People with disabilities working together for dignity, independence and civil rights
This annual report is dedicated to the independent living leaders who we sadly lost this past year.

Hector Racine
U.S. Senator Jim Jeffords

Artwork by Susan Sanderson
Dear Friends,

It is with pleasure that I present the Vermont Center for Independent Living FY 2014 Annual Report. Many thanks to Linda Meleady and the rest of the VCIL staff who contributed to this report. It is truly an honor to be connected to the Vermont disability rights movement and share the amazing work our staff, board, peers and community volunteers achieved over the past year.

This year was filled with change and our organization rose to the challenge, working as an amazing team that allowed for people with disabilities in Vermont to achieve greater independence.

Thank you for your ongoing support of this important work. As we look ahead to the next year we will be taking time to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Through that we want to celebrate and work with the youths in our movement who we are fondly engaging (via Twitter) as #GenerationADA.

Check out our website for events starting with Disability Awareness Day at the State House on March 18. Stay connected to us on Facebook or Twitter and, as always, we look forward to hearing from you!

In Solidarity,

Sarah Launderville
Executive Director
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Our Mission

Vermont Center for Independent Living

The mission of the Vermont Center for Independent Living is to empower Vermonters with disabilities, Deaf Vermonters, and others to tear down the physical, communication, and attitudinal barriers that keep us from realizing our full human potential.

Together, we will build communities to:

- Achieve our human and civil rights and equal access to services and opportunities.
- Have available ongoing resources and options for independent living.
- Realize our power to control and direct our own lives.

We join together to celebrate our diversity and the common goal for the full inclusion of all persons in the life of our communities.

All of us at VCIL are grateful to Chanda Beun (Receptionist/Artist) for taking the time to paint our mission statement in the vestibule of our Montpelier office. Thank you!
WHO WE ARE

The Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL), a statewide nonprofit organization directed and staffed by people with disabilities, promotes the dignity, independence and civil rights of Vermonters with disabilities. Founded in 1979, VCIL was the first organization in the state to have a majority of board and staff with disabilities. In FY’14, 84 percent of our staff and board were people with significant disabilities. We understand what it takes to help others.

VCIL’s central office is in Montpelier with five branch offices in Bennington, Brattleboro, Burlington, Morrisville and Rutland.

INFORMATION, REFERRAL AND ASSISTANCE (I,R&A)

VCIL’s Information, Referral and Assistance (IR&A) Coordinator provides quality referrals and information to people seeking assistance on a variety of issues. Our IR&A Coordinator is also responsible for the intake process of applications for the Peer Advocacy Counseling Program (PAC). In FY’14 VCIL provided 2,383 individuals with IR&A services.

PEER ADVOCACY COUNSELING PROGRAM

Peer Advocate Counselors (PACs) offer individual and group support, skills training, guidance for self-advocacy and resource development. PACs help peers define their individual interests and needs, develop and work toward personal goals, learn specific skills that enhance their ability to live independently and access available resources in their communities. In FY’14, VCIL served 304 individuals through the peer advocacy counseling program.

Deaf Independence Program

The Deaf Independence Program (DIP) provides individual and group skills training to people who are culturally Deaf throughout Vermont.

Benefits to Work Program

The Benefits to Work Program (B2W) helps peers plan for employment and greater independence. Our B2W specialist teaches peers how to
utilize work incentives and provide information and assistance about the Ticket to Work program and the various employment resources available through State and Federal agencies. Our Benefit Counselors help peers understand how they can successfully return to work.

**Vermont AgrAbility**

Vermont AgrAbility is a collaborative partnership between VCIL and the University of Vermont Extension. The Vermont AgrAbility program provides education and assistance as well as peer support at no cost to farmers, their families and farm workers with disabilities who are engaged in production agriculture and want to continue farming. Farmers and their families eligible for Vermont AgrAbility services may have any type of acquired or traumatic disability—physical, cognitive or sensory.

**HOME ACCESS PROGRAM**

VCIL’s Home Access Program (HAP) provides home entry and bathroom accessibility modifications for low-income Vermonters with physical disabilities. The Home Access Program receives funding each year to help people with disabilities make accessibility modifications so they can continue to live independently and remain in their communities. In FY’14 the Home Access Program provided 28 households with ramps or entrance modifications and made 25 bathrooms accessible!

**SUE WILLIAMS FREEDOM FUND**

The Sue Williams Freedom Fund (SWFF) provides funding for services and equipment to help people with disabilities achieve or maintain independence in their own homes. In FY’14 SWFF spent $35,000, helped 35 people obtain services or equipment and leveraged an additional $27,120.78.

**MEALS ON WHEELS**

VCIL’s Meals on Wheels Program (MOW) serves people with significant disabilities who are younger than 60 years of age. The program is statewide and serves people from all counties. It is coordinated from our main office in Montpelier. In FY’14
VCIL contracted with 29 meal sites across the state to prepare and deliver one hot meal a day to program participants. A total of 47,908 meals were funded through this program during FY’14 to a total of 448 peers.

There was no waiting list during FY’14 for the Meals on Wheels program and the program had enough funding available to authorize weekend meals for 48 peers for the entire program year.

**COMMUNITY ACCESS**

VCIL’s Community Access Program works to improve access to buildings, services and programs. Program specialists provide technical assistance and training on the ADA regulations and standards to Vermont cities, towns, employers and businesses.

