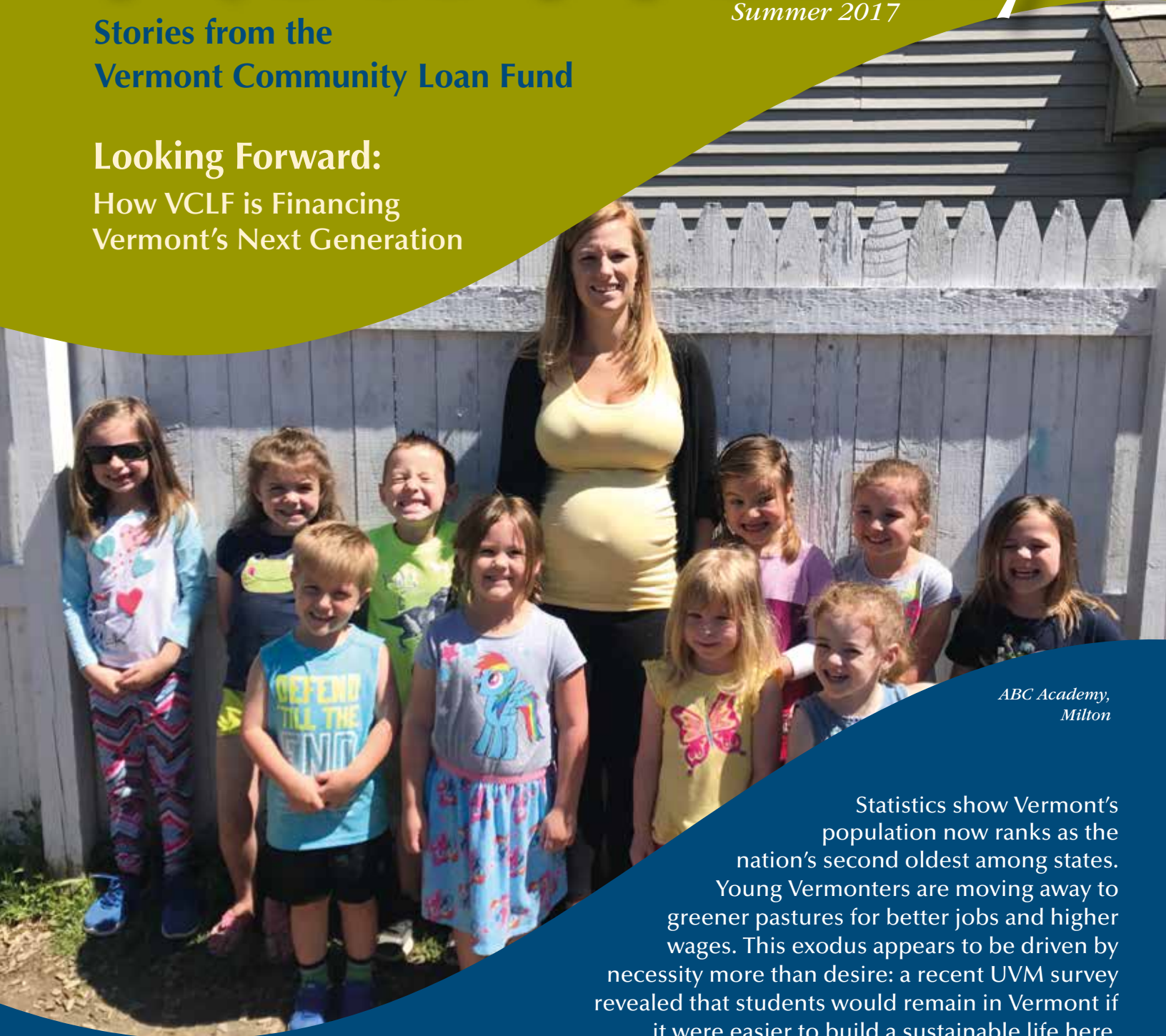


NoteWorthy

Summer 2017

Stories from the
Vermont Community Loan Fund

Looking Forward:
How VCLF is Financing
Vermont's Next Generation



*ABC Academy,
Milton*

Statistics show Vermont's population now ranks as the nation's second oldest among states. Young Vermonters are moving away to greener pastures for better jobs and higher wages. This exodus appears to be driven by necessity more than desire: a recent UVM survey revealed that students would remain in Vermont if it were easier to build a sustainable life here.

Committed to creating and growing opportunities for all Vermonters, the Loan Fund is leading efforts to build a brighter future for the next generation.



