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# THE- ADVOCATE- Spring 2024

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Friends,

Since stepping into the role of Executive Director on January 1st, it has been both an honor and a privilege to join SEVCA as we embark on our next chapter. I am thrilled to share with you our annual impact report, highlighting the remarkable achievements and transformative initiatives undertaken by our agency in the past year.

Serving the vibrant communities of Windsor and Windham Counties in southeastern Vermont, our agency operates at the intersection of compassion and innovation, with a commitment to empowering individuals and families.

From spearheading weatherization projects that promote energy efficiency and sustainability, to nurturing the potential of our youngest learners through Head Start programs, to providing essential family support services, and fostering local entrepreneurship through micro business development, our agency's multifaceted approach to community development continues to make a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve.

With your continued support, we can build a future where every individual and family in our community has the opportunity to thrive and prosper. I hope you will make a gift today.

Sincerely,  
*Joshua Davis*  
Executive Director

## DONATE NOW!

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#### 1. Head Start Partners help families to reach their dreams.

**Head Start** provides a range supports for families of young children that help them to thrive. Just as teachers work with children to achieve academic and developmental goals, so do Family Partners when they join with families who aspire to improve their parenting skills, reach educational goals or enhance their family's economic outlook.

Family Partners are a regular piece of the Head Start experience. They organize monthly parent meetings around topics parents interested in, provide numerous resources for families including information about going to back to school, finding childcare, finding a job, budgeting, fuel assistance, weatherization and home ownership resources.

Family Partners also participate at many tables in our community sharing information about Head Start and advocating for the needs of families with young children and early educators. They also take the lead on recruitment activities for the Head Start program including attending community events like Week of the Young Child and Veggie Van-Go, visiting medical and dental practices, designing flyers/posters and meeting with community organizations to share recruitment information.

Lindsay DeCell, a Family Partner at Pine Street Preschool, shared her account of working with the Benoit Family- Alec, Hannah, Oliver and James who have been enmeshed with SEVCA's Head Start program for several years and recently reached their major goal of homeownership.

The story begins in 2020 when Hannah and Alec enrolled Oliver in the Head Start program at Pine Street Preschool. At the time, Alec was working as a full-time para educator in the Springfield School District and Hannah was at home with a new baby. Oliver came into the Head Start program at a very challenging time for parents and schools- the thick of COVID-19. Alec stated "We really loved how all of the adults



worked with the kids and saw what was best for our son. Their communication with us was also superb.” After such a good experience with Pine Street they knew they would be coming back when baby James was old enough.

In the spring of 2023, the family reached out Lindsay, to enroll James into the program. By now Hannah was working a second-shift job so that each parent could be available for the children. By the September Parent Orientation Lindsay found out that Alec was taking a break from being a Para Educator and was looking for a new work opportunity. She informed Alec about a job opening as the Safety and Maintenance Coordinator for SEVCA’s Head Start centers. The fit proved to be a good one, and within a couple weeks Alec was hired.

During the year Family Partners complete at least two home visits with each family and work with them on goal setting. During a home visit in December, Lindsay learned that Hannah and Alec wanted to buy the house that they have been renting for seven years from Alec’s sister. Lindsay set the family up with resources and helped them figure out what the official first steps were for buying a home. As the path for the family became clearer, the Benois became more motivated to move forward on achieving their goal. Alec and Hannah contacted a mortgage broker and started to move forward.

On their journey to home ownership, they hit many roadblocks but with supporters like Lindsay kept solving problems and pushing through. On April 5th, 2024, the Benoit family became the proud owners of their first home!



## 2: Documentary Film “Ramen Day – The Vermont Everyone Eats Story” Premieres in Montpelier

**Keep an eye out for more  
information to come!**

On April 16, SEVCA hosted the premiere of the documentary film **“Ramen Day – The Vermont Everyone Eats Story”** in partnership with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) and documentarian Corey Hendrickson at the Capitol Showcase Cinema in Montpelier.

**“Ramen Day”** tells the story of Vermonters coming together to create program that responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by preparing and distributing locally sourced meals made from local ingredients – as well as sharing

the stories of many who benefitted from these meals. The Vermont Everyone Eats program ran for 34 months from August of 2020 until March 31 of 2023. The program fed more than 3.9 million meals to Vermonters while bringing in more than 70 million

dollars to the Vermont economy on top of the 49 million provided for the program by the governor, legislature, and Federal resources.

SEVCA Executive Director Josh Davis introduced the film with Gary Holloway from ACCD and Hendrickson. The showing was followed by a question-and-answer panel featuring Hendrickson, Holloway, SEVCA Special Projects Director Kathleen Devlin, Amanda Witman of VEE, Ben Rose of Vermont Emergency Management, and Chris Meyer of VEE/SEVCA.

“My intention with ***"Ramen Day"*** is to inspire audiences to recognize the power of collective action in addressing societal challenges and to understand the unique value of utilizing prepared meals to combat food insecurity. I hope viewers will be moved to support similar programs in their own communities and advocate for a more equitable and sustainable food system” says the film’s director Corey Hendrickson.

