




## Report on 2010 Accomplishments

With the addition of FRESH *Energy*, FRESH *Food*, and a program through Vermont Green that places women in green jobs, 2010 was a developmentally critical year for Vermont Works for Women. We grew from 13 to 18 staff members as we expanded and strengthened our program offerings, and our programs were featured as models of best practice in national webinars sponsored by the US Department of Labor, presentations at the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Affairs, and by the National Girls' Collaborative (a project of the National Science Foundation). At the same time we bolstered our administrative capacity, better-equipping us to respond to the varied challenges that accompany growth. **We thank our many donors, funders, partners and friends for supporting our work this year!**

Key program statistics were encouraging and strong. At year's end:

- **The recidivism rate for women in our prison-based training program was .06%** -- one-half of one percent -- at a time when the state's annual rate for women was 29% and the annual cost of incarceration had reached \$75,000 a year.
- **75% of the women who participated in Step Up to Law Enforcement are working with the Department of Corrections, policing or other law enforcement related agencies.** This, at a time when women comprise only 11% of the nation's uniformed police officers.
- **63% of the women in our Transitional Jobs program (women who have limited or unsuccessful job histories) successfully entered and stayed in the workforce** – a statistic that, in this particular economic climate, is nearly 20 percentage points higher than the national average for such programs.

### Girls' Program Highlights



**Rosie's Girls**, our three-week trades exploration camp for early adolescent girls, encourages participants to develop and strengthen their capacities and confidence and helps them expand their perception of the range of educational and career options that are attainable. In 2010, the program served 110 girls in Vermont through camps in Essex Junction, Barre, Middlebury, Bennington, Rutland, Manchester, and Brattleboro. Comments from the campers about their experience at Rosie's Girls last summer ranged from "*I can do anything if I set my mind to it*" to "*It was awesome. Done. Period. End of story.*"

In 2011 we will add an eighth camp in St. Albans. Since the program's inception in 2000, we have served over 1600 girls in Vermont and nationally. Our replication sites include Santa Monica, and Richmond, CA; Cincinnati, Cleveland and Lorain, OH; Orangeburg, SC; and – for the first time in 2011 – the Emma Willard School in Troy, NY.

**Women Can Do** drew over 300 participants to the campus of Vermont Technical College in October. High school aged girls from across Vermont and parts of New Hampshire participated in 37 different workshops, interacted with dozens of women working in nontraditional fields, and engaged in hands-on learning experiences through an exposition of tools and techniques – all designed to encourage their interest in taking technical courses, enrolling at technical high schools, and considering nontraditional careers.

- 86% of participants reported that they now know more about careers in trades and technology than they did before they came to the Women Can Do conference.
- 86% said that by attending Women Can Do, her ideas of what she can do have expanded.



We look forward to welcoming **Girls Move Mountains** to the VWW family this coming summer. The prospect of merging with GMM (a Montpelier-based organization that offers adventure-based experiential programs for girls) required significant time and attention in the latter half of 2010 and culminated in a final decision by the VWW Board in January 2011. Rather than competing for finite resources in our small state, together we will be able to focus our energies on building a robust and comprehensive girls' program division at VWW—one that has a powerful and far-reaching impact, beyond what either organization could accomplish on its own. Together we can leverage resources, expertise, geographic coverage, and programmatic offerings to greatly magnify the impact of our work with girls and women in Vermont. (See additional information about GMM on page 5.)

## Women's Program Highlights

The **Transitional Jobs Program (TJ)**, a work-readiness and employment training program designed for women transitioning from incarceration or from state assistance into the workforce, expanded in 2010 to serve Central Vermont as well as Chittenden County. TJ combines classroom training and temporary part-time work with a local employer. Employment skills are taught through activity-based instruction with role playing, modeling, guest speakers and individually designed instruction where necessary. Referrals are made for specific participant needs. The program coordinators "case manage" each participant with the combination of group and individual work. The goal of the program is for participants to transition to full time, permanent employment over time.

