

2021 IMPACT REPORT



Vermont Folklife Center



From Apprentice to Master Stone Carver

Master stone carver Heather Ritchie first learned to work with stone in 1999 through the Folklife Center's Traditional Arts Apprenticeship program. This year, more than 20 years later, Heather applied to the same program to pass on her skills and experience to an apprentice of her own, Wolf Whitney from Morrisville.

Back in '99, Ritchie apprenticed to master George Kurjanowicz at Desilets Granite shed in Montpelier. Heather recalls: "At the time I was 24, a college graduate, dairy farmhand, and aspiring artist. The formal apprenticeship lasted four months, but my training with George continued for over four years.... I would like to give another woman the opportunity to make a mark for herself in this industry, as George did for me."

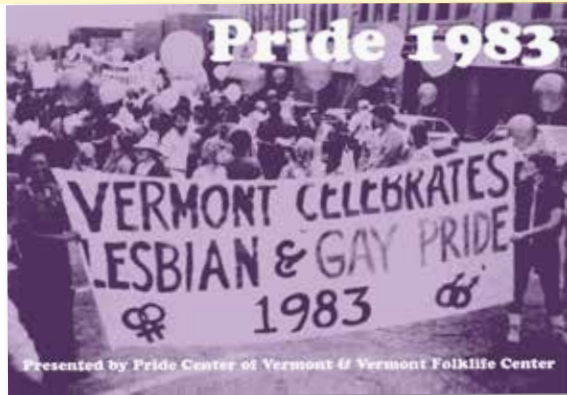
Today, Ritchie is recognized as a master carver in the world-renowned Barre granite carving community, and uses her skills to honor her Scottish heritage and produce public artwork that tells the story of the Barre granite community.



The VFC's Apprenticeship program supports community-recognized artists in teaching a variety of traditional arts to those who are interested in keeping the art forms vibrant and relevant to the communities that practice them. Over half of the artists supported in the 2020-2021 cycle identify as refugees or immigrants, and another 25 percent live in rural areas of the state.

"Water won't run straight & neither will we."

VFC and the Pride Center of Vermont celebrate Vermont's first Lesbian and Gay Pride march with Pride 1983, a Vision & Voice exhibit exploring the origins and legacy of that original event. Participants in that first gathering knew they were taking risks by publicly announcing their sexuality, but they stood together and marched despite threats to their jobs, families and personal safety. This grassroots community action in 1983 grew into newspapers, political organizing, and today's continued work towards equality.



Featuring portrait photographs by M. Sharkey and interviews with local Pride founders, as well as objects and ephemera from the VT Queer Archives, private collections, and Out in the Open's Andrews Inn Oral History Project, Pride 1983 will be on display in Middlebury through March 2022.

Recognition from the National Endowments of the Arts and Humanities!

We were thrilled and grateful to be one of only six Vermont nonprofits to receive a National Endowment for the Arts CARES Act Covid relief grant in 2020. These funds supported program staff salaries, positions crucial to continuing VFC's mission and core creative work in support of the rural and diverse populations we serve.

VFC was also fortunate to be one of five Vermont organizations to receive a National Endowment for the Humanities CARES Act grant. This grant supported Archival work to increase access, enhance descriptions of French language song materials in the collection, and beginning to expand educational resources from our Archive's traditional music collections.

These were highly competitive grants, with only 25 percent or lower application success rates. This success is a testament to decades of VFC staff efforts in completing innovative long-term, federally funded projects. And it is a testament to you, our generous donors.

“With the world suddenly thrown into this crisis, Listening in Place provided an outlet for us to share our experiences in isolation.”

—Dr. Benjamin Dangl, Public Communication Lecturer at UVM

“Listening” to the Pandemic

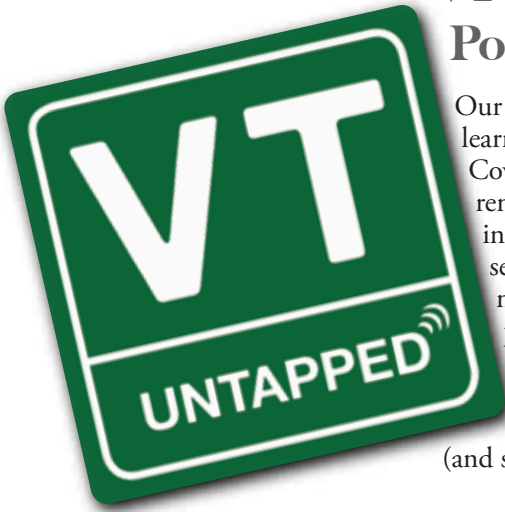


VT Untapped producer Mary Wesley recording in her linen closet.

VFC staff believe that a pathway through anxiety, fear and uncertainty lies in the act of listening as much as it does in the act of telling one's story. This is the driving concept behind *Listening in Place* (LIP), our main response to Covid-19, which offered a variety of ways for people in Vermont to stay connected and make meaning out of their pandemic experiences:

- The Sound Archive, a crowd-sourced collection documenting people's experiences and reflections on this historic time.
- Virtual Story Circles, online gatherings where Vermonters could listen and share during the isolation of early lockdown.
- Virtual Vox Pops, short interviews recorded over the phone with VFC staff to help grow the Sound Archive.
- Show Us Your Masks! A project to document homemade face masks created by Vermonters.