A series of screenings of ***"Ramen Day"*** will be scheduled all around Vermont. Watch **SEVCA's website** for the dates and locations of these shows. A trailer from the film can be viewed **HERE**.

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### 3: After a successful tax season, VITA help still available

**The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA)** has been in existence for 50 years, offering free tax help to people who cannot afford professional assistance. Volunteers come from all backgrounds and undergo a comprehensive training program. Tax preparers must pass annual certifying exams to prove their understanding of relevant tax laws and proficiency of e-filing and tax preparation methods using IRS-approved software.



This year SEVCA’s 15 VITA volunteers completed **over 700** returns for local taxpayers from locations throughout Windham and Windsor counties. SEVCA will still provide services to qualified taxpayers after April 15, 2024.

If you would like to make an appointment, call or text **Emily Strasser** at 802-428-3032, or email **[estrasser@sevca.org](mailto:estrasser@sevca.org)**.

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### 4: Need Help putting Food on the table? Check out 3Squares VT!



3SquaresVT is a program that helps you to buy food.

3SquaresVT provides money each month to stretch food budgets. Over 70,000 Vermonters get benefits every month but many more qualify. Contact SEVCA's **Family Services** to see if you qualify or visit **Vermont Food Help**

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## 5: Employment Opportunities at SEVCA.

More information about these openings can be found on the [Careers page at SEVCA.org](#).

### Administration

- **Finance Director** SEVCA is currently seeking a Finance Director to provide agency-wide administrative services and oversight in the areas of financial and grant management, personnel and human resource management, procurement and other business functions in compliance with all applicable fiscal, administrative, corporate, legal, funding and regulatory requirements, and to ensure that SEVCA maintains and enhances its capacity to achieve its mission. Full-time position. Salary: \$80,000 – \$90,000 annually based on experience. Benefits.

**Contact:** Please send resume and letter of interest to

**Tammie Putnam Executive Assistant:** [tputnam@sevca.org](mailto:tputnam@sevca.org)

### Family Services Department

- **Disaster Case Manager- Northern Windham and Windsor County** SEVCA is currently seeking a Disaster Case Manager to work directly with people impacted by the July 2023 flooding. The ideal candidate will have a keen interest in supporting their communities to recover from the flood. Case managers will partner with disaster survivors to assess and address unmet needs, identify available resources, and support their financial, physical, emotional well-being. This two-year program is funded by FEMA in partnership with the State of Vermont. Full-time position. Salary: \$43,000.00 - \$45,000.00 per year, Benefits.

**Contact:** **Pat Burke, Director of Family Services:** [pburke@sevca.org](mailto:pburke@sevca.org)

### Economic Development Program

- **Financial & Energy Coach - Lead** SEVCA is currently seeking a Financial & Energy Coach – Lead to work directly with people to increase their financial well-being and self-sufficiency via credit building, debt reduction, savings strategies, and budgeting. The ideal candidate will have a keen interest in supporting people to engage in education and activities that will enable them to become more financially self-sufficient as well as accessing available resources that will help them to save money and improve the energy efficiency of their homes and vehicles. Full-time position. Flexible schedule including some evenings and weekends. \$24.04/hour 40 hours/week non-exempt.

**Contact:** **Kathleen Devlin, Director of Special Projects:** [kdevlin@sevca.org](mailto:kdevlin@sevca.org)

### Head Start:

- **Child Care Services Coordinator (CCSC)** is responsible for the overall planning and implementation of curriculum and classroom operations for SEVCA's childcare programs, during non-Head Start weeks (This would include vacation weeks and summer months). The CCSC will be responsible for growing the childcare program to the other Head Start centers. The CCSC will support children and families needing the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) in completion of the application and maintaining certificates for payment of tuition. The CCSC will have an office at both Chester (Chester Community Preschool) and Springfield (Pine Street Preschool), but will travel to other classrooms as needed, to provide support, guidance and covering staff who are absent when needed.

- **Food Service Provider for Pine Street Preschool** Seeking a motivated individual to prepare meals for a large group of preschoolers. Food Service Providers will be responsible for meal prep, serving meals on time, kitchen clean-up; dishes, emptying garbage daily, cleaning appliances, cleaning cupboards/drawers, etc. Food Service Providers are also responsible for shopping, putting groceries away and paperwork. Experience planning, preparing and serving meals to large groups requires, and familiarity with Head Start Performance Standards and guidelines of the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and State of Vermont Early Childhood Program Licensing Regulations are very desirable.

**Contact:** [Lori Canfield, Head Start Director: lcanfield@sevca.org](mailto:lori.canfield@sevca.org)

### **Weatherization**

- **Crew Tech** Join the Weatherization Team for a career in energy conservation, installing energy-saving measures in homes of low-income residents. Year-round work. Full-time, 4-day week, 10-hour days. Excellent benefits; chance for advancement. Ideal candidate will have construction and/or building science knowledge, dependability, problem-solving skills. Construction & insulating experience preferred but not required. High school diploma or GED, and valid driver's license required.

**Contact:** [Vic Baisley, vbaisley@sevca.org](mailto:vic.baisley@sevca.org)



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