

IMPACT UPDATE



Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning

FEBRUARY 2022

Something extraordinary is happening in our society and **UP for Learning is a catalyst.**

Schools and communities are coming to understand that EVERY young person deserves an educational experience where their voice is truly valued, and where they can feel a sense of belonging, purpose, hope and agency. **This is the moment to make change.** Schools see an amplification value in partnering with UP for Learning to change the educational narrative across VT and the country.

Over the past two years, due to or despite the pandemic, schools have increasingly recognized the importance of UP for Learning, creating high demand for our programs and consulting. We have already surpassed our total FY21 projects by 150% and we still have four months left in our fiscal year! Our projects focus on engaging youth and adults in creating antiracist communities, developing school to career pathways, participating in community change efforts, and creating a community where educational equity is considered a human right.

During the 2021–2022 academic year, UP has continued to innovate in order to increase the number of youth and adults engaged in creating systemic change in their communities. The following are a few important stories from the first half of the academic year, that **YOU, our treasured donors, have made possible.**



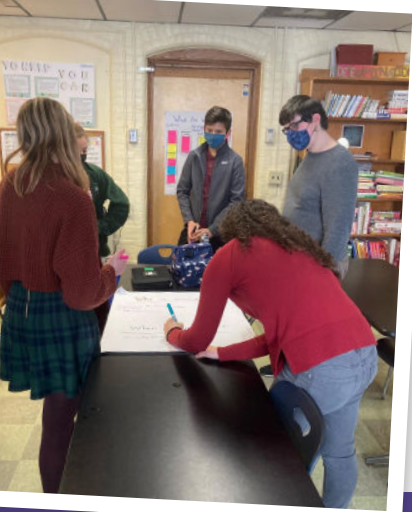
*"Every time I attend or facilitate an UP for Learning event, I am reminded why I am a part of all this. I feel like I have never been in a place where **I can listen, learn, share and have conversations that matter so much to me.**"*

–UP youth facilitator

MAIN STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL, MONTPELIER, VT

Youth from Main Street Middle School are using their voices to make a lasting impact in their school community. Last year, a small group of dedicated 5th-7th graders, in partnership with teacher Don Taylor, took part in [Cultivating Pathways to Sustainability](#). They designed an engaging Sustainability program for all 5th-8th graders to learn and teach others about environmental and social justice issues, using their

vision, passion and skills to make a difference in their community. With the successful launch of this program in the fall, they now run the Sustainability Steering Committee, advising and adding youth voice to curriculum planning, developing schoolwide sustainability initiatives, and modeling what youth-adult partnership can look like at MSMS!



*"Working with UP for Learning has been a major factor in the success of our new sustainability program at Main Street Middle School. The emphasis on youth-adult partnership and the development of youth leadership opportunities have enabled us to build **engaging, transformative and innovative educational experiences for young people.**"*

—Don Taylor, MSMS educator

MILTON INNOVATION CENTER, MILTON TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT, MILTON, VT

The Milton Town School District is making personalization and career pathways a priority by bringing together youth and adult stakeholders from schools, the community, local businesses and artists to create an innovative new program within the high school. The Milton Innovations Center (MIC) will provide a hands-on space for students to explore, create, and innovate their passions into a career path with the collaboration

and mentorship of educators and community professionals. This project involves collaboration with Generator, the Milton Artist's Guild, and other community partners. UP is engaging all stakeholders in creating the unified vision necessary to design and implement this project. Currently, the MIC team is re-designing the physical space within the high school technology/arts wing, creating curriculum opportunities, collaborating with local artists as mentors, and preparing for the launch of the Innovations Center for the 2022-2023 academic year!

HARWOOD YOUTH LEADERSHIP CLASS,

HARWOOD UNION, DUXBURY, VT

Something exciting has been underway at Harwood Union High School, and youth are leading the charge! Over the summer of 2021, a committed group of five UP for Learning Youth Facilitators explored ways to build

capacity for youth-adult partnership (YAP) and advocacy for change within their school. They co-designed and facilitated a Youth Leadership course as an equitable opportunity to engage and support young people who may have never thought of

themselves as leaders or who had been overlooked for leadership opportunities in the past. The ultimate goal: build skills and capacity for youth to serve as partners in decision-making at Harwood. The quarter-long pilot experience culminated with circle dialogues between the staff and student TAs in order to discuss transparency in the attendance policy, as well as effective communication of COVID-19 policies at Harwood.



"Students possess all the elements necessary for education transformation: passion, experiential knowledge, optimism, and a personal and collective investment in the present and future."

