



COMMUNITY SKILLS Career and Transition Services

June 2016
Early Summer

A Newsletter about CSSU students participating in work-based learning

You're hired! CVU Students get to work!

Having a paid job means a lot, especially when it is your first job and it's something you worked hard to achieve. Students will tell you that making money gives them more opportunities. They can pay for "stuff"...for Jose Abel-Palmer, it helped him pay for his field trip to Boston; for Lanie Beaudin it helps her pay gas and car costs, and Dan Higginbottom enjoys buying souvenirs and snacks.

But it's way more than that. Paid work is an indicator of future success. Students with learning challenges face a dauntingly low employment rate after high school nation-wide, 60-70%. How do we change that? Paid work! Having a "real job" opens gateways to not only more jobs, but more support.

Jack Lyman and Alex Farrington are stepping into paid positions at local country clubs; each are starting to think about college options. After multiple internships with the Community Skills staff guiding and coaching, both Jack and Alex gained confidence and soft skills that will help get them where they're headed.

Isabel Frantz landed a job at Plato's Closet before her Junior year at CVU. After training at Plato's with an Employment Specialist, she had Cont. Pg. 2



Alex Farrington will be working at Burlington Country Club after a successful internship at Gonzo's



Lanie Beaudin has been hired by After the Track Horse Farm



Daniel Higginbottom is hired at Gullivers Doggie Daycare: First Paycheck!



Jack Lyman trained at the Shelburne Museum and then was hired at Kwiniaska Country Club.

Student Learners, continued from page 1



“Seriously? It was an awesome year for me. I learned a lot about everything. I am so excited to be accepted into UVM Succeed. I can’t wait.”

Isabel Frantz is employed at Plato’s Closet and will help run the Computer Service Kiosk at Resource.

to advance her skills. She spent her last and 5th year at CVU training at Resource in the Career Start Program. Isabel now can use a cash register and is adding time to her post-grad schedule as a Computer Technician.

Other students have been hired too. Jose Abel-Palmer will work as an office assistant at RESOURCE, Ally Lacroix leaves two semester long internships to work in a summer job as a front desk assistant at a local hotel.

Who accomplished this? An incredible group of CVU students who were able to learn the skills to be successful on a job, and demonstrated their motivation and determination to employers!

Survey Says!

Teachers/Case Managers throughout the district responded to a survey about the value and quality of services from Community Skills this year. What did they say?

- 94% of surveys said services exceeds expectations in: staff collaboration, attitude and professional skills, contribution to team communication and data / reports
- 100% agreed services were not available anywhere else in the district and that student services were “excellent”

Area for improvement:

- Over 86% were pleased with communication but 14% felt timely communication was “adequate, but could use some improvement.”

Super helpful to know! THANKS!



Alex Farrington at the Shelburne Museum



Jesse Campbell works at Spears Store in East Charlotte



Ally Lacroix worked at an internship at Replays. She will be working at a hotel this summer.

5th Year Students spend 3 Days in Boston!

The student designed field trip had long been in the works for Isabel, Jose and Dan. They wanted to go “somewhere fun” that was also exciting, and it had to fit their budget and availability. But where? The three 5th year students chose Boston and the Nantasket Beach Resort where a ferry could take them into the center of Boston. They packed in hikes, boat rides, a visit to the New England Aquarium, restaurants, outdoor sculpture gardens, and lots of fun. Given a scale of 1 to 10, all students gave the celebratory adventure a “10!” What a great way to recognize an awesome final year. Many thanks to Sharon Ogden and Mike Egan for hosting the trip!



L to R: Cricenti Bog Hike, NH; Arrival at Hull, MA; and Beach Walk

CVU Transition Night for Parents

On April 4, College Day at CVU, Community Skills invited a talented team of representatives from many adult service agencies. In attendance was presenters from VocRehab, UVM Think College, Howard Family Services, SUCCEED, Vermont Family Network, Champlain Vocational Services, Project Search, and Transition II.