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COMMUNITY
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From the Executive Director

Are the Green Mountains going gray? Not at the Vermont Community Loan Fund. Every day, we're providing financing, connections, training and resources to the next generation of Vermont entrepreneurs and service providers. From our groundbreaking early care & education financing and training programs, to the Next Generation and Food, Farms & Forests investment funds, to our work with start-up and early stage



Will Belongia

businesses to create those good jobs and sustainable futures, the Loan Fund has been dedicated to Vermont's tomorrow since our own younger days back in 1987.

Recently, *NoteWorthy* went out into the field to ask some younger VCLF borrowers (and staff!) about their commitment to living and working in Vermont, and their own contributions to the state's future. What we found: young citizens engaged as mentors, employers, caregivers and role models, doing their part to build opportunity for upcoming generations of Vermonters. Their stories assure us that, collectively, we're heading in the right direction.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Will Belongia'.

Will Belongia, Executive Director

Looking Forward: How VCLF is Financing Vermont's Next Generation

FUTURE-FOCUSED

Kaitlyn Mesler, age 24, is a millennial with some decidedly 'old school' leanings. At Barre's Spaulding High School, a love of photography and digital media led to an afterschool job at **Bob's Camera**. After graduation, part-time led to full-time, which led to a growing fascination with the photo and video field, including Bob's extensive stock of analog equipment.

When Bob announced his intentions to retire and sell the shop, Kaitlyn stepped forward. "I didn't like the idea of somebody else taking over," she says, smiling.

Kaitlyn approached a large regional bank, which turned her loan request down flat. So she worked with local agency Capstone Community Action to develop a business plan, and then approached the Loan Fund. **"Because I was so young, I didn't even have a credit history. Technically, I didn't even exist," she laughs. "I'm not sure what VCLF saw in me, but I'm grateful they saw something!"**

In November of 2015, Kaitlyn bought Bob's Camera. She was all of 22.

While she acknowledges it would be easier to be in business somewhere else "where profit margins would be bigger," Kaitlyn says she remains committed to Vermont, and particularly to Barre.

Today, Kaitlyn and her three employees sell, service, clean and repair photo equipment across many formats. She has plans for building the business, hiring more employees and possibly changing up the space—maybe a little. "I do want to modernize a bit, but a lot of the longtime customers like things the way they are," she adds with a laugh.

ON THE RISE

Lisa Labelle's business is, quite literally, the future. Lisa is the founder and owner of **ABC Academy**, which provides high-quality early care and education serving 42 children and their families.

Lisa begins her day opening the Milton facility at 6:45 am, prepping for breakfast and the day's many activities. "I'm in the classroom, then I'm in the office, and then I get to be with the kids, which is my favorite part," she says energetically.

Continued on next page

The Loan Fund at Work January 1, 2017 - June 30, 2017

Small Business Lending

10 loans **\$1,379,812**

- Barton Maple Company, *Barton*
- Danforth Pewter, *Middlebury*
- Green Wolf Logging & Sugaring, *Bakersfield*
- Grow Compost of Vermont, *Moretown*
- Mamava, *Burlington*
- Northern Reliability, *Waitsfield*
- Pulmac Systems International, *Williston*
- Vermont Natural Beef, *Benson*
- Vermont Quince Company, *Newfane*
- Vermont Wood Pellet Company, *North Clarendon*

Child Care Lending

3 loans **\$34,178**

- Horizon Early Learning Program, *Brattleboro*
- Morristown After School Program, *Morristown*
- Otter Creek Child Care Center, *Middlebury*

Housing & Community Facilities Lending

1 loan **\$182,500**

- Awakening Sanctuary/Ethan Allen Residence, *Burlington*

Equipment Access Program

2 loans **\$37,173**

- Butterfly Bakery of Vermont, *Montpelier*
- Center for an Agricultural Economy, *Hardwick*

Landbank Program

1 loan **\$145,000**

- Housing Trust of Rutland County, *Ludlow*

Total Loans (17) **\$1,778,663**



Looking Forward *Continued from page 2*

At just 27, Lisa claims the secret to her success is goal-setting and perseverance. “Keep moving forward. If you think you can’t do something, don’t stop. Just keep going.” This would seem to be advice she’s been following for much of her young life. By age 16, Lisa was already volunteering in her grandmother’s Colchester child care business. Her grandmother was “a natural with children, and a big influence in my life,” she recalls.



