

COMMUNITY SKILLS

A Newsletter about CSSU students participating in work skills learning

CVU Garden Takes Root

The CVU Garden, located behind a stockade fence and struggling through hard soil, vole attacks and the chronic infestation of rugged Vermont weeds, has been up for “adoption” for several years. Leo LaForce, CVU Cafeteria Manager, who funded the garden start-up in his earnest desire to bring very local food to teens, made a last ditch effort last Spring for help. Leo felt either the garden needed serious garden-ship or it was literally, going under.

Everyone liked the idea of gardening, but no one class could provide the year-round attention that a garden requires. Leo’s plea on the CVU e-mail forum caught the attention of Community Skills staffer, Alicia Kroll. “Lish” loves gardening and farming and has been a principle staff member to the newly launched CVU Farm Crew. Lish works in the Fall Work Crew, Spring Farm Crew and summer services. Combining the efforts of all three groups, she felt Community Skills was perfectly

poised to adopt the project and become year-round garden tenders. Presenting the project to Leo LaForce and later Sean McMannon, the project received a welcoming “green light” to move forward!

The garden now has had a full season of robust growth thanks to the attention and skills Lish provided and instructed. Many students have already learned the process of preparing, planting and harvesting vegetables. With the help of many-many students, CVU Grounds Crew, Community Skills (especially Dave Richardson) and CVU staff, 8 short months of effort has resulted in:

1. The removal of the aging stockade fence to increase light and air circulation
2. The addition of deep raised beds and the establishment of a gravel drainage bed
3. Planting a crop of summer and fall vegetables.
4. The harvesting of many delicious vegetables (300 pounds!)



BEFORE

Keirnan, Corey, Avery, Lee and Adam



AFTER

Lish thanks Ryan for his hard work.



Thanks
Everyone!



Ryan Martel sketches on the bench Dave R. built; Mary and Nicole plant seeds (left).

Work Crew 2012: Back to Hard Work and Great Learning

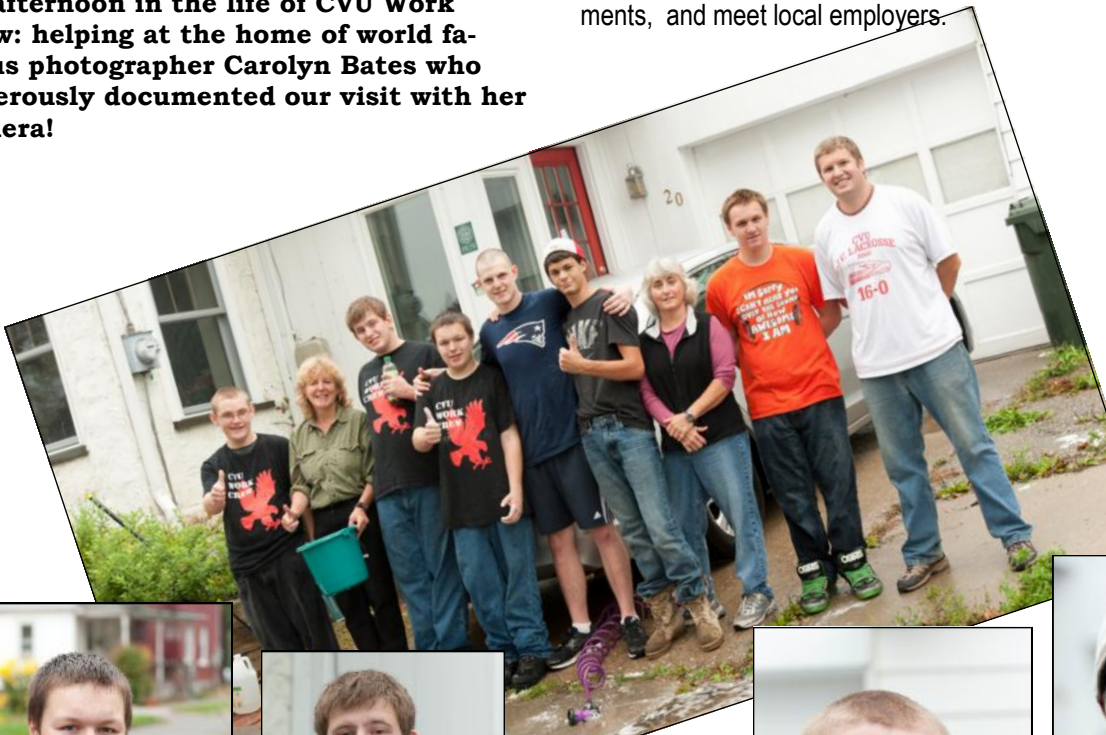


Every white day at noon, five CVU Students drop their back packs off in our small cluttered office and head out with rakes, shovels and tools. The group will return in three hours after an afternoon of hard work: raking, cutting brush, cleaning barns, prepping decks, stacking wood, cleaning out gardens and more. Crew Leaders, David Richardson and Sharon Ogden provide the student direction and structure that makes the experience successful.