CVU parents of transition age students came to hear about resources for their son or daughter. Leaving public school services and setting up a support system for after high school can be a challenging process with many choices along the way.



Many parents left with ideas and connections. Our recommendations to parents:

Leaving the adventures and learning of public education can be challenging. Early planning and connections help!

- ◆ start exploring options early
- ◆ help your son or daughter define their goals through school-based transition planning



- ◆ link to services as soon as possible, being “known” makes connections easier



- ◆ listen to other parents by joining a parent group or connecting to Vermont Family Network
- ◆ help your son or daughter be independent, hold expectations and keep raising the bar
- ◆ accept help
- ◆ and let the village in, you need breaks and your teenage son or daughter needs to develop the skills to rely on themselves or others.

NEW “Transition Intensive” 5th Year Services

Many students in Community Skills receive an extra year of school services to help build a strong bridge to “life after high school”. With academics accomplished, it’s time for students to roll up their sleeves, get a job, develop connections to adult service agencies and their community. Community Skills staff initiated a new array of services to meet these goals. Although the focus was student achievement, we also wanted to keep students learning in their own school community while linking to the larger world, accessing pre-existing resources and reducing dependence on school staff. “TI” exceeded all expectations!

Jose Abel-Palmer, Daniel Higginbottom, Isabel Frantz and Josh Emrick participated. Their weekly schedule was customized to challenge each student in many environments. Students boarded the Burlington Tech bus with a drop off to meet a staff person on Church Street, students then accessed public transportation or walked to their many commitments. Students worked-out weekly at the YMCA, or recreated outdoors in good weather. They performed Community Service for a full year at the Food Shelf and The Hope Lodge, they cooked food, budgeted funds, took employment classes at VocRehab and RESOURCE, and planned field trips. In the afternoon, their focus shifted to vocational skills. Josh Emrick, our Peer Mentor, completed his second year of the Welding Program at Burlington Tech while participating in Career Path. He has been offered a full-time manufacturing position. Daniel Higginbottom was hired at Gulliver’s Doggie Daycare, became a confident member of the YMCA and talented volunteer. Isabel Frantz expanded her retail skills and will have two jobs when she exits, Plato’s Closet and running the Computer Kiosk at RESOURCE. Jose Abel-Palmer joins the office staff at RESOURCE, filing, typing and assisting; he travels there and back by the city bus, navigating his community with confidence.

It’s a solid start to a good future. Impossible to replicate in a classroom. The real success was the least measurable, rising confidence, stronger connections and more sure footing towards a future.

4 students participated
 All achieved paid employment
 All will maintain connections to their community network



“I wasn’t sure I wanted to come back. But being a CVU Road Warrior was actually the best year I had in high school.”



Middle School Students

Fourteen middle school students participated in supported work based learning this year. Students gained confidence and skills while investigating their strengths and interests.

All students spent a portion of their time at CVU, navigating the building, meeting new (and old) friends, and participating in classes. What a great introduction to high school!



Ryan Gladstone (Shelburne Museum), Lucy Picard (and Joe Tomko at Goodtimes), Alex Curtis (Hinesburg Auto Village) and Hope Beaudin (Shelburne Farms)

Community Skills Staff 2015-16



Peggy MacDonald, Coordinator: B.A. Outdoor Education/Human Services; M.Ed. In Transition and Special Education (UVM).

Skills and Talents: Outdoor sports, sailing/boating, amateur mycologist, enrolled in Autism Specialist studies at Lesley University....



Sharon Ogden, Asst. Coordinator. Bachelor of Science (Lyndon State) In Sports and Recreation Therapies. Certified Employment Specialist.

Skills and Talents: Raises pigs and chickens, field hockey, loyal Patriots fan, all outdoor sports, basketball....



Alicia Kroll, Employment Specialist and Advocate. B.A. In Arts Education (Beloit College, WI and UNC, Asheville).

Skills and Talents: expert gardener, Personal Learning Plans, billiards, nutrition, paddleboarder....