—Amy Rex,
Milton Superintendent

"Learning and working with youth leaders as colleagues has re-energized me as an educator. It has been a significant bright spot in a year that has been pretty tough!"

—Ellen Berrings, Harwood educator

STUDENT VOICE GROUP, NORTH COUNTRY CAREER CENTER, NEWPORT, VT

The North Country Career Center Student Voice Group has been grappling with the damage done to their building and to their sense of safety and belonging. They are rebuilding school unity by addressing vandalism, harassment, and bullying through student-led small group advisories and large group assemblies where the questions come from students and the conversations are facilitated by students. The learning from those conversations will be shared with the director of the center, who has committed to joining the Student Voice Group on a regular basis.



"I joined the student voice group to advocate for other people — because not everyone has a voice."

—NCCC Student Voice Team member

BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT RESTORATIVE PRACTICES YOUTH AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TEAM, BURLINGTON, VT

The BSD Youth and Family Engagement Team was formed to create a vision for change for BSD's youth and families. They will build intergenerational relationships working together to create more restorative schools. This dynamic



UP by the Numbers

381

hours of
compensated
time for youth
co-facilitators/
interns

67

unique youth-
adult teams

52

schools
partnering
with UP

46

youth interns
and Advisory
Council
members

12

teams with 12
unique projects
outside of VT

(Mississippi, Wisconsin,
Delaware, New Hampshire,
Massachusetts, Nepal)

2

youth voting
members on
UP's Board of
Directors

6

monthly virtual racial
justice dialogue events
led by Vermont and
Mississippi youth (continued from
2020-2021)

5

school district level
projects infusing youth-
adult partnership

(Data from Sept 2021-Jan 2022)

team of over 20 youth, family members and community members, mostly of the global majority, gather monthly to create community through restorative circles, sharing ideas, identifying priorities, and creating change. The first priority identified is to create more equitable opportunities for BIPOC students to access honors and advanced courses.

YOUTH VOICE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS/GTY

Elementary schools in the supervisory unions of Greater Rutland County, Orleans Southwest, and Slate Valley are participating in Community Connections and Getting to 'Y' programs during the 2021-2022 school year. In Community Connections, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade youth and adults explore listening, resilience, values and empathy. Infused with hands-on activities, reflection and joy, Community

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Connections helps provide common language and shared experiences. Building on this experience, Getting to 'Y' helps students understand the strengths of their school through analyzing data from their school's climate survey. As youth and adults in each of these schools bring together their understanding of community and their analysis of their own school environment, they are moving forward to create the positive change they envision!

LAMOILLE SOUTH UNIFIED UNION **YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIP ON THE BOARD EQUITY SUB-COMMITTEE**

The LSUU project is establishing a sustainable structure and practices for youth voice, agency, and youth-adult partnership in school board protocols and practices. After UP facilitated a session at the board's summer retreat, this work found its roots in the board's Equity Sub-Committee, where the charge includes having a youth adult team review equity policies to craft one that reflects the LSUU community. This team will also work to conduct an equity audit, engage all voices in the community, and communicate the purpose, process and the progress on the work. The conversation among the youth and adult members has built a shared understanding of the experience of students, staff, and community while upholding the goals of learning about and engaging in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work.

*"I hope being on this committee will set a precedent for **more student involvement in administrative decisions** even after I graduate."*

—Peoples Academy youth representative



GETTING TO 'Y' **TAHLEQUAH HIGH SCHOOL, TAHLEQUAH, OK,** **CHEROKEE NATION**

With the support of the Cherokee Nation Public Health Department, students in Oklahoma's Tahlequah HS are participating in a pilot replication of GTY. Seven students and one adult advisor served as the GTY Core Team and worked with UP for Learning to lead a student leadership class through analysis of



their local Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data. The Core Team presented their work at a Community Coalition Annual Meeting, sharing their data priorities and gathering input and ideas from community members. Since the meeting, the Core Team has received funds to implement action steps and has been invited to join the Coalition. GTY advisor Ashley Wade noted that the Coalition **"realized how important it is to have student input, and they would like to have that going forward."** Coalition member Jyme Vaughn is **"excited to see where the students take this project"** and believes that **"they will offer much-needed, inventive strategies that are unique to their age and life experiences."** The Cherokee Nation Public Health Department hopes to continue their partnership with UP for Learning with a goal of bringing Getting to 'Y' to more schools next year.

Empowering youth and adults to reimagine & transform education together

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