



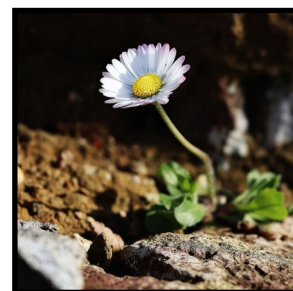
**June 2020**     *Learning Lasts a Lifetime!*

## Staying the course, delivering services amid a pandemic

As our public health paradigm shifts with the presence of Covid-19, many Vermonters are living with uncertainty. Those with lower educational levels, training, and/or limited language skills are more vulnerable during economic downturns.

According to Advance Vermont ([www.AdvanceVermont.org](http://www.AdvanceVermont.org)), four out of five workers who lost their jobs during the last recession lacked high school diplomas and/or were low-skilled. Vermont Adult Learning (VAL) stands ready to assist those seeking to earn their high school credentials; train for a new job; learn English; or brush up on their reading, writing, and computer skills with a shift to online teaching and training.

Reflecting on our transition to virtual service delivery, one of our teachers said: "Thank goodness for the chrome books (purchased with donations). These parents—our students—need something other than caring for their kids while sheltering in place. They need mental stimulation. They need someone to check in and ask how they're doing."



## Our Work

Vermont Adult Learning serves adults ages 16 years and older. Our programs include basic education and literacy, high school completion, GED tutoring and testing, courses for English Language Learners, workforce readiness and development, and transition to post-secondary education. Our services are free.

Visit us at [www.vtadulthoodlearning.org](http://www.vtadulthoodlearning.org).



### From our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As I write this, the Covid-19 Pandemic continues to disrupt global health, education and employment. VAL adapted to deliver services virtually, engaging continuing students

while welcoming new ones who have lost jobs. Our teachers have been nimble, delivering online lessons and materials while, also, maintaining vital human contact with students at this time of unease. We are very grateful to donors who answered our call for assistance to put technology into the hands of our students so that their educations would not be disrupted. When we emerge from this pause, our students, staff and volunteers will carry forward lessons learned and skills acquired.

Be safe and be well.

**Hal Cohen, [hcohen@vtadulthoodlearning.org](mailto:hcohen@vtadulthoodlearning.org)**

## Vermont Adult Learning Centers

### Central Office

46 South Main Street  
Waterbury, VT 05676  
802-244-0634

### Addison County

282 Boardman Street  
Middlebury, VT 05753  
802-546-0879

### Chittenden County

29 Church Street, #9  
Burlington, VT 05401  
802-846-7245

### Franklin & Grand Isle Counties

5 Lemnah Drive, Ste. 5  
St. Albans, VT 05478  
802-524-9233

### Rutland County

16 Evelyn Street  
Rutland, VT 05701  
802-775-0617

### Windham County

90 Birge Street  
Brattleboro, VT 05301  
802-257-9449

### Windsor County

White River Junction Location  
225 Maple Street, Ste. 6  
White River Jct., VT 05001  
802-281-4311

Springfield Location  
100 River Street, Ste. 102  
Springfield, VT 05156  
802-546-0879



June 2020

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**“Access to technology  
 (during Covid-19)  
 keeps me on track”**

**~Student**

## Thank you to our donors

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Please contact Katherine Stamper, Development Director, at [kstamper@vtadultlearning.org](mailto:kstamper@vtadultlearning.org) or (802) 735-1670 to discuss any of these options. We strive to thank all donors. Please contact Katherine if your name was, inadvertently, left off of our donor list. Thank you!

### MISSION

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

## Vermont's need for manufacturing employees continues

Gellu, an industrial engineer, was born in Maracaibo, Venezuela. She spent 13 years working for *Petroleos de Venezuela*, a state-owned oil and natural gas company. She arrived in Vermont in 2018.

“We emigrated because of the terrible situation in Venezuela,” Gellu said. Both my husband and I worked in the main oil industry and our salaries were not enough to eat. Sometimes, one of us stopped eating so our son could eat. We couldn't buy medicine. We couldn't help our parents.”

