

CENTRAL VERMONT ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

~~~Local Partnerships in Learning~~~

Serving Washington, Lamoille, and Orange Counties

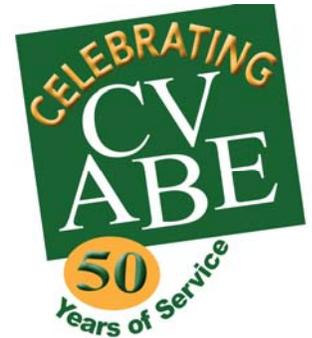


NEWSLETTER · FALL 2015

## CVABE Celebrates its 50th Year of Service

### Did you know that ..... ?

- CVABE's current Executive Director has been on staff since 1972.
- In 1973 CVABE began to organize, train and support cadres of volunteers. Volunteers have been an integral part of CVABE's philosophy and operations since the very early years of our history.
- From 1965-1970 traditional night school classes were offered to adults around the central Vermont region. It doesn't seem possible that CVABE has been around since 1965!
- By 1970 the need for individualized instruction and home-based services was recognized by central Vermont teachers.
- In 1972 the first two home tutors were hired to work with students in five towns in Washington and Orange counties. **(AND WHO WERE THOSE FIRST TWO TUTORS? Find out in the next newsletter.)**
- CVABE's local learning center sites expanded from the first site in Barre to include:
  - Morrisville in 1980
  - Waterbury in 1982
  - Randolph in 1983
  - Bradford in 1984



Plans are underway for a grand 50<sup>th</sup> year celebration at the **Vermont State House next June 22<sup>nd</sup> from 6-8 pm. How appropriate to culminate the celebration of CVABE's GOLDEN anniversary under the GOLDEN dome!**

**You are invited! Please save the date—June 22, 2016, 6-8 pm—on your calendars.**

In our next newsletter we'll offer more information on that upcoming big night at the State House and more highlights from the CVABE's 50 year history time line. Stay tuned.

## Happy Golden Anniversary to CVABE!

- ***In This Issue:***
- Ray Fratus Receives His Diploma
- New Opportunities for the Life Skills Class
- Nhi's Citizenship
- A Musical Interlude
- Steven Freihofner Accepts Award
- New Opportunities Ahead for Sarah Braun Hamilton
- Financial Literacy Focus



*Ray receives his Certificate of Achievement from Morrisville teacher, Charlotte Bill.*

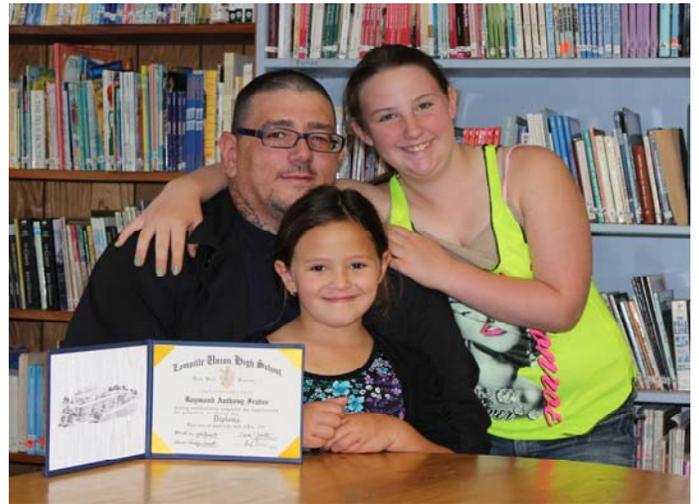
## Ray Fratus receives his diploma

When Ray Fratus first walked in the door of CVABE's Morrisville Learning Center in October 2013, he was extremely nervous at the thought of going back to school, but he'd made up his mind. He was determined to earn his high school diploma.

At the learning center, Ray worked hard to improve his math and writing skills so he could qualify for CVABE's High School Completion Program (HSCP). He is a stay-at-home dad whose wife works outside the home, and their children took great delight in seeing their dad doing lots of homework. That homework paid off. Ray improved his

math and writing skills enough to begin the HSCP, and this past summer he earned his 2015 Lamoille Union High School diploma.

Ray is very committed to his children's education. He and his wife read to them every evening, and Ray is now better able to help them with their homework. When his children are old enough, Ray would like to get a job in the culinary field. With his improved academics and high school diploma, new opportunities will be available to him. Meanwhile, he's enjoying cooking meals and caring for his family, as well as being a great role model for his children on the value of education.



*Ray's children attended the graduation party and showed pride in their dad's good work.*



*Life Skills class students taste and compare flavors of various fruits.*

## New Appliances Offer Learning Opportunities for the Life Skills Class

The Barre Learning Center has some new additions: a brand new stove with oven and some cooking dishes and utensils made possible through a grant from The Agnes M. Lindsay Trust. These additions, along with a new refrigerator, now make it possible to incorporate cooking into students' learning plans. The topic of food is full of opportunities for students to explore basic math, nutrition, new foods, and the history of food.

As part of her weekly Life Skills class in Barre, volunteer Susan Pirie is incorporating lots of culinary fun into the curriculum.