The work program, now a perennial favorite among staff and students, gets students outside and working on projects at local homeowners and town parks and land. The students enjoy the opportunity to be together, earn incentives and build leadership and team skills. Work Crew consistently provides a unique learning experience for students heading into tech school programs or directly into the work force.

Homeowners really enjoy sponsoring the crew. Advertised through CVU's e-mail forum and neighborhood "Front Porch Forums", the crew schedule fills fast! In December, when work demands lessen, students will visit area agencies and resources, take vocational assessments, and meet local employers.

An afternoon in the life of CVU Work Crew: helping at the home of world famous photographer Carolyn Bates who generously documented our visit with her camera!



Things washed:

The deck, the windows, the screens, the siding, the door and the car...our feet too...



Travis



Ryan



Henry



Bruce



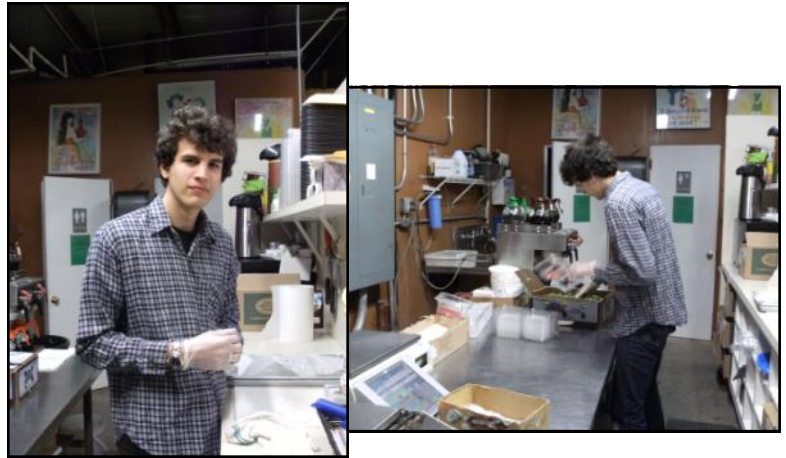
Logan

Paid Employment: End Goal for all participants

The best possible outcome for all our students is paid employment in their own communities. Adam Champine achieved that goal last June when the Shelburne Supermarket hire him after spending a semester on a credit-earning internship with the great crew.

Community Skills staff accompanied Adam to work for his first month, creating a classroom of learning within the business. As Adam became increasingly proficient in his job tasks, more were added on. He moved from produce prep, to bottle sorting to stocking aisles within two months. Mostly, Adam became increasing confident in his role and connected to the co-workers.

Adam advocated for his hire, filled out an application and followed up. His persistence paid off. Adam works at the market several days a week. His favorite part; "buying stuff". His big goal as a senior is to buy a car. *Nicely done!*



Adam Champine was hired by the Shelburne Supermarket this summer after completing an internship with Community Skills

Unified Sports gets rolling again! Join them in the Penguin Plunge!

Tim Rich with his infectiously positive energy, has picked up the baton and brought Unified Sports back to CVU. After applying for a small grant from Special Olympics, we recruited Tim to lead the team. Tim volunteers several hours a week to make the opportunity possible.

Starting small last Spring with a handful in the delegation for the Summer Games, Tim now counts a dozen regular visitors with more coming soon. The team trains weekly at Spare Time in Colchester, getting ready for the Unified Sports Vermont Schools bowling competition in early December. Unified Sports is for absolutely everyone, anyone can join the sport activity and learn skills and build friendships.

Tim is recruiting EVERYONE in the school district to join him in the Penguin Plunge this winter. You can make a donation to a plunger, or donate directly to the team or jump in the lake yourself.

The club meets most every Thursday at 3:00 p.m. in the Community Skills office.

Emily Scott and Joanna Hart celebrate their bocce victories in June.



Helping Graduates Build Stepping Stones



Helping students move towards better futures is our primary goal. For Abdul, (pictured to the left with Sharon), that meant searching for employment opportunities in his own community during his last semester at CVU. He developed a resume, filled out job applications and spent many hours on the road visiting employers. He decided to stay in his current job at a restaurant after exploring the local job market.

For Andrew (right), who graduated after several years of job skills training, his successful transition included a paid job at Lantman's grocery store and the possible opportunity to attend a post-secondary program at UVM called Think College.

Both students received individualized supports based on their interests and hopes for their future.



Our New Website is here!