Mike Egan, Employment Specialist and Advocate. B.A. in Business (UVM) Certified Employment Specialist

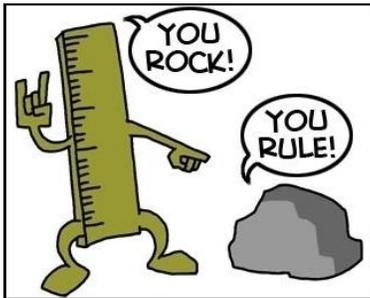
Skills and Talents: Disc golf, biking, dog washer extraordinaire, folk music....

Many thanks to Alicia Jerome who helped hold down the fort (Right) when Pam Gover (Above) shifted to a new CVU position! You both rocked it and will be missed!



CVU WORK CREW

Rocks it again!



The phone starts ringing in the Spring with Work Crew requests for the Fall. If we ever worried about having enough work to keep a van load of students busy, it's a dim memory now! The staff keep a running list of project requests on the white board. There's the regulars, like Val Gardner, who counts on the crew to stack her wood. "Gabe", up the street from CVU relies on the crew for the same, except it takes four or five days to get his wood in. He treats the crew to banjo playing to pull them along.

CVU Work Crew is 9 years old and a solid entry-level opportunity for students to gain skills and earn a small stipend. Five students and 2 staff load the van every other day after lunch. The students pull appropriate tools from the shed, put their boots and jackets on, and then they are off to help.

The popular CVU Work Crew involves a semester long commitment of about 3 hours every other day; providing over 100 hours of training and experience. The crews use only hand tools and personal grit to power up and tackle projects into mid-Winter. There are great days and hard days. Shoveling snow to rake leaves, or cutting devils club brush can challenge the group. There are beautiful Vermont days with great learning where everyone feels lucky! The crew learns to build and safely remove structures, maintain gardens and yards, cut back brush, wash and stain decks, move and remove stuff. They are challenged to problem-solve and help each other.

All participants shift into individualized internships in the Spring; many students choose to apply and go to Tech Programs after their experience.

In a nutshell, learning at it's best!

My
new
hat!



CVU Work Crew Fall Blocks W3/W4

- A community based team
- Helping homeowners for a small donation
- Teaches team and employment skills
- Crew Leaders direct and support
- Hard, demanding, and tough
- A highlight experience for many!
- Most students move on to Tech School or paid





Community Skills:

30 years of creating opportunities for work-based learning and independent living skills for students in special education, Grades 8-12+!

1986-2016

New Business Sponsors This Year!

- Natural Provisions
- All Breeds Rescue
- The Tap House
- Gullivers Doggie Daycare
- Williston EEE
- Williston Kwik Stop
- Grateful Dog
- Hinesburg Auto Village
- Fjords and Friends
- Gonzo's
- Chris's Auto Repair
- Spare Time



Thanks to all the new businesses that sponsored student learning this year! We couldn't do it without you!



Old Friends and Partnerships

RESOURCE, The Shelburne Museum, Spears Store, Shelburne Farms, Replays Thrift Shop, Plato's Closet, The Food Shelf, Play it Again Sports, Good Times Café, The Hinesburg Library and Staff, St. Mike's College, CVU Maintenance Staff, Gardener's Supply, Hannaford's Store...

Community Skills

Champlain Valley
Union High School
363 CVU Road
Hinesburg, Vermont
05461

**We can make
anything
WORK!**



Jose Abel-Palmer presents his Video Game Concept on a Crankie Stage for Graduation Challenge

TO:

Summer EPIC: A week long community exploration in June!



It's time to saddle up for our 7th Year of an EPIC Summer Adventure. This year it is June 20-24. Sharon Ogden and Mike Egan will lead the week for Transition Age students who are ready to take on some fun community challenges. EPIC helps students experience all the tasks involved in being a

part of the team, traveling in the community, being prepared for adventures and being challenged. Yup! It's meant to be fun too and the schedule is packed with hikes, swimming, picnicking, visiting attractions and playing sports.