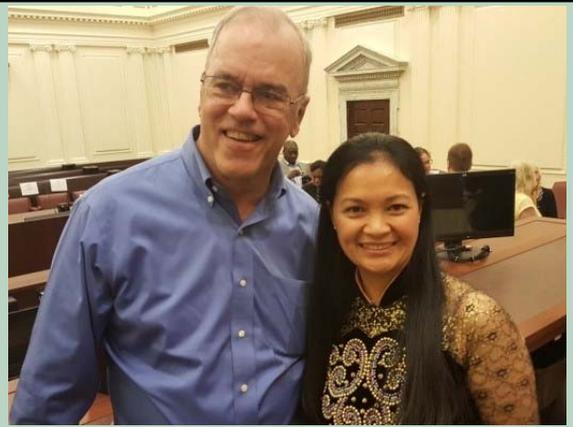
One week the class made and enjoyed three versions of grilled cheese sandwiches. Another week the group prepared a simple roasted vegetable recipe with many variations. Making a simple garlic pasta dish was another lesson. Cutting, tasting and comparing fruits was yet another activity. In addition to cooking, students explore a variety of related topics in the Life Skills class such as recycling, measuring, sensible shopping techniques, and more. The possibilities are endless for this class.



## NHI VO EARNS CITIZENSHIP

On August 11, 2015 CVABE student Nhi Vo was sworn in as a U.S. citizen at the Rutland District Court. Many of Nhi's family and friends attended the ceremony, including Nhi's CVABE teacher, Sarah Braun Hamilton who said, "Nhi has worked hard every day to get to this point. I am so proud of her. She's such an asset to our community, and America is very lucky to have her as a citizen."

Born in Viet Nam, Nhi came to the U.S. in 2009. She first worked with Sarah to attain her license as an esthetician, practiced nail and skin care in a Montpelier salon, and last year, together with her business partner, Cindy Pirtle, opened CynNhi Salon on East State Street in Montpelier.



*Nhi with CVABE volunteer, VT State Representative, Warren Kitzmiller.*

Nhi credits CVABE volunteer, State Representative Warren Kitzmiller with his patience and persistence in helping her to prepare for the naturalization exam, which she passed in June, 2015. Warren says, "Helping Nhi study for her citizenship exam was pure pleasure. She worked very hard, and aced her test! We had a lot of fun and I am glad for the opportunity to make a new friend." Nhi deserves much credit too, as she found the necessary time to study for the exam, while simultaneously facing the challenges of starting and maintaining her business. Now, Nhi is eager to use her U.S. passport to visit her new granddaughter in Italy.

Nhi has set some new goals. Next steps for her are to continue to develop her professional skills and improve her English. She is starting to prepare for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), which she intends to pass in order to expand her options for higher education in the United States. She has also recently begun to work on her personal physical fitness, which is so important to her in her challenging and physical work as an esthetician. Achieving and setting new goals seems to be a way of life for Nhi.

When asked to offer advice to other ELL (English Language Learner) students, Nhi says, "Work harder and learn harder and you will get what you want." Congratulations to Nhi on her hard work and accomplishments and for proving herself to be a lifelong learner!



*Nhi and CVABE teacher, Sarah Braun Hamilton*



## A MUSICAL INTERLUDE

Music is one of Kelsey Brandt's passions. One of her career goals is to, "...either light up Broadway or conduct a class of students that could get there."

As part of her High School Completion Graduation Education Plan, Kelsey has dedicated herself to learning to play the piano in order to work towards that goal. Private piano teacher, Colleen Hewitt, says she enjoys working with Kelsey and that she is an excellent student. Kelsey and Colleen meet for their weekly piano lesson at the Hedding Methodist Church, conveniently located across the street from the Barre Learning Center.



*Kelsey Brandt (left) enjoys her weekly piano lesson with private piano teacher, Colleen Hewitt.*

## **CVABE Volunteer Steven Freihofner Wins Community Service Award**

We are pleased and proud to announce that Steven Freihofner, a CVABE volunteer for over three years, was selected as one of the recipients of the 34th Annual Community Service Recognition Awards of the Barre Joint Service Clubs (Kiwanis, Lions, and Rotary). The award is given each year honoring individuals "for making the greater Barre area a better place to live." Steve was joined by four other recipients this year and is now one of over 200 honorees over the last 34 years of the award's existence.



Around the time of Steve's retirement from a twenty-six year career as Attorney for the Vermont Department of Labor, he completed the prestigious Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) through Cambridge University. He was eager to put his new skills to work, became a volunteer at CVABE, and almost immediately began working with English language learners in both Barre and Montpelier.

As he worked more closely with this population, his interest grew, and now, nearly three years later, Steve continues to research teaching methods and curriculum options for his students. He has taken on more and more classes and one-on-one student assignments and can often be found in the Barre and Montpelier learning centers more than fifteen hours per week. He has also conducted workshops for the CVABE staff and other volunteers on best practices and techniques for working with English language learners.

Steve's community involvement does not stop with CVABE. He is currently the Woodbury Town Moderator, a member of the Woodbury Planning Commission and the Hazen Union High School Board. His past community involvement has included stints on the Woodbury Select board, Zoning Board, Board of Listers and the Hardwick Community Cable Television Board.