During FY’14 the program trained 313 people in nine training events around the state. Highlights of this year’s training calendar included Accessibility and Historic Buildings in Vermont Building Codes event with Associated General Contractors in January 2014, Vermont Agency of Transportation engineering students in July 2014, Vermont Youth Development Corps/AmeriCorps Employment Accommodations in August 2014, and the Preservation Trust of Vermont’s Historic Preservation in Community Buildings also in August 2014.

The Community Access Program responded to 451 ADA technical assistance requests from individuals, businesses and government agencies. Additionally the program supported municipal ADA committees in Barre, Montpelier, Burlington, Brattleboro and Rutland. The VCIL office in Bennington worked with community members on an AARP-supported pedestrian assessment of downtown.

VCIL’s ADA news and materials distribution list (280 members of state and local government and community partners) is managed by the Community Access Program. Monthly distributions included local training opportunities, New England ADA Center Access E-Newsletters, Department of Justice settlement announcements and U.S. Access Board publications.
VCIL staff attended the 2014 ADA Symposium in Colorado for specialized training in ADA coordination and ADA standards and regulations.

Community Access Program staff sit on the following committees, task forces and work groups: State of Vermont Fair Housing Committee, Montpelier’s ADA Committee, Vermont Governor’s Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence Task Force, Vermont Department of Education Advisory Council on Bullying and Harassment and the NCIL Task Force on Abuse and Violence.

WELLNESS WORKFORCE COALITION

VCIL’s Wellness Workforce Coalition continues to grow its capacity to meet the needs of Vermont’s expanding peer workforce. In the coalition’s second year it was busy with an additional 127 people trained in providing peer support through Coalition sponsored trainings around the state.

Training events included:

- Intentional Peer Support (IPS) Advanced Facilitator
- Peer Cadre for crisis, trauma treatment and recovery
- Bridges Out of Poverty with Prudence Pease

Coalition trainings were attended by peer workers from peer-run organizations, as well as peer workers from the designated mental health agencies. Funded by a grant from the Vermont Department of Mental Health, VCIL is able to continue to provide these trainings for free, or at a very low cost, to peer workers.

Julie Brisson, the Coordinator of the Wellness Workforce Coalition appeared on VPR’s “Vermont Edition” discussing reentry issues faced by incarcerated Vermonters and the strong role peer support can play in this harrowing process. Brisson also appeared on a Northeast Kingdom TV talk show explaining VCIL’s programs and services and the work of the coalition. Along with Civil Rights Manager Kim Brittenham, Brisson presented the workshop “How to Better Serve Victims with Disabilities” at the National Victims of Crime Conference in Miami, Florida.

www.wwcvt.org
GET INVOLVED

Community Meetings:

VCIL holds ongoing community meetings where people with disabilities come together to organize around systems issues and share stories.

Meetings are held monthly throughout the state. A schedule of meeting dates and locations can be found at www.vcil.org or by contacting our I,R&A Department at 1-800-639-1522.

VCIL Website:

Check out the VCIL website at www.vcil.org. From that site you can gain access to our Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages.

Facebook:

We invite you to join our ongoing discussions and post upcoming events. Check out our page at: www.facebook.com/VTCIL

Twitter:

VCIL invites you to follow us on Twitter, which is updated at least weekly by Sarah Launderville, Executive Director.

Donations:

The Vermont Center for Independent Living depends on private contributions to support our civil rights work. Please consider contributing to our organization by donating online today through our secure Network for Good link, through the United Way or by sending the enclosed envelope directly to VCIL.

AmazonSmile

When shopping on Amazon, go to AmazonSmile and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to VCIL. Bookmark the link: http://smile.amazon.com/ch/02-0271000 and support us every time you shop!
PEER SUCCESS STORIES

AgrAbility
Robert Smith

AgrAbility Specialist Tom Younkman visited Robert Smith, who has cerebral palsy and his parents, Richard and Linda, and discussed the improvements to their lifestyle since receiving a power chair through Wayward Wheels. Robert's father said that after a full year of complete confinement to the house due to Robert's increasing inability to walk and the extreme pain he experienced when trying, Robert is now able to get outside. He can now go to the barn and do all of the chores required to tend the goats and chickens. Robert's newfound freedom has also freed up time for Richard and Linda to do things around the home and barn and has also allowed them to make improvements in other parts of their lives. Richard used to have to walk Robert to each of his chores when he was able to, but he literally was not able to leave the house for the past year!

Linda stated that Robert isn't angry all the time anymore and her husband agreed. Richard added that his son used to feel useless, but now he is proud and knows that he is useful. This one power chair has made all three of them very happy and given Robert back his sense of pride and usefulness. As reserved as they are, the happiness and freedom is evident in their faces and words. This was absolutely huge for them!

Home Access Program
Carol Sweet

Carol Sweet recently received a bathroom modification for her shower. Her son Ron wrote to VCIL’s Tom Younkman to let him know how the project went. “Hi Tom! Well, I just wanted to update you that the bathroom renovation project is now all but complete!! Everything looks great, and at this point there really are just some finishing touches that will be done early next week. I was a little worried that my mother would not like the walk-in shower (since there is no tub, etc.), but she tried it for the first time yesterday and she says she really likes it! I just wanted to thank you for all your hard work to bring all of this to reality.”
Sue Williams Freedom Fund
Kathryn Kilbourn

“I’m a 72-year-old woman. I have lived here in Vermont for 29 years, I became disabled 30 years ago from a car crash and roller skating fall. I have a big family who live all over the country so I have to do things on my own. I live my life by my faith in the Lord. Three years ago I had a triple stroke two days after Irene flood and was in Hospital for 14 days to have an operation, my left side was paralyzed but now only my left foot is. I could no longer walk long distances. I live in an apartment on the bottom floor and have to walk up 15 stairs to do laundry, take out garbage, or go to store. Someone gave me a very old three-wheeled scooter but I was able to get out and do things I needed done. In July, my scooter fell backwards because it wasn’t very stable with three wheels and I smashed my left shoulder. After being hospitalized for 20 days I ended up back there for an operation to fix all the damages. After 6 months of 24/7 care from my daughter, sleeping in a recliner and occupational therapy I am getting around again. I put in for a four-wheel scooter and Sue Williams Freedom Fund made that possible with only $100.00 of my money and now I can get around inside and out and my goal is to keep going. Praise God. The Vermont Center for Independent living has been loving and caring.

