

Fresh Spaces Strengthen Access to College and Career Pathways



When learners walk into our St. Albans, White River Junction, and Springfield learning centers this year, they are stepping into something new. Each location now shares space with a community partner, creating stronger connections between adult education, college, and career training.

Our Franklin/Grand Isle Learning Center has relocated to the Community College of Vermont (CCV) campus in St. Albans City. In Windsor County, our White River Junction site is now also co-located within a CCV campus, and our Springfield Learning Center has moved into the River Valley Technical Center.

For learners, these moves mean more than new classrooms. They mean learning in spaces where college courses, technical training, and career certifications are happening every day. Adult learners studying for a high school credential, building

English skills, or preparing for a career are now surrounded by visible next steps.

*“The new location(s) allow for students to be exposed to a variety of **additional community resources**, along with immediate access to **next steps in college and career readiness.**”*

*- Sara Teller, FGI Regional Director
photographed above in front of the
new St. Albans Learning Center location*

Co-location also makes collaboration easier. Advisors, instructors, and staff across organizations can connect more naturally, helping students navigate transitions to college programs, technical training, and industry certifications. Informal conversations can turn into coordinated support, reducing barriers and creating momentum for learners ready to move forward.

“VAL FGI is excited to be co-located with CCV on Main Street in Saint Albans,” said Sara Teller, Regional Director covering Chittenden and Franklin/Grand Isle Counties. “The new location allows for students to be exposed to a variety of additional community resources, along with immediate access to next steps in college and career readiness.”

These partnerships strengthen sustainability as well. Sharing space and infrastructure reduces operating costs for VAL, allowing more resources to be directed toward instruction and student services while maintaining a strong presence in the communities we serve.

Over time, VAL’s addresses may change, but our commitment to learners remains the same. By deepening partnerships, we are building clearer bridges to college, careers, and opportunity for adult learners. ■



Yodit: Learning, Driving, & Thriving in Brattleboro

of the Windham County Sheriff’s Department, and the Vermont State Highway Safety Office’s Enhanced Driver Safety Program.

VAL instructors worked closely with Sgt. Chris Norton and Michael Roj to develop curriculum and adapt materials specifically for individuals learning English. State-of-the-art driving simulators support classroom learning.



language skills needed to understand road signs, motor vehicle laws, and highway safety expectations.

For students like Yodit, who arrived in Vermont from Africa speaking no English, the impact is measurable. Within a year of working with VAL, she has gained near fluency, secured a stable job, and is working toward her driver’s license.

“Vermont Adult Learning gave me my voice.”

-Yodit, photographed above with VAL English language instructor Gloria Cristelli

“When I arrived, I had no words to speak with my neighbors,” Yodit said.

“VAL gave me my voice. My teachers didn’t just teach me words; they taught me how to build a life here. Now I have a good job, and I am getting my driver’s license.” ■

Community partnerships are expanding access to safe, legal driving for multilingual learners at Vermont Adult Learning’s Windham County Learning Center in Brattleboro.

Driver’s education is offered through collaboration between Vermont Adult Learning, the Brattleboro Area Immigrant Driving Academy, the Adult Immigrant Driver Safety Program

The program serves Vermonters 18 years or older and integrates driver education with English Language Learning. Participants build driving knowledge while strengthening the

Hussam: Growing His Career and Confidence Through Employer Partnership



raising three children and are grateful to call Rutland home. “It’s quiet, nice, and full of kind people.”

“Vermont Adult Learning has filled the gaps we were able to identify and come up with a good plan to help Hussam succeed...”

He’s truly an inspiration!”

*-Laurel Rice
Supervisor at Casella*

Laurel, his supervisor, shared that he began part time but quickly advanced to full time. “He’s incredibly thorough and motivated,” she said.

Recognizing his potential, Casella offered to connect Hussam with Vermont Adult Learning to strengthen his professional communication. Working with his teacher, Rebecca, he improved his pronunciation, writing, and industry-specific vocabulary. “It’s made a big difference at work,” he said. Laurel noted that this preparation helped Hussam confidently represent Casella at a tax convention in Chicago.

“VAL has filled the gaps we were able to identify and come up with a good plan to help Hussam succeed,” Laurel said. “He’s truly an inspiration!” ■

When Hussam arrived in Rutland nearly eight years ago after fleeing Syria, he hoped to rebuild his accounting career. After time in Turkey, his family was unexpectedly resettled in Vermont instead of Los Angeles.

“It was a big change,” he said with a laugh. Today, he and his wife are

Hussam worked early mornings at a bakery while studying at the Community College of Vermont, earning his accounting certificate. After a year at Rutland’s Longfellow School, he joined Casella Waste Systems’ tax department. “I’m so excited to be part of such a great company,” he said. “My team is amazing.”



A Note From Tara

Meeting the Moment: Why Continued Support for Adult Basic Education Matters Now More Than Ever

Dear Friends,

Over the past year, we have been strengthening what we call One VAL. This effort brings our learning centers across the state together around a shared goal: ensuring that every learner has access to high-quality education and support, no matter where they live in Vermont.

As part of this work, we are aligning our programs around three core pillars: Education, Workforce, and Community. These pillars reflect what adult learners need most to succeed: strong academic foundations, clear pathways to opportunity, and supportive communities that help learners stay connected and moving forward.

At the same time, the demand for adult education continues to grow. More Vermonters are seeking English language instruction, workforce preparation, and the foundational skills that open doors to new possibilities.

Public funding supports the foundation of our work. Private support allows us to reach more learners, innovate new programs, and ensure that adults are not turned away when they are ready to learn. As we continue our celebration of 45 years of serving Vermont, we are also looking ahead, working to build a stronger and more equitable statewide system of adult education so that opportunity is within reach for every learner and every community we serve.

Thank you for standing with Vermont’s adult learners and helping make this work possible.

Warm regards,

Tara Brooks, Executive Director

Rooted in Community: A Semester of Local Impact

This fall, VAL participated in the Community Roots Apprentice Fellowship, an initiative of the New Perennials Project connecting students with local organizations. The semester included student–practitioner pairings with Otter Creek Yoga, Caleb Kenna Photography, The Townhall Theater, and Middlebury Area Land Trust.

Middlebury College student Elia Meyer-Arrivillaga chose to work with VAL to feel more rooted in the Middlebury community. During the semester, Elia collaborated with Addison County Regional Director Natalie Reigle on a science-focused project, explored opportunities for adult learners at Middlebury College, and supported outreach to gauge interest in science-related projects. She also joined an English Language Learning class, attended a STEM Collaborative Team meeting, and participated in Addison County’s Fall Kick-Off Meeting.



Elia (center in red) and Natalie (center in yellow) with the New Perennials Cohort

As she prepares to study abroad in Ecuador next semester, we are grateful for her contributions and the perspective she brought to our work. ■

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Vermont Adult Learning
Learning Lasts a Lifetime!

Vermont Adult Learning's mission is to create an innovative, inclusive, and equitable learning environment that provides personalized opportunities for education and career development for Vermont residents by building relationships, strengthening communities, and fostering lifelong learning.

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