CVABE is extremely proud of Steve for this award and for his tireless efforts to improve the lives of his students. In the words of one of his students, "he is passionate about his work. The special thing I notice about him is his humanity. He likes other human beings... He is more than just a teacher to me, he is a friend and we spend time exchanging life experience."

Steve is a busy person and we are grateful he gives so much of his time to CVABE's students.

## **New Opportunities Ahead for Sarah Braun Hamilton**



Sarah Braun Hamilton has moved on to a new job at Migrant Worker Education Program where she will be coordinating educational services for out-of-school migrant youth throughout Vermont. Sarah says, "While I am excited about my new opportunity, I am very sad about this transition. I want you to know how deeply I value the work that we have done together, and the work that I know you will continue to do to advance the goals of full literacy in our communities."

We know Sarah will continue to do important work of the highest quality wherever she goes.

Sarah promises to continue her involvement with CVABE in a volunteer capacity. Also, there may well be opportunities for professional collaboration between Sarah, in her new position, and CVABE staff.



## Teaching Students Essential Financial Skills



When it comes to personal finance, many adults have questions and concerns. CVABE students express a wide variety of financial concerns, such as:

- ◆ "I need to buy a car and have no credit. How do I build a good credit record?"
- ◆ "I hope to start my own farming business some day and need to learn about credit and mortgages."
- ◆ "I don't have a bank account and need help with budgeting."

As CVABE students learn personal financial skills, they improve their ability to reach goals to lead more successful lives. This is why CVABE incorporates financial literacy education into all of our educational programs.



*Wendy Rea, Community Banking Officer at Northfield Savings Bank, provided a Financial Literacy workshop at the Montpelier Learning Center. She is shown here with CVABE student Ashia Copeland.*



*Erin Broe Swafford, Personal Banker at Merchants Bank, provides financial literacy guidance to CVABE student Megan Scribner at the Waterbury Learning Center.*

CVABE offers one-to-one instruction and group workshops on a variety of financial literacy topics, tailored to address our students' financial questions, challenges, and goals. Our financial literacy instruction is often led by community volunteers who are professionals at local banks and credit unions. Based upon student needs, financial literacy topics include: budgeting and saving; credit card matters (interest, finance fees, overcoming debt); building and restoring one's credit score; personal banking, and more.

"We are so fortunate to have talented and caring financial professionals working with our students in this way," said Carol Shults-Perkins, CVABE's Executive Director. "They ask about our students' specific needs and teach practical financial information that they can use to better their life circumstances."



*Sandra Poczobut, Member Services Representative at Granite Hills Credit Union, recently led a workshop on responsible use of credit cards to a group of eleven CVABE students in Barre.*

Financial literacy instruction is available to every CVABE student, regardless of their age, background, or learning level. We tailor instruction to adults learning at varied literacy levels, and we assist immigrant and refugee students in understanding personal finance here in America.



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---Local Partnerships in Learning---

Serving Washington, Lamoille and Orange Counties

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U.S. Postage PAID  
Permit No. 61  
Montpelier, VT

Barre Learning Center  
(and Main Office)  
46 Washington St. - Ste. 100  
Barre, VT 05641



## CENTRAL VERMONT ADULT BASIC EDUCATION, INC.

CVABE has learning centers throughout the three-county region. Please call your local learning center for more information about student services or volunteer opportunities. You can email us at [info@cvabe.org](mailto:info@cvabe.org) or visit our website at [www.cvabe.org](http://www.cvabe.org).



### Learning Centers

#### Washington County

**Barre Learning Center  
(and Main Office)**  
46 Washington St. - Ste. 100  
Barre, VT 05641  
(802) 476-4588

#### **Montpelier Learning Center**

100 State St. - Ste. 3  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
(802) 223-3403

#### **Waterbury Learning Center**

141 South Main St. - Ste. 8  
Waterbury, VT 05676  
(802) 244-8765

#### Orange County

**Bradford Learning Center**  
24 Barton St. - Ste. 1  
PO Box 917  
Bradford, VT 05033  
(802) 222-3282

#### **Randolph Learning Center**

10 South Main St.  
PO Box 84  
Randolph, VT 05060  
(802) 728-4492

#### Lamoille County

**Morrisville Learning Center**  
52 Portland St. - 2nd Fl.  
PO Box 478  
Morrisville, VT 05661  
(802) 888-5531

### Programs & Services

- Basic Skills: Reading, Writing, Math, Computer Literacy
- English Language Learning; Preparation for U.S. Citizenship
- High School Diploma
- Preparation for GED and GED testing
- Academic skill readiness for work, technical training, college
- Volunteer opportunities for community service

In our learning centers, community locations, workplaces and homes, CVABE teachers and volunteers work with adults and teens to meet their basic education needs. All tutoring and classes are free to the student.

We believe that a person who is literate has the essential key for self-understanding and for full and active membership in the world. Ours is a two-part strategy for the realization of full literacy:

1. Providing basic education for adults and teens and
2. Involving the entire community so that the hopes and efforts of our students will be championed every step of the way.