Home Access Program
Maggie Novack, (by her husband Alan Taplow)

My wife Maggie had a severe stroke in July, 2013, which left her with an inability to speak or move her right arm and leg. While she was in rehab, I was wrestling with the emotional as well as physical drain of getting the house ready for her homecoming in the midst of a flurry of hospital and health-care bills. VCIL was such a great help in getting her bathroom ready for her return from rehab. We needed to remove a tub and vanity and construct a walk-in shower as well as a low sink which she could wheel right up to. VCIL handled and monitored the contract with the builder and made it all happen in good time. We are most appreciative of the folks at VCIL who were so helpful when we really needed help.
Employee Success Story
Helen Johnke

I started work at VCIL in 1999, as a part-time Peer Advocate Counselor. Below are some of the highlights of my fifteen years working in the disability rights movement at VCIL:

- I was a staff representative twice in my fifteen years at VCIL. I attended board and committee meetings acting as a liaison for staff and took issues to the board. This gave me more knowledge of how a nonprofit operates.
- I attended the NCIL conference in Washington, DC in 2003. I had never seen so many people with disabilities in one place, everyone chanting “our homes, not nursing homes.” The march to the Capitol was very long and hot but the speeches were inspiring. Seeing and hearing the national and state groups showed me the importance of organizing and continuing to press for our civil rights. There is an endless need for educating the public of the needs of individuals with disabilities to live the most fulfilling life possible.
- I served on the Steering Committee for the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Planning Grant that came to Vermont in 2001 and then on the Advisory Board for the Implementation Grant. One of the biggest needs then was education about the importance of getting medical intervention for any kind of TBI. At that time, no one knew that a concussion was a serious injury.
- I was on the Governor’s Committee for Employment of People with Disabilities for five years.
- In 2000, I attended a workshop on Social Security work incentives for beneficiaries of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). This sounded like a good idea, to be able to work and be self supporting while not losing disability benefits.
- In 2005, I began work as a Benefits to Work counselor (B2W)

Working at VCIL has increased my knowledge around disabilities and given me more patience with people. I have a warrior personality and I have developed the ability to support peers in making their own decisions to improve their own lives.

In the 15 years I have worked at VCIL, the staff here have become like a second family to me. We support one another.

Many thanks to Helen for her years of service.

--Sarah Launderville, E.D.
# ABOUT OUR PEERS

## GENDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>737</td>
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## OUR DISABILITIES

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<td>Cognitive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Emotional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple</td>
<td>386</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>773</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>17</td>
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## AGES OF OUR PEERS

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<td>Under 6 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ages 6-17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ages 18-34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ages 35-64</td>
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<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Unknown</em></td>
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## INDIVIDUALS SERVED BY COUNTY

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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennington</td>
<td>176</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caledonia</td>
<td>113</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chittenden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Isle</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lamoille</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
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<td>Orleans</td>
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<td>Rutland</td>
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<td>Washington</td>
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<td>Windham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Windsor</td>
<td>121</td>
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<tr>
<td>Out of State or unknown</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
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*Much of the data represented is from IR&A calls where people do not always disclose their age or type of disability.*
SERVICES AT A GLANCE

Information, Referral & Assistance
2,383 peers and organizations (duplicated)

Home Access Program
25 bathroom modifications, 25 ramps, two entrances and one platform lift

Peer Advocacy Counseling
304 peers served

Meals on Wheels
448 peers served - 47,908 meals

Sue Williams Freedom Fund
35 peers received assistive technology totaling of $35,000
FY’14 HIGHLIGHTS

Rosemary J. Miller Dining for All Award

In October 2013, VCIL awarded the first annual Rosie J. Miller Dining for All Award. The award was named for our longtime receptionist who retired in 2011 after over 30 years with us! Rosie, who was born with cerebral palsy, has never let her disability slow her down, including her passion for dining out, shopping and advocating for disability rights.

VCIL Executive Director Sarah Launderville said, “We could not think of a more fitting way to honor Rosie than be creating an award to recognize a Vermont eatery that offers dining for everybody.” Sarah added, “We hear from people with disabilities who are not able to access restaurants because there are stairs, or the bathroom is too narrow. We hear from others that they are treated with disrespect. We wanted an award that highlights a restaurant for doing a good job. The Three Penny certainly fits that description and we salute them.”

Kevin Casey of Montpelier who nominated the pub for the award said, “I was pleased to see that the Three Penny Taproom really worked hard to make sure that their renovations were as accessible as possible, with two accessible bathrooms, wide aisles and gently sloping floors between the two spaces in lieu of what would have historically been a step.”

Scott Kerner, co-owner of Three Penny Taproom, said, “We are honored to accept this wonderful award. We were lucky to be able to make our restaurant accessible with the expansion.”

Other nominees included: Church and Main in Burlington, Sarducci’s in Montpelier, Whetstone Station Restaurant and Brewery in Brattleboro, Subway in Bennington and the Wayside in Montpelier.