VT Untapped™ Podcast



Our VT Untapped™ production team learned to work with the constraints of Covid over the past year, conducting remote interviews, recording narration in the linen closet, virtual editing sessions, and more. Drawing on material from our *Listening in Place* programs we heard how Vermont communities were creatively coping with the pandemic, and we tapped into the Archive to revisit voices (and some spooky stories!) from the past.

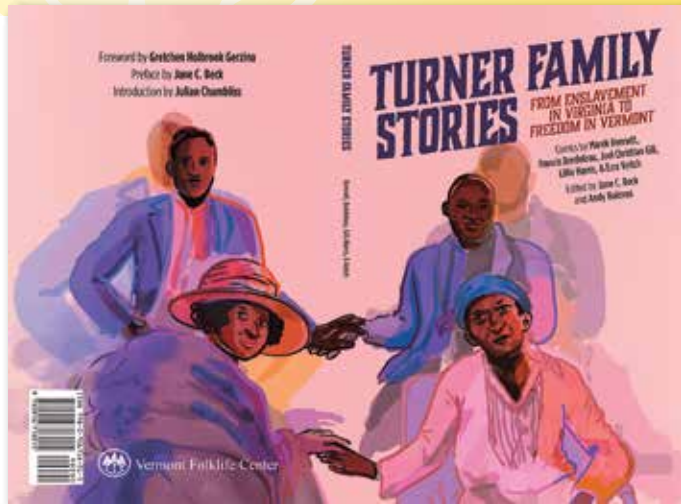
“You’ve truly made a difference in the lives of our participants and staff.”

—Staff at Elderly Services re: participating in Virtual Vox Pops at Project Independence

Two New Nonfiction Comic Collections!

The Center is proud to have published two nonfiction comics anthologies, *Turner Family Stories: From Enslavement in Virginia to Freedom in Vermont* and, with our partners at Middlebury’s Open Door Clinic, *The Most Costly Journey: Stories of Migrant Farmworkers in Vermont Drawn by New England Cartoonists*.

This summer we published *Turner Family Stories*. Using recordings and photographs from the VFC Archive, five cartoonists illustrated a selection of family and personal stories of Daisy Turner (1883-1987), a native of Grafton, Vermont, and the daughter of the formerly enslaved Alec and Sally Turner, who settled in the town after the Civil War.



Last spring we released *The Most Costly Journey*, a collection of comics created as mental health outreach tools for migrant workers on Vermont dairy farms. Drawn by a diverse group of cartoonists from interviews with farm workers by Clinic staff and volunteers, *The Most Costly Journey* gives readers insight into the challenges faced by these vulnerable people who are vital to creating the food we eat.

Bridging Communities to Classrooms

This past year demanded adaptation and resilience from Vermont educators, students, families and communities.

Our education staff quickly realized that our *Listening in Place* project—with its focus on engaged listening as a way of maintaining connections between people—provided a template for how to we could support the needs of educators and students during the pandemic.



Remote interviewing and podcast production became ways for young people to bridge distance and isolation and strengthen relationships with their worlds. In response to the realities of Covid-19, staff found inspiration for new approaches to storytelling and archiving that make space for young people to record and preserve their stories and experiences.

“Listening in Place opened opportunities for students to practice active listening skills, explore identity and develop empathy, find creative outlets through sound, and connect as a community.”

—Sarah Keener, Librarian & Tech Integrationist, Hazen Union School

FY21 ACTUAL RESULTS (PRE-AUDIT) ORDINARY INCOME/EXPENSE

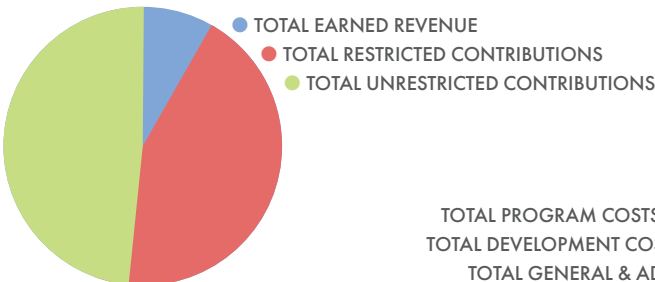
INCOME

TOTAL EARNED REVENUE	\$49,476	8%
TOTAL RESTRICTED CONTRIBUTIONS	\$257,385	43%
TOTAL UNRESTRICTED CONTRIBUTIONS	\$287,485	48%
TOTAL INCOME	\$594,346	100%

EXPENSE

TOTAL PROGRAMMING COSTS	\$424,341	73%
TOTAL FUNDRAISING/DEVELOPMENT COSTS	\$87,193	15%
TOTAL GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS	\$69,755	12%
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$581,289	100%

FY21 REVENUE



FY21 EXPENSES

