



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Local organizations receive grant from the Vermont Community Foundation to build raised gardens beds for Addison County residents



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The Vermont Department of Health Middlebury District Office along with Middlebury Union High School Alternative Education Program and Addison County Relocalization Network (ACORN) recently received a \$1,575 grant from the Vermont Community Foundation's Small and Inspiring grant program. The grant will help build 15 raised garden beds at the homes of Addison County WIC (the special supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants & Children) participants and other low-income residents.

The idea for this project came out of a farm-to-school meeting hosted by ACORN. Steve Colangeli, science teacher in the MUHS Alternative Education Program, talked at that meeting about how his students were building raised garden beds on the school grounds but the students wanted to find a way to give back to the community. Moira Cook, Middlebury district office director for the Health Department, proposed a partnership with the local WIC program. WIC is the special supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children which provides nutrition education, breastfeeding support and nutritious foods for income eligible families. A member of the Health Department's staff, Linda King, previously ran her own small-scale vegetable farm and was a former manager of the Middlebury Farmers Market. King had expressed a desire to do more gardening outreach and education with local families. Students in the Alternative Education Program will build the garden beds and King will provide follow-up consultation on planting, weeding, harvesting and preparing vegetables from the gardens.

"We're excited about this partnership. The students will be able to use their building skills to help the community and local families will gain the knowledge and tools to help feed themselves nutritious foods," said Cook.

The raised garden bed project will be integrated into the Alternative Education curriculum and students will build half of the raised beds in the fall and half in the spring. The Health Department's Middlebury District Office will start promoting the availability of the raised garden beds at WIC clinics during the summer.

Through its Small and Inspiring grants program, the Community Foundation hopes to help foster the spark and hope that keeps Vermonters healthy and happy by finding and supporting projects in every town in Vermont where a small grant can make a big difference.

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Through its 12 district offices, central office and public health laboratory, the Vermont Department of Health strives to protect and promote the best health for all Vermonters. For more information about the Vermont Department of Health and Vermont's WIC program call 802-388-4644 or visit healthvermont.gov.

The Vermont Community Foundation is a family of hundreds of funds and foundations established by Vermonters to serve their charitable goals. It provides the advice, investment vehicles, and back-office expertise to make giving easy and inspiring. The Foundation also provides leadership in giving by responding to community needs and keeping Vermont's nonprofit sector vital. Together, its funds and programs provide more than \$12 million a year in grants and other investments in Vermont. Visit www.vermontcf.org or call 802-388-3355 for more information.

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