### TJ PROGRAM STATISTICS (JULY 2009-DECEMBER 2010)

Number Served	63
Percentage Unemployed at the start of program	100%
Percentage with a criminal record	93%
Percentage on Public Assistance	100%
Percentage Placed in Employment	63%
Recidivism Rate	2% (the state recidivism rate for women released from 1997 to 2006 was 30.5% within the first year of release)

**Participant Profile:** Ashley, who originally came to VWW homeless and living at the COTS shelter with her two young children, applied for TJ in November 2009. During the time she was working with us, she maxed out her time at the shelter, started hotel and couch surfing, and made the difficult decision to have her older child live with her mother until she could find stable housing. While in our program, we helped her secure a subsidized, temporary position with NeighborKeepers for six months, all the while assisting her with both apartment and permanent employment searches. After her graduation from our program and the end of her transitional job, we continued to support Ashley. In mid November 2010, she was offered a full-time position paying \$11.38 an hour with benefits at a prominent Burlington area nonprofit and soon after found housing for herself and both children.





Since 2001, VWW has offered a year-round construction and job skills training program for incarcerated women. Currently housed at Northwest State Correctional Facility in Swanton, VT, the **Modular Home Building program** offers training in carpentry, electrical wiring, plumbing, weatherization and roofing as participants work to build modular homes from the ground up. In 2010, the program took on contract work for the Agency of Transportation, constructing information kiosks for Visitor Centers around the state. The program combines these technical building skills with employability skills such as goal-setting, problem solving, communication and teamwork – all help women identify their strengths and become more prepared for their job search and success upon release.

### MOD HOME PROGRAM STATISTICS (FY2010 AND FY2011)

<b>Number Served (and completed 4 or more weeks of the program)</b>	28
<b>Recidivism Rate</b>	Less than 1% (as compared to state first-year average of 29%)
<b>Percentage Employed Upon Release (of those currently eligible for work)</b>	82%
<b>Certifications Offered</b>	Basic Construction Safety Introduction to Construction Math Introduction to Hand Tools Introduction to Power Tools Introduction to Blueprints Orientation to the Trade (NCCER) Woodbuilding Materials, Fasteners and Adhesives (NCCER)

**Participant Profile:** Lisa joined the Mod Home crew with experience in residential and commercial painting. She expressed a desire to start her own company, but lacked the self-esteem and confidence to strike out on her own. Prior to her release, VWW staff helped her find additional community support to help translate her ideas into a business plan. Once back in the community, she started her own business - in partnership with her sister - finding steady work and making an average of \$15/hour. According to Lisa, *“The work at the Mod Home program helped me to stay focused and think of the future, as well as keep me in shape and learn more of the building trade. The support from all the staff at VWW has been what I needed to feel good about myself, so that I have the confidence it takes to move forward. Everything I have experienced at and from VWW has made me a better person and that helps me to be proactive in the community.”*

**Step Up to Law Enforcement (SULE)**, a nine-week, pre-Academy training program to prepare qualified female candidates for careers in policing and corrections, is the first pre-Academy, enforcement education and training program for women in the United States. The program represents a unique collaboration between law enforcement agencies and Vermont Works for Women. This intensive and comprehensive program offers participants:

- Physical fitness training and testing which mirrors the Police Academy entrance requirements.
- Instruction in law enforcement related topics such as firearms, use of force and advanced communications techniques.
- Job readiness skills specifically tailored for law enforcement such as CPR, first aid, self-defense and resume/cover letter/ interview preparation.

Additionally, program graduates receive ongoing one-on-one support from VWW in the form of phone calls, emails, and personal meetings. VWW maintains an online Job Bank which lists law enforcement jobs currently under recruitment. Program graduates who are hired are contacted periodically to support retention and career building.

## STEP UP TO LAW ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS (2010)

Number Served	8
Percent Graduated	100%
Percent Unemployed at the start of program	25%
Percent on Public Assistance	13%
Percent Working with DOC, police agencies, or other law enforcement related agency	75%
Additional Number Currently in Police Hiring Process	2

**Participant Profile:** Katy was a 24 year old mother of two children who was working 10-15 hrs/week as a cleaner for a health center. Though she had been working multiple jobs since she was 16, she had never had benefits and was ready for a career. She saw our ad for SULE in 2004, but was too young to apply at the time. She didn't forget about the program and applied in 2010. She was a diligent student, never missing a class and doing all assigned homework on time and thoroughly.