The award will be given out annually and submissions can be sent to VCIL’s Stefanie Monte at smonte@vcil.org.
**Women of Color Network**

VCIL serves as a community partner in the Women of Color Network Leadership Academy. Kim Brittenham, VCIL Civil Rights Manager, and Keri Darling of Deaf Vermonters Advocacy Services (DVAS) were core trainers for the second round of fellows in Boston in September. Workshops were provided on caucus building, funding diversity and effective communication. WOCN is a project of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, which is a national grassroots initiative dedicated to building the capacity of women of color advocates and activists responding to violence against women in communities of color.

**Sue Williams Freedom Fund**

The Sue Williams Freedom Fund originated at Sue’s death in 1981 as a memorial to her work on behalf of people with disabilities. Sue contracted polio in 1955 at the age of 29 while pregnant with her youngest daughter. Sue went into labor while in the iron lung where she ended up giving birth.

Although the disease caused Sue to become a quadriplegic, she went on to empower many people through her public speaking, lobbying, and helping to establish the Vermont Center for Independent Living.

VCIL recently connected with Sue’s daughter Heather Winkler who was thrilled to hear that the SWFF program continues to provide assistive technology to people with disabilities.

It was such a pleasure to meet Heather and hear about Sue’s family. Heather felt the same way about visiting VCIL and seeing that her mother’s spirit is still alive and well here.
Education

VCIL continued to serve on the Vermont Agency of Education Bullying & Harassment Advisory Council, representing the disability perspective. Per Act 129 of 2012, the Secretary of Education established an advisory council to provide advice and recommendations on harassment, hazing, and bullying prevention strategies and resources, and to coordinate statewide activities related to the prevention of and response to harassment, hazing, and bullying. The council reports annually in January to the state board and the house and senate committees on education. [http://education.vermont.gov/bullying-prevention-council](http://education.vermont.gov/bullying-prevention-council)

Farmer Veteran Forum

A movement is afoot in the Green Mountain State to connect veterans returning from deployment with farming.

The Vermont Center for Independent Living and Vermont AgrAbility sponsored the first Vermont Farmer Veteran Forum on June 11 at the Veterans Administration Medical Center in White River Junction.

This workshop was created to organize veteran farming initiatives around the state. The effort is focused on offering veterans, including those with disabilities, agricultural opportunities with therapeutic programs at various farms throughout Vermont. Many are already interested as this represents a growing movement nationally in which increasing numbers of veterans returning from deployment find healing through agriculture.

The event was well attended by veterans with active plans for veteran farms, and multiple organizations that provide support and service to veterans. All parties present shared interest and were enthusiastic about the prospect of organizing veteran farms. The key speaker of the event was Dr. Michele Pfannenstiel, who fulfills several roles with the Farmer Veteran Coalition, including serving as Northeast development coordinator and president of the Maine chapter. Her presentation highlighted the structure of the Farmer Veteran Coalition chapters and detailed the steps to getting started. VCIL is working to build partnerships within the Veteran Farmer Community in FY’15.
FY’14 EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

Annual ADA Celebration

On July 24, 2014 VCIL celebrated the 24th year of the American with Disabilities Act at Branbury State park in Salisbury. The Executive Director stated, “twenty-four years after the signing of this historic legislation we have community members and friends in the business community who are breaking down barriers that stand in the way of people with disabilities being fully included in our society. We are proud to have been able to provide technical assistance to businesses, the state of Vermont and our community to ensure that people with disabilities can access goods, services, education and the equality we deserve.”

As part of our ADA celebration our Advocacy Award was presented to Dale Hackett. Dale of Barre City has been a shining star for his tireless work at the State House and vigilance in protecting the rights of Vermonters with disabilities.

Hackett is a native Vermonter who spent a lot of time as a child in Hanover, N.H., where he excelled at running and cross country skiing, even making the Olympic “B” cross country skiing team. He has been legally blind since childhood and also has epilepsy, which led to his athletic career being cut short.

When his three children were little, he found that the system was not very supportive of a father with a disability trying to do the best he could for his kids. That, along with seeing some of his loved ones confront disability issues, seemed to light a fire that would fuel his passion for advocating for people with disabilities.
VCIL also presented the following **Ally of Accessibility** Certificates at the ADA picnic:

**Bennington Museum** for commitment to accessibility with its auditory exhibit descriptions.

**Branbury State Park** for commitment to equal access to recreation for people with disabilities

**City of Rutland** for reinstating the Committee for Accessibility Improvement.

**Green Mountain Power** for commitment to accessibility evident in major renovation for the new Energy Innovation Center on Merchant Row.

**The Whetstone Station & Brewery** in Brattleboro for modeling beautiful wheelchair access in a great setting both inside and outdoors.

**Town of Brandon** for renovations to the historic Town Hall creating wheelchair access to town services and events for people with disabilities.

**Town of Brattleboro** for commitment to its long-standing Americans with Disabilities Act Advisory Committee.

**Town of Hartford** for pedestrian improvements benefiting people with disabilities.

**Town of Pittsfield** for commitment to accessibility to people with disabilities evident in extensive renovations to Town Offices and Library

**West Rutland Library** for modeling beautiful and effective wheelchair accessibility in a historic public building.

**Living Well With a Disability Workshop (LWWD)**

More than 20 peers and service providers participated in the Rutland office’s LWWD workshop series. The two hour sessions were held over a six week period in July and August. Event topics included exercise options for people with disabilities, nutritious eating while on a tight budget, coping skills for dealing with stress, emergency preparedness, self-advocacy, and relaxation techniques.

