



“I am so proud of my diploma!” ~ Earlene

Earlene is currently reading Fannie Flagg's book, *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café*. The novel was a high school graduation gift from her employer.

“I couldn't read until a few years ago. Now, I love to read,” Earlene said. “I read all the time. I can borrow books from all the libraries---Fairfax, Milton, Essex, Colchester and Georgia. My favorite is Georgia (her hometown). The librarian knows me and she's so nice.”



Earlene showed great determination when she enrolled as a student at Vermont Adult Learning (VAL) in St. Albans. She committed to learn to read AND earn her high school diploma---at age 58. It took many hours of supportive instruction by teachers and hard work on Earlene's part. She achieved her goal, graduating high school in June 2020, amidst a pandemic.

Earlene's story reminds us that it is never too late to learn.

Our Work

Vermont Adult Learning (VAL) 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.

From our Executive Director



Dear Friends,

We appear to be in the final stretch of the pandemic as COVID-19 vaccines are administered across the populace. It's taking time, but there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Our students and staff continue their work, virtually and in-person, in accordance with Centers for Disease Control guidelines.

We're grateful for a workforce development grant from the Vermont Low Income Trust for Electricity to develop a hands-on, integrated education and training program to prepare individuals to enter high-demand, sustainable energy fields. As the economy reopens, these folks will be ready to return to work. Thank you for supporting our work!

Be safe and be well,

Hal Cohen, Executive Director, hcohen@vtadulthoodlearning.org

Vermont Adult Learning Centers

Central Office

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

Rutland County

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

Addison County

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

Windham County

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

Chittenden County

77 College Street
Burlington, VT 05401
802-846-7245

Windsor County

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

Franklin & Grand Isle Counties

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

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



"Every student who walks through the door gives me an opportunity to ask the right questions, thus giving students a pathway to find their right answers.
~MJ Trask
VAL Teacher

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Welcome
Kimberly Sizelove
Regional Director
VAL-Windham County

Volunteer Spotlight: Charlene Gates



Charlene, a retired physical therapist, joined VAL as an English Language Learning (ELL) volunteer in January 2020 after finishing a TESOL* course. She started tutoring students 1:1 and, shortly after the pandemic started, was invited to expand her volunteering to teaching a class---virtually.

Charlene meets with classes three times per week; she still tutors. Her current roster includes students from Afghanistan, China, Japan and Brazil. She includes current events, popular music and the arts as tools to help students gain fluency while also learning about U.S. culture and politics. From the works of National Youth Poet Amanda Gorman to Nat King Cole's *Three Little Words*, Charlene creates ample opportunities for students to engage with their new language.

"Charlene is warm and caring...she would understand my English level and give me appropriate courses and suggestions," said Mia, an ELL student.

*TESOL-Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Are you interested in volunteering at VAL?
Contact Katherine at kstamper@vtadulthoodlearning.org



From a Belarus to Vermont

"VAL gave me the opportunity to be successful." ~ Katya

Katya arrived in Vermont in the summer of 1998 from Minsk. She just completed tenth grade and, at 16, spoke three languages---Russian, Belarussian and Polish. She came to the United States to reunite with her father whom she had not seen in seven years.

"I only came to visit for the summer, but we decided that it would be beneficial for me to stay longer and enroll in school to improve my language skills, make new friends and fully immerse myself in American culture," Katya said. "I fell in love with the United States and Vermont, in particular. It felt like home to me immediately."

Eager to learn English, Katya enrolled in Brian Mahoney's English Language Learning (ELL) class offered by VAL in June.

"I remember Katya as being like a sponge when she was in my classes," Brian said. "She was so eager to absorb everything around her. Students like Katya are easy to teach."



By September, Katya enrolled as a 10th grader at Burlington High School (BHS).

"It was the most terrifying experience in my life---full immersion, no language, no friends," Katya recalled.

Her first friends were fellow students from former Soviet Republics who also spoke Russian. She quickly got a job at the now-closed Ames Department Store.

"My younger brother, who was eight, dramatically helped me," Katya said. "He moved to the U.S. when he was one year old. I helped him with Russian and he helped me with my English."

Katya worked hard and thrived at BHS. Her English improved quickly, allowing her to skip 11th grade and advance to 12th grade. She graduated in June 2000 and enrolled in Champlain College's Marketing Management program. All the while she worked, building a resume of increasing responsibility in Vermont's banking and health care sectors. Today, Katya is a People Partner staffer (Human Resources Manager) at Rhino Foods in Burlington.



As Katya looks to the future, she is eager to complete her Master's Degree (She is half-way there!) while raising her two beautiful daughters. She is committed to giving them the opportunity to attend college and earn degrees that speak to their passions.

When asked about something she brought with her to the United States from home, Katya said, "My independence."

Student Writing



The Falcon *By Nathaniel Greene*

The falcon that flies so high, I ponder where she goes.
Flying through the trees, into the sky, through the dust and the wind.
She is very fast and a pretty little thing, birds like her love to soar and glide.
She soars to the ground to catch some mice, catching them twice.
She hears some cries, baby bird cries.
She flies with the mice in tow.
She lands in a nest, a big little nest and feeds her young.
She gives them love and little baby bird hugs.
Then again she flies through the trees, into the sky, through the dust and the wind.
Soaring so high into the sky, I ponder where she goes.

Nathaniel is a high school completion student at VAL's Windsor County Learning Center.



Email kstamper@vtadultlearning.org to receive this newsletter via email. Type GO GREEN in Subject Line.



Vermont Adult Learning

46 South Main Street

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