	922	
Participants	2018 Totals	Public Programs
Adults	1,339	Reading and Discussion 99 book discussions in 22 towns
Adults	5,000	Speakers Bureau 133 public lectures hosted by local non-profits in 83 towns
Adults and students	6,324	First Wednesdays 66 talks at nine regional centers around Vermont
Adults and students	101	Ideas on Tap Three events at ArtsRiot in Burlington
Adults and students	952	Reading Frederick Douglass 31 participatory readings around Vermont
Adults, students, Department of Corrections inmates and probationers, adult and teen literacy students	4,600	Vermont Reads Community activities related to one book
Adults, teachers, and some students	250	Fall Conference 1½ day conference at UVM's Davis Center
Veterans	55	Veterans Book Groups 31 sessions in four different book groups
Hospital staff	52	Humanities at the Heart of Health Care Reading and discussion groups in four hospitals
	18,673	
Total participants for all programs	19,595	

Programs at a Glance

Program	Audience	Number Served in 2018	Locations
Community Programs			
VERMONT READS			
Brings Vermonters together for activities related to one book. (2018: <i>Bread and Roses, Too</i> , by Katherine Paterson.)	General public and students, as well as audiences at correctional facilities, literacy centers, and Humanities Camps	An estimated 4,600 people in 106 towns participated. VHC distributed more than 4,000 free books.	Schools, libraries, community centers, and other nonprofits statewide; author visits to schools and communities
ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE			
A 1½ day conference that explores a topic in depth. (2018: <i>The Ebb and Flow of Optimism in American History</i>)	General public and teachers	Over 250 attendees, including 21 educators attending on full scholarships, and seven on partial scholarships	Held at University of Vermont's Dudley Davis Center
READING AND DISCUSSION			
Discussions led by a VHC-trained scholar help make connections between people, books, and ideas	General public and intergenerational audiences	1,339 Vermonters took part in 104 discussions in 24 Vermont towns	Statewide, hosted by libraries or other nonprofits
VETERANS BOOK GROUPS			
Reading and discussion programs for veterans	Former service members, including one group of female veterans	55 veterans participated in five book groups that met for a total of 38 sessions	White River Junction VA Medical Center (two groups), Burlington Lakeside Veterans Clinic, the Veterans' Place in Northfield, and Northern Vermont University at Lyndon
READING FREDERICK DOUGLASS			
Annual community participatory readings of Frederick Douglass's 1852 Fourth of July address.	General public	30 events involved 952 participants of all ages	29 towns around Vermont, plus a reading in the Northern State Correctional Facility
LITERATURE AND MEDICINE: HUMANITIES AT THE HEART OF HEALTH CARE			
A hospital-based reading and discussion program open to all hospital and affiliated staff	Hospitals/health care staff	52 people at three hospitals	Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital, Rutland Regional Medical Center, White River Junction Veterans Affairs Medical Center
BEFORE YOUR TIME PODCAST SERIES			
Monthly podcast episodes that explore Vermont's history. Produced with VTDigger and the Vermont Historical Society.	General public	The ten new episodes released in 2018 were downloaded or streamed over 13,000 times.	Available for streaming and download at www.beforeyourtime.org . VTDigger helped produce and promote the episodes.

Program	Audience	Number Served in 2018	Locations
Talks and Living History			
FIRST WEDNESDAYS			
Free public lectures featuring nationally renowned speakers in nine communities each month, October through May	General public within reach of nine regional hub communities	6,324 people attended 66 talks at nine locations; an average of 96 people per lecture	Brattleboro, Essex Junction, Manchester, Middlebury, Montpelier, Newport, Norwich, Rutland, and St. Johnsbury
SPEAKERS BUREAU			
Presenters made available to nonprofit organizations for public lectures	General public	Over 5,000 attendees at 152 programs in 81 towns	Hosted at libraries and other community centers statewide
IDEAS ON TAP			
A series exploring engaging topics in a casual setting	General public, including younger adult audiences	101 people attended three events	ArtsRiot, a Burlington restaurant/bar and performance space
Grants			
GRANTS TO COMMUNITIES			
Grants to nonprofits for humanities programming	General public	21 grants totaling \$40,000 and serving tens of thousands of Vermonters	Museums, libraries, and performing and community venues statewide
Humanities-Based Literacy			
NEVER TOO EARLY			
Early literacy professional development for childcare providers, and family literacy training for parents	Childcare providers and parents, especially low-income households and teen parents	282 different providers and 254 different parents at 41 events. 5,159 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, with the Community High School of VT, the VT Dept. of Corrections, and community organizations	Corrections inmates and probationers, teen and adult literacy students, social service organization clients	143 individuals served, and 61 group events held, including 29 in correctional facilities. 482 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 and build positive peer groups.	At-risk middle-schoolers, ages 11 to 14	221 students in camps at 14 Vermont public schools. 1,175 free books distributed.	14 schools statewide*
VOICES			
Professional development program for Adult Education and Literacy and other educators to facilitate book discussions; gift books for their students	Adult educators and students, including refugees and immigrants	22 adult educators received training. 378 teachers and students (82 of whom were in correctional facilities) received 647 free books.	18 adult education centers and prison/probation sites statewide

* Brattleboro Area Middle School, Burke Town School, Camels Hump Middle School (Richmond), Canaan Schools, Fair Haven Grade School, Grand Isle School, Hartford Memorial Middle School, Irasburg Village School, Northfield Middle/High School, Richford Junior-Senior High School, Riverside Middle School (Springfield), St. Albans City School, St. Johnsbury School, Stowe Middle School