



Vermont Reading Partners

A Volunteer Literacy Program

Student-Tutor Newsletter, August 2012

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This fiscal year started off with a great deal of excitement—Hurricane Irene—resulting in the postponement of our Summer Social. Despite the change in the date for the Social, all who were able to attend the rescheduled event and auction enjoyed a lovely evening.

Although Vermont was still struggling to recover from Hurricane Irene, tutor training was offered in the fall, and seven new tutors were trained for our Adult and School programs. This resulted in a total of 43 available tutors for this year and enabled us to serve 60 students one-on-one. In addition, we have one tutor who works with a school homework club weekly and two tutors who serve in a school classroom meeting students' needs one-on-one, providing a combined total of five mornings of tutoring each week in that classroom. Our adult students come to us from southwestern Vermont. Our student-centered learning strategy allows us to meet the needs of each student so that they reach their goals in basic literacy, math skills, computer literacy, or English as a second language.

We had twenty-two entries for our fall Essay Contest, "Should Being a Bookworm Make Me Squirm," a topic that caught the imagination of middle school students. Maple Street School students were the recipients of all three top prizes. We look forward to another essay contest with an equally engaging topic.

Annual December gifts of reference books were provided to our students by donations from the Manchester Lions Club and the Vermont Country Store. In addition, we participated in the Literacy Fair sponsored by Headstart and Northshire Day School in early May at the Dana L. Thompson Recreation Park, providing 180 children with Bookshare books of their very own.

The Bookshare program continues to be an important source of books for children from childhood through teens. We are providing approximately 2,500 gently used books annually to children in Bennington, Pownal, Shaftsbury, Arlington, Manchester, Danby, and Pawlet.

Our annual February hockey game was again a success—although once again the Green Mountain Boys bested our Vermont Law Enforcement Hockey Club. Despite the score, all had a good time.

With the end of the school year approaching in May, we once again celebrated with a year-end party at each school. Organized by Program Coordinator June Gutbier, and coordinated with schools, teachers, tutors, and parents, we gave awards of certificates and books to each student for her/his hard work and accomplishments.

The year ended with a wonderful garden party at the home of Eleanora and Bob Devenish. As so often in June, we had afternoon and evening showers. Nevertheless, members of VRP and friends gathered and were able to admire the beautiful grounds and enjoy tasty food and good conversation.

VRP board members and tutors also volunteered as Road Marshals for the Tour of the Dragons this spring, and we assisted with registration for the Lions Maple Leaf Marathon in the fall. In addition, the Northshire Not-for-Profit Network is providing strong support for local not-for-profits with monthly meetings encouraging the exchange of ideas, stronger communication with local government, and the opportunity to regularly meet with each other, as well as with consulting specialists for not-for-profits, and local government officials.

The Board of Directors would like to express our deepest thanks to those Board members who retired this year. To Charles Brewster, Elizabeth Butler, Eleanora Devenish, Elizabeth Luca, Carolyn Smith, Marie Sossi, and Christine Wetzel whose dedication and years of service are greatly appreciated. Approximately 52 years of service were provided by these Board members to improve literacy in our region. To our past President, Koshka Pabst, words cannot express our gratitude for her time, talent, and commitment. Our VRP training material stands as a concrete testimonial to her dedication and expertise.

As we begin a new fiscal year, the Board of Directors would also like to thank all the civic organizations and local businesses for the continued support they have provided. Thanks to the Zion Church Vestry for their generosity in donating VRP office space for more than fifteen years. Our appreciation to First Congregational Church and First Baptist Church in Manchester and the Second Congregational Church and St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Bennington for their donation of tutoring space. We are also grateful to Mach's market, Pawlet; Nichols Store, Danby; Shaftsbury Country Store, Shaftsbury; Stewart's Shops, Manchester; Winchester's, Pownal; for their support of VRP by providing space for our Bookshares. The Oak Hill Child Center, Pownal; Sunrise Family Resource Center, Bennington; and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program), Bennington, also provide Bookshare space for participants in their programs.

VRP looks forward to building on our 26 years of successfully serving adults, children, and their families with free literacy programs and books. Despite a fragile economy and the need to provide Hurricane Irene recovery support, our communities have provided the critical funding for our mission and have afforded consistent encouragement to us in support of literacy. Our deepest thanks for your generosity and support which demonstrate the goal of southwestern Vermont to ensure that everyone who wants to read has the opportunity to learn.



VRP board members past and present at the 2012 Garden Party

—Suzanne Rose

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Tutor Training Workshop Coming Up!

Free training classes for Adult and School Program tutors will be held Sept. 11, 13, 18, and 20 at the Martha Canfield Library in Arlington. Call or email the VRP office for more information or visit our website at www.vermontreadingpartners.org. No teaching experience necessary.

Left: New tutors from a previous year's class.

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