Gellu is enrolled in the Certified Production Technician Program via the Strengthening Working Families Initiative of Vermont Technical College; VAL is a partner. Gellu works in production at Olivia's Croutons.

“I want to give my son a better quality of life and help my parents and family in Venezuela. I appreciate all the help and support VAL has given me.”



**Leave a Legacy:  
 Remember  
 Vermont Adult Learning  
 in your will.**



## Meet Drew, a High School Completion Student

***"There have been many triumphant realizations in calamity that helped persuade my decision to go to college."***

**By Drew**

Throughout my twenty years of life, so many good and bad things have occurred. Some of the events and factors at play were things out of my control. There have been many triumphant realizations in calamity that helped persuade my decision to go to college.

When I was two, I moved with my mom and sister from Detroit, Michigan, to Burlington, Vermont. Growing up, I spent time going back and forth from parents and spending summers and all of my free time in Detroit. My father was an alcoholic and lived in a very dangerous neighborhood. While visiting him growing up, I gained a real sense of the word defeat. I saw how my father, who grew up affluent, made a few rough decisions that defined how he saw himself. I remember, sometimes, I would walk with him to get more beer from the store late at night and I would hear gunshots and tires screeching. When I visited my father on holiday breaks, sometimes, we would have to stay inside on New Year's Eve because of people shooting off guns into the air. I noticed that this is what lack of opportunity looks like; this is what life is like at rock bottom.



While spending a contrast of time in Detroit, I also spent all of my academic time in Vermont where my mom was going to school to be a teacher. Going from my dad's house, which was like the apocalypse, to a vegan, college educated mom was drastically different. My mom always held me accountable for my actions and made sure I was morally sound. My mom had her first child at sixteen and me at twenty. She moved out at my age and decided she wanted more than what Detroit had to offer. She moved to Vermont and worked a few jobs, took care of us and excelled in school. I had this view of what happens when you go to college and do not go to college. I saw my mom living a happier life from going to college. I watched her personally get a Bachelor's Degree and two Master's Degrees.

Growing up and being around and seeing so much helped shape who I was. For a while, I was very depressed, trying to find my place in the world. I started not completing my schoolwork to my full capability and felt trapped. I experienced health issues requiring hospitalization. I spent a year in foster care and lived in a group home. I moved back when things got better at home.

I connected with VAL's Chittenden Learning Center to make a plan to finish my high school diploma. They were flexible and helped me get my requirements completed, putting me one step further in life.

I am focused on going to school to become a lawyer and am working on college applications. I want the opportunity to ensure I will be successful. I believe college is the only route fathomable for me to reach my goals.

***Drew is a 2020 recipient of the John H. Chafee Scholarship for Foster Care Youth.***

## Our Students on the front lines



### ***Meet Ella\* a student and supermarket employee during the Covid-19 Pandemic***

I clock in and it's go, go, go. I'm a service leader at our local supermarket so I hear a lot of the complaints from customers. It's been very draining on a lot of us. We've had people screaming in our faces that we're stupid, or why can't we order this, or 'my bag is cleaner than yours.' We had to threaten to call the police because one customer was verbally attacking our manager. We've had very grateful customers who want to tip us and will thank us a dozen times because we're still working; those mean a lot to us. Sadly, customers who yell at us leave a bigger mark. A lot of our policies are out of our control. We just have to enforce them and some people who may have had a bad day see an opportunity to let anger out. It's been sad to see, if you don't have what people all of a sudden need, how they treat you.

I decided to become a VAL student because I was going to be on my own and hadn't finished high school yet. I wanted my diploma and I knew working 30-40 hour weeks on top of school and homework wouldn't work. My brother attended VAL in Rutland and really seemed to like it. It gave him a flexible schedule so he could continue to work. I needed the flexibility and VAL gave me that.

***Ella is an eighteen-year-old Vermonter, self-supporting and on track to earn her high school diploma.***

\*Name changed to protect confidentiality



Email [kstamper@vtadultlearning.org](mailto:kstamper@vtadultlearning.org) to receive this newsletter via email. Type GO GREEN in Subject Line.



**Vermont Adult Learning**

**46 South Main Street**

**Waterbury, VT 05676**