Tom Alcorn of VT Adaptive Ski & Sports presents on exercise options for PWD.
Holiday Open House

This year’s theme for our holiday open house was “It’s A Wonderful Life,” so it seemed appropriate that during the most wonderful time of the year, we honor a young Northfield woman. On December 12, 2013 Catrina Audet was presented with the Deborah Lisi-Baker Leader of Tomorrow Award.

Audet, who has a developmental disability and a learning disability not only helps out on her family farm, she has also been volunteering at VCIL for close to a year.

In presenting the award, Lisi-Baker said, “When other young people come to VCIL, Catrina helps them feel welcome and does the kind of things that help us all have a wonderful life by being there and being committed to disability rights and to inclusion.”

Lisi-Baker added, “Her dream is to continue to do that work and be able to have equal opportunities in employment and independence and to bring her vision to the world as she grows up and continue the work of the independent living movement. We honor her because she decided to start this work young.”

Audet assists VCIL with various tasks, including organizing the library, helping with mailings and making copies. She also assists with games and crafts for the youth nights that VCIL holds on a weekly basis. She is a member of Green Mountain Self-Advocates and volunteers at a senior center and at a local soup kitchen serving meals. She also helps out her grandmother by acting as her personal care attendant.

Another highlight of VCIL’s holiday open house was an art show by Sharon Pine’s second/third grade class at Montpelier’s Union Elementary School. As part of a class project, the children interviewed family members and friends who have disabilities and then created portraits (see next page). The project was a good way to learn about people with disabilities and the colorful artwork was very much enjoyed by the folks who attended our open house.
“Meet Your Neighbor” Radio

In June of 2013 the VCIL Bennington office held an Americans with Disabilities Act Community Meeting. One of the topics discussed was stigma and how it affects people’s lives. That discussion resulted in an ADA Stigma Work Group comprised of peers and VCIL staff members. The group decided that they wanted to try and educate a larger segment of the community on how stigma affects people with disabilities. So they could understand that people with disabilities are no different than someone that doesn’t consider themselves disabled...and that is how the “The Meet Your Neighbor” radio show was born. Co-hosted by VCIL peer Maggie Bernstein and VCIL PAC Charlie Murphy, the intention is to create greater awareness about the prevalence of disability in the community, and to encourage listeners to think of the person first, not the disability.

Depending on the day, the program may be an interview or a topic-driven format. There are a number of people living in Bennington representing a variety of jobs, careers, or professions who have a disability of some form. When interviewed they discuss the type of disability they have and what are their “workarounds”. (Maggie came up with that phrase which basically means what adaptations or accommodations one employs to function in daily life). Other topics discussed have included hidden disabilities and the Complete Streets Initiative. The show airs live for half an hour at 1 pm on Fridays twice a month on Bennington’s WBTN AM 1370 and replays in between.

Disability Awareness Day

On February 19, 2014 the Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights celebrated Disability Awareness Day. As a member organization of (VCDR) VCIL was a cosponsor and very involved in the planning this year. Employment and empowerment were on people’s minds and about 300 members, friends and allies of VCDR gathered to spread the message: “Empower People with Disabilities: It’s Only Right(s).” Lt. Gov. Phil Scott kicked off the day by welcoming attendees to the Statehouse – many of whom were visiting for the first time. He shared the story of his father, who was severely injured during the World War II D-Day invasion of Normandy, France, had to have both legs amputated.
and was fortunate to have survived. Howard Scott went on to lead a very rich life that included getting married, having three sons and working for the state of Vermont. He is remembered, among other things, for being a consummate gentleman.

“I hope you remember my dad, what he struggled with and what he accomplished and how it relates to each and every one of you,” Scott said.

Following Scott’s welcome, various workshops were held along with a press conference about employment for people with disabilities. Speakers included Chester A. Finn, who in the early 1990s spent six years working in a sheltered workshop, where he made about $4 for two weeks of work. Finn, who is blind and has a developmental disability, got out of that sheltered workshop. For about 17 years, he has worked as a client advocate for the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities. In 2008, Finn co-founded Community Empowerment Programs, Inc., which provides community services and educational programming for people with disabilities.

Finn has been in the national spotlight recently for advocating that President Obama include people with disabilities in his executive order to raise the minimum wage on new federal contracts. People with disabilities were originally not going to be included in the executive order, but thanks to the efforts of Finn and others, Obama changed course.

“A lot of times people forget about us,” said Finn, referring to people with disabilities, “and that work is important to us as well as to everyone. I can’t wait to get up in the morning at quarter to five when my clock goes off so that I can get to work. It’s important to have everyone have an opportunity.”

Bryan Dague of the University of Vermont-Center on Disability and Community Inclusion also shared his thoughts at the press conference. Dague provides training and technical assistance to supported employment programs and high school transition programs throughout the state of Vermont.

“Nationally the number one topic in this country right now is employment,” said Dague, noting that work is really important to
everyone and that people should get paid what they’re worth.

“Vermont’s been pretty progressive and fortunate to have closed down the sheltered workshops and segregated employment,” said Dague, “but nationally about 75 percent of people with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities are still in segregated sheltered workshops. The average pay of a sheltered workshop is $2.50 an hour but it goes down about as low as 6 cents an hour.”

Finn gave a keynote address in the evening on Disability Awareness Day, which was enjoyed by many legislators, among others. The keynote was followed by a panel discussion featuring Nicole LeBlanc of Green Mountain Self-Advocates, George Nostrand of Vermont Psychiatric Survivors, Deaf storyteller and comedian René Pellerin and educator Tom Van Meter.

The Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights is a cross-disability advocacy organization. VCDR member organizations, staff members and volunteers engage individuals with disabilities and family members in Vermont’s legislative and policy activities, enabling them to have a voice in the administrative and legislative decisions that affect their daily lives and civil rights.

**TBI Support Group**

VCIL PAC Kenny Smith along with other members of the Traumatic Brain Injury support group had their artwork featured in the St. Johnsbury Caledonian Record last Spring. VCIL’s TBI support group’s exhibit was created to bring awareness to domestic violence and how the violence can cause a traumatic brain injury. Artwork was on display in the Twilight Theatre at Lyndon State College and was open to the public.

**NSTI**

Community Access Program again worked with Vermont Agency of Transportation to provide its National Summer Transportation Institute (NSTI) students with an adventure in navigating pedestrian areas using a variety of mobility devices and visual disability simulation goggles. This annual workshop was led by Montpelier High School student Ash Brittenham in July 2014.
Farmer’s Field Day

On August 20, 2014 VCIL held an AgrAbility Project Field Day at Young’s Milky Way Farm in Springfield, Vermont. Kenny Young, a peer of the AgrAbility program, and his wife, Kelli, welcomed guests to their beautiful accessible home. Tours were given and visitors were introduced to the various assistive technology devices that have given Kenny the opportunity to continue to be a fifth generation farmer and live more independently after a snowmobile accident eight years ago left him a paraplegic.

Later in the day folks were treated to lunch under a tent on a beautiful August day. Kenny spoke about how Vermont AgrAbility has helped him and others with a disability, injury, or chronic illness stay active in agriculture.

The event was open to anyone in agricultural production who was interested in learning more about its services, including assistive technology solutions, modified farm equipment and other assistance to allow farmers with injury or chronic conditions to return to farming.

Kenny had an innovative idea when he purchased an old bucket truck and replaced the bucket with a chair; he then uses the arm of the truck to bring him over to his tractor and transfers into the tractor’s seat.

Kenny’s hand pedal bicycle and adaptive skiing equipment, which he teaches with the VT Adaptive Ski and Sport program.

Corey Chappell of the Action Track Chair Co. and Sam Smyth, a dairy farmer from Connecticut who connected with Kenny through VT AgrAbility.
In September, close to 200 members of the Deaf Community held a rally at the State House in order to draw the attention of politicians, state officials and the general public to the achievements of Deaf people and the concerns of the Deaf community, in light of the closing of the Austine School. Since 1908 the Austine School has been working with students who are Deaf and hard of hearing. Now that tradition has to come to an end. VCIL’s Deaf Independence Program Coordinator Missy Boothroyd helped plan the event.

Nate Besio, PAC in Burlington, at the Community Service Fair at Essex H.S.
Accessible Garden Planters

Last spring VCIL had accessible garden planters built (thank you, Will Eberle) for the front of the Montpelier Office Building. Thanks to the exceptional green thumb of VCIL’s MOW Coordinator, Karin Nissen (center) we can now look forward to spring bulbs emerging!

Disability Awareness Day

Senator Bill Doyle with James Tedesco, son of Patricia Tedesco, VCIL’s MOW Assistant at Disability Awareness Day.

Mike Charron, Civil Rights Specialist, expresses his feelings about the day:
“Teams of wild services horses won’t keep me away from Disability Awareness Day
Feb. 19th 2014
Vermont State House”

ADA Celebration

PACs Tracy Dorman and Colleen Arcodia try out the beach wheelchair at Branbury State Park

Wellness Workforce Coalition
BOARD of DIRECTORS

Martha “Marty” Roberts, President
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Charlie Teske, At-Large Member
Joellen Valley
Benjamin Wimett

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Michelle Grubb, Finance & Operations Officer

Admin. & Support Services

Chanda Beun, Receptionist
Sue Booth, Bus. Office Coord.
Patrick Fitzgerald, Outcome & Evaluations Specialist
Stefanie Monte, Executive Ass’t.
Patricia Tedesco, MOW Program Ass’t.

Information, Referral & Assistance (IR&A)

Ericka Reil, I,R&A

Development / Fundraising

Linda Meleady, Development Coord.

Community Access

Kim Brittenham, Civil Rights Manager
Mike Charron, Civil Rights Specialist

Peer Advocacy Counseling (PAC) and Deaf Services

Colleen Arcodia, PAC – Bennington
Nate Besio, PAC – Burlington
Missy Boothroyd, Deaf Independence
Jessie Butterfield, PAC – Rutland
Tracy Dorman, PAC - Bennington
Jack Hall, Advocacy Specialist
Helen Johnke, Benefits to Work Specialist
Peter Johnke, Database Coord.
Charlie Murphy, PAC - Bennington
Kevin Plant, Database Assistant
Glenn Reed, PAC – Rutland
Kenny Smith, PAC - Morrisville
Candace Stoumen, PAC - Brattleboro
Tyler Sweeten, PAC - Montpelier
Kimberly Whitney, PAC - Burlington
Program Coord. - Brattleboro
Tom Younkman, AgrAbility Specialist

Direct Service Programs

Alaina Clements, Sue Williams Freedom Fund Specialist
Rever Kennedy, PAC & Home Access Program Specialist
Harold Nadeau, Direct Services Mngr.
Karin Nissen, Meals on Wheels Coord.
Joyce Werntgen, Home Access Program & Sue Williams Freedom Fund Coord.

