



## Vermont Senate Education Committee Testimony

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Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Frascoia

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*"I feel that I gained more of an understanding of what type of engineering I may want to go into later on in life for a career, and what direction I would like to take my life over the next few years."*

- 2020 GIV Engineering Participant

*"I truly believe that I grew as an artist, a thinker, and as a person from attending GIV. During the past few months, I have found it hard to create due to both a personal lack of inspiration and due to the state of the world. Attending GIV, I gained a lot of creative inspiration and confidence in my art and my abilities. It was heartwarming to be virtually surrounded by such incredible artists during this lonely and grief-filled time. In addition to the creative inspiration and confidence, I also gained a lot of new friends and connections. Due to the small class sizes and frequent activities and events throughout each day, I got to know a lot of people and have stayed in touch with quite a few of them."*

- 2020 GIV Arts Participant



*"I gained a sense of confidence and strength knowing that I now have the tools and knowledge I need to make a difference in my community."* - 2020 GIV Global Issues & Youth Action Participant

## What is GIV?

At its core, the Governor's Institutes of Vermont (GIV) is about creating opportunities for Vermont's high school students to peer over walls, real or imagined, to see future paths for themselves. We help these curious, motivated students take a deep dive into a topic they are passionate about, and connect them with mentors, peers, and structures with which they can design meaningful lives and careers. We believe that learning should be fun, and we provide a nurturing and supportive community in which to play and formulate new ideas.

Here are a few more hallmarks of GIV:

- Our mission: *The Governor's Institutes of Vermont empowers young people with intensive, hands-on learning experiences in college settings which inspire their academic and creative passions, build confidence and leadership, and expand their sense of possibility.*
- GIV is a 38-year-old independent 501(c)3, founded collaboratively by VT Department of Education and VT Arts Council and operating in partnership with all Vermont high schools, nine Vermont colleges, the Agency of Education, VSAC, VT EPSCoR, and private funders.
- We aim to offer experiences not available in a typical high school experience, such as learning to carve stone, conduct a medical interview, and analyze a solar energy system. GIV students work in college laboratories with state-of-the-art equipment. We also offer unparalleled access to professionals working in each field through our faculty, staff, and guest speakers.
- GIV Institutes serve as an Extended Learning Opportunity for Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements, and students can earn credit by demonstrating the proficiencies they gained by attending GIV. For some of our Institutes, college credit is also available.
- GIV is Vermont's largest provider of hands-on, in-depth STEM learning to Vermont students outside of schools and tech centers.
- We are a recognized leader among Governor's Schools nationwide, and are currently offering nine topical Institutes in:
  - Arts
  - Engineering
  - Entrepreneurship: Creativity & Innovation
  - Environmental Science & Technology
  - Global Issues & Youth Action
  - Health & Medicine
  - Leadership
  - The Kenneth I. Gross and Tony Trono Governor's Institute on Mathematical Sciences
  - Technology & Design
- No matter the platform - we are online in 2020 and 2021 - we offer our signature interactive, hands-on, personalized approach to learning within a supportive community.

*"It was surprising how hands-on this turned out to be. I really liked how it wasn't all just instruction over Zoom. The big box of supplies helped me to get excited for an online immersion."*

- 2020 GIV Astronomy Participant

*"We got to research, we got to brainstorm, and we got to build. We got to, and had to, do the entire process rather like an actual engineer might."*

- 2020 GIV Engineering Participant

*"[I was surprised by] how well the social element was integrated into the experience and how little the online technical aspect actually impacted everyone."*

- 2020 GIV Mathematical Sciences Participant

*"I gained a lot of problem-solving skills and more confidence."*

- 2020 GIV Mathematical Sciences Participant

## Outcomes

We conducted a long-term impacts study of our alumni at our 30th anniversary, and found that up to 30 years later, **88% of our alumni stated that GIV was one of the most important experiences of their high school years.**

Additionally,

- 85% reported that GIV increased their **self-confidence**
- 83% reported that GIV increased their **academic or creative motivation**
- 79% reported that GIV helped them to become **more aware of interesting educational or career opportunities**

Anecdotally, we hear that students feel newly connected with their peers around the state, and find a group of people at GIV who also care about their special interest, be it drawing comics or a particular type of coding. They have an opportunity to get out of their comfort zone and meet people who have different backgrounds and experiences, and this creates a rich foundation to learn how to be themselves in relation to the wider arenas of Vermont and beyond. A student can blossom here, and many do so, heading back to their communities full of excitement and contagious passion. These future scientists, artists, thinkers, and citizens deserve the best start we can give them.

And each year a startling number of GIV graduates call their Institute experiences **"life-changing."**

I know this impact first hand: I am an alum myself, and I will be happy to share my story with you. It is an honor to now be stewarding the Governor's Institutes of Vermont into the future, and to provide these opportunities to the next generation of Vermonters.

*"[I gained an] increased knowledge in the field, more people to talk to about it, the tools to find increased learning opportunities." - 2020 GIV Environmental Science Participant*

## Educational Equity

**The Governor's Institutes of Vermont is committed to making world-class, accelerated enrichment programs financially and geographically accessible to every young person throughout Vermont**, and encourage participation without regard to economic status, gender, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or physical ability.

We are successfully serving a diverse population with targeted initiatives to attract and include students from underrepresented geographic, economic, gender, racial, and ethnic backgrounds and varying degrees of physical ability.

We do this by partnering with organizations working with these communities, and by offering an innovative sliding scale tuition model that drops as low as \$10 for a one-week Institute. And this summer, **in 2021, tuition is “pay what you can”** to be sure that no student perceives a barrier to applying for these opportunities, no matter their family's financial situation.

We also assist students with technical and equipment support, and when we are in residence on college campuses, work hard to ensure that students can physically get to the campus, coordinating carpool rides and following up with parents and guardians.

In a typical year, more than 500 students, hailing from more than 70 high schools, participate in GIV, and **at least 80% of students in recent years have received some discount due to our sliding scale tuition model**. Those discounts range from 15% to nearly 100%.

As we go forward, GIV wants to serve more students from all backgrounds, and to never have cost be a barrier to them in accessing these transformational opportunities.

*“This was an opportunity I never thought I would be able to have but having it as pay what you can and online was perfect for so many who might not have been able to go.”*

- 2020 GIV Health & Medicine Participant

**Thank you for  
supporting  
the young people  
of Vermont!**

**Learn more at [giv.org](http://giv.org)**