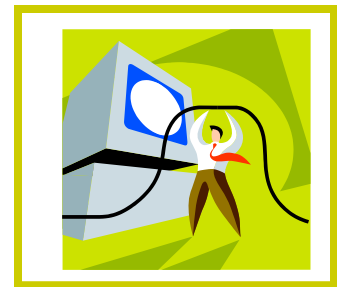
If you're an educator looking for resources or a parent or student looking for more information about the work we do, you will find a growing amount of information on our newly launched website.

Educators will find referral forms, eligibility information, suggested IEP/ITP Goals and a large bank of links to our Transition partners.

You can link to the website by going to the CVU home page (www.cvuhs.org) and finding us under the Instructional Support Link. We're trying to make the site informative but also a visual celebration of our students' accomplishments. It appears that part of being a good website is to be forever in construction and updated, so that we are!

Wanted to find something that

isn't there? Send an e-mail to: pmacdonald@cvuhs.org



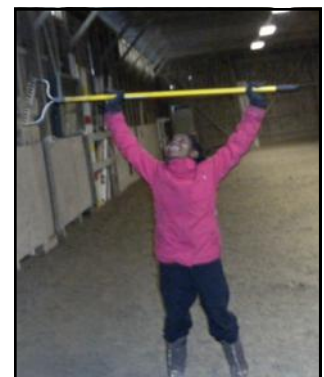
Middle Schools: Getting to Know Us; Us Getting to Know You

Most of the work done in middle school revolves around building pathways of possibility while increasing student confidence.

Being a district-wide program that starts in the 7th grade, Community Skills has the unique role of launching

students towards greater community independence and knowledge. Students frequently visit CVU, developing comfort and connections.

Schools participating this year: Williston (3 students), Shelburne (4 students), and Hinesburg (1 student).



Farm Crew 2: Getting Back to (the) Earth (literally)



There's no shortage of farms that are willing to welcome a helping hand and share a little earthy wisdom. We are excited to launch our second session of Farm Crew at CVU, a full semester of hands-on learning on area farms. Students will have the opportunity to help sugar, learn about dairy farming, meat/breeding animals, pre-

pare and start vegetable gardens, build structures for animals and crops and more.

The first year was a chance to try the concept out, and to see if the skill training moved students along to better work skills and kept students invested in learning. The students who participated in the pilot showed up on time, took responsibility for their work projects and rated the experience as one of their best school experiences. Where did the four students go after their Farm Crew experience? The four went on

to: 1) interning in the ECHO Center Science Dept.; 2) working for Vermont State Parks; 3) working at the Fish Hatchery and 4) attending a CTE Trades Program.

We are eager to see what this Spring brings (besides muddy boots.)



Welcoming a lamb at Shelburne Farms

Community Skills Staff 2012-2013



Peggy MacDonald, Coordinator: M.Ed. in Transition and Special Education: (UVM) Under graduate majors: Outdoor Education and Human Services.

Interests: sailing, bicycling, outdoors, reading, crafts and family.



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

Interests: being a great mom to grade schoolers Stella and Zane, yoga, gardening, art, family.



Sharon Ogden, Assistant Coordinator. Bachelor of Science (Lyndon State) In Sports and Recreation Therapies.

Interests, sports, basketball, field hockey, football, the Patriots, family, seeing her grown daughters move out!



David Richardson, Employment Specialist and Advocate. Currently completing Masters in Special Education (UVM).

Interests: Baby Isabel (congratulations!) and young son Donovan, building his homestead, coaching lacrosse, sports, good food, finishing school!

Dave and students are building a garden tool shed in CVU's courtyard! Watch it grow this school year!

Community Skills

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

LET'S Go!

Next issue!
Student Stories
Graduate Inter-
views and Family
Resources



TO:

Our partnership with Career Start at ReSource in Burlington



Avery, Lee and Corey partici-
pate in training programs in
retail sales, computers and
building materials.

You may be surprised to find three CVU Seniors working in downtown Burlington several afternoons a week during school hours. Corey Mansfield may be ringing up your order in the building materials yard, Avery Duda may be helping you load your purchase into your car and Lee Grant-Hill can be found upstairs recycling or testing your donated computer. The CVU students are all participating in youth training programs at ReSource, designed to help each student gain life work competencies within their interest area. All participants receive a monthly incentive stipend.

Avery says the experience is “super cool” and allows him to get out and be on his own. Lee agrees. “I have an awesome boss , John (Benjamin) is so nice.” Corey feels his supervisor (Janet Babbits) has really helped him learn a lot.

All three young men ride the Burlington VocTech bus back to school after their work shifts. This Spring, they will begin summer work searches with staff.

Many thanks to Bethany Johnson at ReSource for her oversight and encouragement.