Wellness Workforce Coalition
Julie Brisson, Coordinator
ABOUT OUR FUNDING

Most of VCIL’s funding comes from a variety of federal, state and local sources. VCIL’s primary funding comes from the U.S. Department of Education.

The Department of Education funding helps us provide Peer Advocacy Counseling, skills training services, community advocacy activities, and information, referral and assistance services.

In FY’14 VCIL received funding from several Vermont state agencies, one United Way, and 135 cities and towns, all of whom are valuable partners. We thank all of the individuals, businesses, contractors, community organizations and partners that help keep our programs active and successful. These include the Vermont Legislature, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the National Institute on Disability & Rehabilitation Research and the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, the Vermont Department of Mental Health and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Most importantly we thank the volunteers and individual donors who help bring VCIL’s mission of dignity, independence and civil rights to every community in Vermont. Your active participation in this movement and your continued support is what makes our work possible.
## Vermont Center for Independent Living

### Annual Report FY ’14

**Statements of Financial Position**

**For the Years Ended September 30, 2014 and 2013**

### Current Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$305,073</td>
<td>$192,373</td>
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<td>Accounts and grants receivable</td>
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<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
<td>31,798</td>
<td>43,986</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>649,610</strong></td>
<td><strong>521,750</strong></td>
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### Property and Equipment, net

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<td>Restricted cash – building reserve</td>
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<td>8,044</td>
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<td>Investments</td>
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<td>248,849</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL OTHER ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>234,518</strong></td>
<td><strong>256,893</strong></td>
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### Total Assets

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<tr>
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<th>2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,260,734</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,196,143</strong></td>
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### Current Liabilities

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2013</th>
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<tr>
<td>Current portion of long-term debt</td>
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<td>20,000</td>
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<td>Current portion of capital leases</td>
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<td>9,000</td>
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<td>Accounts payable</td>
<td>87,695</td>
<td>76,102</td>
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<td>Accrued payroll and related liabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accrued vacation</td>
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<td>35,243</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contract advances</td>
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<td>37,513</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>268,124</strong></td>
<td><strong>250,919</strong></td>
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### Long-Term Liabilities

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<tr>
<td>Mortgage note payable, net of current portion</td>
<td>232,709</td>
<td>253,554</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital lease obligations, net of current portion</td>
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<td>4,697</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL LONG-TERM LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>232,709</strong></td>
<td><strong>258,251</strong></td>
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### Total Liabilities

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES</strong></td>
<td><strong>500,833</strong></td>
<td><strong>509,170</strong></td>
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### Net Assets

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<th>2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted – undesignated</td>
<td>742,635</td>
<td>672,130</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board designated – building reserve fund</td>
<td>11,622</td>
<td>8,044</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal – unrestricted</strong></td>
<td><strong>754,257</strong></td>
<td><strong>680,174</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporarily restricted</td>
<td>5,644</td>
<td>6,799</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>759,901</strong></td>
<td><strong>686,973</strong></td>
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### Total Liabilities and Net Assets

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<tr>
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<th>2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,260,734</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,196,143</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**VERMONT CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**  
**STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES**  
**FOR THE YEARS ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2014 AND 2013**

### CHANGE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal and State Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$2,319,362</td>
<td>$2,406,267</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipalities</td>
<td>25,790</td>
<td>18,808</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fees and other income</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>40,832</td>
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<td>Investment Income (loss)</td>
<td>104,398</td>
<td>35,665</td>
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<td>United Way</td>
<td>22,857</td>
<td>27,138</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-kind contributions</td>
<td>5,380</td>
<td>10,009</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net assets released from restrictions</td>
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<td>1,049</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,517,787</td>
<td>2,539,768</td>
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**TOTAL REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT**  
$2,538,052  
$2,539,888

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<tr>
<td>Program Services:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent Living Resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Advocacy Counseling</td>
<td>1,086,676</td>
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<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>612,713</td>
<td>697,585</td>
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<td>Other Programs</td>
<td>137,403</td>
<td>142,908</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Program Services</td>
<td>2,80,736</td>
<td>279,824</td>
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<td>Support Services:</td>
<td>2,117,528</td>
<td>2,130,295</td>
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<tr>
<td>General and Administrative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing and Development</td>
<td>295,429</td>
<td>293,686</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51,012</td>
<td>71,110</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Support Services</td>
<td>364,441</td>
<td>364,796</td>
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**TOTAL EXPENSES**  
$2,463,969  
$2,495,091

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CHANGE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tr>
<td>74,083</td>
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<td>44,797</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>BEGINNING UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>680,174</td>
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<td>635,377</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENDING UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$754,257</td>
<td></td>
<td>680,174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHANGE IN TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2013</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</td>
<td>19,110</td>
<td>1,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts and Grants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19,110</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets released from restrictions</td>
<td>(20,265)</td>
<td>(120)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANGE IN TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS</td>
<td>(1,155)</td>
<td>1,009</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEGINNING TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS</td>
<td>6,799</td>
<td>5,790</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENDING TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS</td>
<td>5,644</td>
<td>6,799</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS                 | $72,928    | $45,806    |
THANK YOU TO OUR GRANTORS

Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC)
National Institute on Disability, Independent Living & Rehabilitation Research
National Resource Center on Domestic Violence
Statewide Independent Living Council
United Way, Rutland
University of VT State Agricultural College
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Education
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
U.S. Department of Social Security Administration
VT Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living
VT Department of Mental Health
VT Housing & Conservation Board

VCIL wishes to extend our sincere appreciation to all of our project partners that we have worked with throughout the years. Without these valued relationships our mission would not be possible.