Lisa Labelle and friends

From then on, Lisa knew she wanted a career that balanced caring for kids with growing a business. She took online classes, studied what worked for successful child care programs and dedicated herself “to finding all the resources that were out there,” including the Loan Fund.

“I didn’t just get financing from VCLF. I also got extra support and learning about what was needed for the business side of child care,” she explains.

Next on Lisa’s to-do list: achieving the STARS state quality rating system’s highest mark of five STARS (ABC currently has

four), accreditation by the National Association of Early and Young Children, and continuing to run her business in Vermont. No, she says emphatically, she wouldn’t leave Vermont, where she has strong connections with the ABC Academy families and kids whom she supports and who support her. “And it’s Vermont. It makes you feel good.”

OPENING DOORS

Though she was born and raised in Washington, D.C., Elise Shanbacker’s years at Middlebury College convinced her that Vermont would become her home. Now 32, Elise is helping provide safe, affordable homes for roughly one-thousand vulnerable Vermonters annually in her role as Executive Director of **Addison County Community Trust (ACCT)**. The nonprofit owns, operates and manages more than 600 affordable homes for the county’s families and seniors.

It’s no small job. Elise’s typical day includes financial oversight, management of multiple ongoing projects, Board recruitment, fundraising, program updates and more. The Loan Fund has partnered with ACCT for nearly 15 years, helping develop projects from single family rental rehabs to construction of multi-family apartment buildings. “We’re

Continued on back page

Current Investment Rates as of August 1, 2017

Social Investment Term Account					Social Investment Cash Account	
1-2 Years	3-4 Years	5-6 Years	7-9 Years	10+ Years	Open-Ended Maturity, Withdrawals on Demand	
0.85%	1.25%	2.25%	2.5%	3.0%	0.5%	
Social Investment Graduating Account						
Fixed Rate, with Monthly Deposits						
0.5%						

Investors may choose to invest at lower rates. Lower rates allow us to keep financing affordable for our borrowers, furthering our impact in Vermont communities. Rates are subject to change. Check our web site under Rates & Terms at investinvermont.org.

**Come celebrate
 30 years and
 \$100 million
 loaned!**

**Thursday, October 12, 4-7pm
 Shelburne Farms Coach Barn**

**Visit our website for
 more details.**

Looking Forward *Continued from previous page*

grateful for the Loan Fund's flexible financing and problem-solving approach," Elise says.

Recently, ACCT collaborated with VCLF and Cathedral Square to develop

McKnight Lane, named for Elise's late predecessor and mentor Terry McKnight. "The project was conceived of by Terry in the early 2000s," says Elise. A derelict mobile home park in Waltham was converted to a nonprofit community, with vacant and damaged units replaced with new VerMod net-zero homes for rent. "It's the first net-zero affordable housing in Vermont," Elise says, clearly and deservedly proud. **"If not for the Loan Fund, Waltham would still have a blighted, derelict mobile home park instead of new net-zero homes for all those families,"** she adds.

With all ACCT homes developed to be permanently affordable, ACCT's work is creating a legacy for future generations. "We also provide support to make sure tenants are successful," Elise says, listing eviction prevention and home ownership counseling, and SASH (Support and Services at Home) for seniors, all ACCT programs that help lower-income Vermonters find and remain in safe, stable homes.



Addison County Community Trust staff

SUPPORTING ROLE

Future entrepreneurs seeking loan capital and other resources in Vermont would do well to meet Dan Winslow. For six years, Dan, 34, has been helping develop and manage the Loan Fund's Business Lending Program as its Loan Coordinator. He's the first one you'll talk to when you inquire about financing your budding business.

Don't be shy. Dan's skills, honed over the years processing loans for the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation and the Loan Fund have made him an excellent listener with a keen sense of what it takes to make it as an entrepreneur in Vermont.

"I see my role as trying to facilitate opportunity for people," he says, noting that prospective borrowers contact him at different stages of their business' development. Some he encourages to apply for loans immediately, while for others he might help rework a business plan, refine projections, or otherwise fine-tune applications for "loan readiness."

"Once a loan is approved, I work closely with borrowers, all the way until it's fully paid back," he says. This includes supporting borrowers with referrals to Vermont's many available resources through VCLF's Business Development Services program. These services run the gamut from financial management, to marketing, licensing, bookkeeping and more.

Ultimately, Dan admits, it's the successes of borrowers that are the most rewarding aspect of his job. **"I get to see people make something, start-up something, that provides employment for other people," he says. "The borrowers are the stars here."**