Katy passed both the written and physical entrance requirements for policing while still in the course and identified Montpelier as her agency of choice. While that department did not have any open officer positions, they did advertise for a dispatch position and she knew that would be an excellent stepping stone toward her dream to be a police officer. She was hired at \$15.29/hour and began receiving benefits for the first time in her life. While waiting for an officer position to open up, Katy has made an impression. According to one MPD colleague, *"The response to Katy has been a loud WOW! She has really amazed everyone at MPD and my hunch would be that she is quickly headed to becoming a police officer. Frankly I don't believe she would have had the drive and direction without SULE."*

## FRESH Energy

Beginning in 2007, VWW began to explore program options that would address the following objectives: to provide meaningful, year-round training for economically vulnerable women in a field which offers significant employment opportunity; to sustain operations chiefly through earned income; and to reduce our risk by partnering with others whose skills complement our own or who can generate demand for our work. A year ago we launched FRESH Energy, a social enterprise that trains women for efficiency and renewable energy careers where there is great opportunity and too little diversity.

In its first year, in partnership with JA Morrissey Construction and AllEarth Renewables, FRESH Energy installed 39 solar trackers, renovated 63 units of mixed-income housing at Burlington's Northgate Apartments, and served as a regular subcontractor for CVOEO's weatherization program. Our team leader is BPI-certified and performs regular energy audits. FRESH Energy has been recognized as the state's first certified weatherization technician apprenticeship program.



## New in 2011 **FRESH Food**

With seed funding for equipment and planning, VWW launched *FRESH Food*, a sustainable culinary business, in January, offering the dual benefits of providing transitional job opportunities for women entering the workforce and enabling more children in Burlington area daycare centers to access nutritious meals funded through federal subsidies for centers serving low-income families.



*FRESH Food*, based out of the O'Brien Community Center kitchen, serves women who have limited or unsuccessful work histories, or who are returning to the community from incarceration and face many barriers to employment. As an extension of VWW's Transitional Jobs program, *FRESH Food* provides program participants who need more intensive services a supervised work experience before moving into jobs with private sector employers. Participants learn basic workplace and food service skills, including fundamental food safety and sanitation, knife skills, operation of food service equipment, and skills relating to the operation's management (ordering and managing inventory, bookkeeping, and customer relations).

Through a contract with Champlain Valley Head Start, *FRESH Food* currently prepares 30 breakfasts and 150 lunches each weekday for four childcare centers in Burlington. And through a unique partnership with Chiuho Duval, Chef/Owner of A Single Pebble in Burlington, *FRESH Food* crew members are producing the restaurant's signature pork dumplings. Reports from the crew's two trainees indicate high levels of satisfaction with the training experience and an increased positive outlook for the future.

In just two months, feedback from Champlain Valley Head Start has been enthusiastic. One parent commented, *"My kids go to Robin's Nest Children's Center and has recently been receiving lunch from the Fresh Food program. I just wanted to tell you how amazing the lunches are! Please send my thanks to the people who are creating such fun, interesting and healthy food for my kids. They can't stop telling me how every day they are in the "clean plate club!" As a busy mom who works hard to provide nutritious food for my kids, it's really great to know that they are getting a great, healthy lunch at school."*

### **Vermont Works for Women and Girls Move Mountains Joining Forces**

Girls Move Mountains is a Vermont organization dedicated to nurturing girls' innate capacity for confidence, courage, and leadership through outdoor adventure-based experiential education. Summer and school year programs include Dirt Divas (mountain biking), rock climbing, and multi-sport programs—all intentionally designed to support girls to discover and realize their full potential, as individuals and as community members.

Girls Move Mountains' programs are designed to cultivate confidence, courage, and leadership through outdoor adventure and a supportive environment. Programs combine a dynamic staff of positive female role models, technical skill building, trail rides, bicycle mechanics, environmental stewardship, community building, inner reflection, creative arts activities, and curriculum on subjects such as media literacy, gender identity, body image, and leadership. Program activities emphasize building physical, social, and emotional skills that will serve girls in their everyday lives.

#### **GIRLS MOVE MOUNTAINS PROGRAM STATISTICS (2010)**

<b>Number of programs and clinics offered</b>	15
<b>Number of girls served</b>	115
<b>Percentage of participants qualified for free/reduced lunch</b>	45%
<b>New Programs offered</b>	Rock Climbing Overnight Leadership Back Country Skiing for Women School-Year Multi-Sport

# HADESTOWN

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