**These lists reflect Individual, Business, Organization and Grantor contributions and/or partnerships for FY 2013. Our deepest apology to any agency, organization or individual we may have inadvertently omitted.**
## CITIES AND TOWNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Albany</th>
<th>Fairlee</th>
<th>Mount Tabor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alburgh</td>
<td>Fayston</td>
<td>New Haven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andover</td>
<td>Ferrisburgh</td>
<td>Newark</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arlington</td>
<td>Fletcher</td>
<td>Newbury</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barnet</td>
<td>Glover</td>
<td>Newfane</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barre City</td>
<td>Goshen</td>
<td>North Hero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barre Town</td>
<td>Grafton</td>
<td>Northfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belvidere</td>
<td>Granby</td>
<td>Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennington</td>
<td>Granville</td>
<td>Pittsfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkshire</td>
<td>Greensboro</td>
<td>Pittsford</td>
</tr>
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<td>Berlin</td>
<td>Guildhall</td>
<td>Plymouth</td>
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<td>Bethel</td>
<td>Hartford</td>
<td>Poultey</td>
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<td>Hartland</td>
<td>Pownal</td>
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<td>Brattleboro</td>
<td>Highgate</td>
<td>Proctor</td>
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<td>Richmond</td>
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<td>Rutland</td>
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<td>Duxbury</td>
<td>Marshfield</td>
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<td>E. Montpelier</td>
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To the many organizations helped make our 24th Anniversary of the ADA celebration possible by sponsoring our event.

Disability Rights Vermont
Rutland Regional Medical Center
VocRehab Vermont
VT Developmental Disabilities Council
VT Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence
VT Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
VT Workers’ Center

Sorenson Communications, Inc. and Joseph Giancola
Real Estate & Construction
whose donation enabled VCIL guests to attend our ADA event free of charge.

To those businesses that generously donated gift cards, hot dogs, cheese or reduced their fee so we could offer our guests delicious items at no cost!

Cabot Creamery
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Fred Lantz
Samuel Liss
Karin Nissen
Price Chopper, Barre
Shaw’s, Montpelier
Upper Valley Cooperative
Walmart, Berlin
Wayside Restaurant

**Our deepest apology to any individuals or organizations we may have omitted.**
Remembering Hector Racine
"Marathon Man" (1959-2014)

In his early years Hector could be seen working on local farms or mowing lawns. He attended local schools and graduated from Otter Valley Union High School, class of 1977. Shortly after high school he volunteered at Rutland Regional Medical Center as a message coordinator in the Maintenance Department. He had been a quadriplegic, living independently for nearly 40 years, in Brandon with the assistance of RAVNAH, family and friends. He was determined to live his dream of going places, doing things he liked to do, especially fish and hunt. He modified and adapted many devices to overcome his disability. He courageously created a video, on hunting in the wild, while facing the obstacles of his disability.

Hector served on the Rutland City Committee for Accessible Improvements when it originated in the 1980s. He went on a mission to make Rutland County accessible. He became involved in his community by making it accessible for the disabled by assisting with the installation of the accessible doors at the First Brandon National Bank, and many other public places. He worked with engineers to create curb cuts, making accessibility easier.

Hector networked, and became one of the founding members of the Rutland Area Disabled Advocacy Group (RADAC). He advocated for the basic right of accessibility to public places and for programs to improve the lives of the disabled. He served RADAC for well over 20 years, and the last several years served as President.

The yearly statewide accessible picnic was one of Hector's tributes lasting 23 years. He singlehandedly did the fundraising, transportation, mailings and coordination of the magnificent event that drew people together, from all over Vermont, with a magnitude of disabilities. They were able to share their stories and connect with others with respect to their difficulties and human rights.

Hector served on the Board of Directors at The Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL), in Montpelier, for many years. He went on to college and then became a Peer Advocate Counselor for VCIL serving Rutland County for 21 years. He was a powerful advocate contributing to the strength, dignity and independence of all persons with disabilities.
Homage to Jim Jeffords

--Sam Liss

As Chairperson of the Vermont Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and a member of the Board of Directors of Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL), I am particularly saddened to hear of the passing today, Aug. 18th, of former US Senator, Jim Jeffords.

Jim was as much a friend of people with disabilities as anyone holding public office. His work on behalf of passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was incomparable. Jim was by no means flamboyant or bombastic, but, rather and preferably, was genuine and sincere. He strongly believed that efforts toward equity, respect and inclusion for people with disabilities was the right thing to do and transcended partisan and other divides.

Indeed I can remember attending a luncheon in Burlington several years ago at which Jim accepted an award on behalf of his work for people with disabilities. As he accepted the award and watched the thundering applause, his eyes swelled with genuine emotion as he realized the appreciation he so deserved. Is this not what public service is or should be all about? I also remember a story he was fond of relating: upon being questioned by other members of Congress regarding a clause he advocated for in the ADA and its cost implications, he shrugged and replied, “So?” In other words, he felt that requiring governmental facilities to be accessible was necessary and correct and would pay for itself in the long run in terms of a greater degree of participation in our great democratic institutions.

Jim was a moderate in philosophy and behavior, but was a champion of human and civil rights and of democracy in its most poignant sense.

We will miss him greatly, but I am hoping his legacy will be retained for as long as people are struggling for equality and fairness. He was truly a champion of what is right.
VCIL – Montpelier
11 East State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
802-229-0501 (voice and TTY)
800-639-1522 (voice and TTY)
Email: info@vcil.org

VCIL – Bennington
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