

# LARAWAY YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

## LARAWAY...

## IT'S ABOUT THE KIDS



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### Board Members

W. Duncan Tingle, *President*  
Carrie Lambert, *Treasurer*  
Paul Dupre  
Stuart Senghas  
Justin Philie  
David Bergh

Greg Stefanski, *Executive Director*

Fall 2008

*Children thrive in a nurturing environment*

### A new facility? A capital opportunity!

We've been reminded by our kids, staff and community partners for years that Laraway is a little space challenged. Growing demand for our School, Foster Care and Backpack services, coupled with increased need for creative supports for kids and families, point to the constraints of our current facilities. Our Board, at their August meeting, authorized Laraway to launch a Capital Campaign, with help from Christine Graham, to purchase a promising property here in Johnson.

We envision a campus, on sprawling farmland, accommodating all programs on one site. We've found a piece of land with space to build environmentally friendly classrooms, workshop space and offices. Easy access to the outdoors allows expansion of our hands-on curriculum including woodworking, gardening and studio arts. The setting provides increased opportunities for kids

and families to engage in healthy outdoor recreation including biking, fishing and hiking.

How does this dream become reality? It requires tapping into two key resources: expert advice and community goodwill. Laraway's Management Team has been consulting with financial, legal, and construction professionals to chart a prudent course. We want to be sure we're pursuing the right project at the right time in the right way.

Your role? Laraway is a great agency due to the dedication of our staff, foster parents and supportive community members. We will be reaching out in the coming months to invite you to join us in this next chapter of Laraway's history of serving kids. Please contact me at (802) 635-2805 x 201 with any questions or if you can help.

**Greg Stefanski, Executive Director**

### Moment in Time: Tail Wagging Community Service

The sun shone brightly on a recent Monday morning at the North Country Animal League. Children participating in Laraway's Backpack Program were walking dogs,



training them to obey simple commands, and helping to tidy up the Morrisville, Vermont, animal shelter.

"It helps the dogs, if you train them. They're more likely to get adopted," commented 11-year-old Jack\*, a program participant.

Amid the cacophony of barking

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## Graduation: Effort and Attitude Matter

Johnson State College Men’s Basketball Coach Michael Osborne was guest speaker at Laraway’s Graduation and Recognition Ceremony held on Wednesday, June 18th.

Osborne coordinates a volunteer program in which JSC varsity basketball players

informally coach and mentor kids from Laraway.

The following excerpt from Osborne’s speech shares words of wisdom offered to Laraway’s 3 graduating seniors and 23 younger students celebrating a year of growth:

“When you work hard and keep a good attitude, even if your goal isn’t met every time, at the end of the day you can rest your head on your pillow with peace of mind, knowing you tried your best. I encourage you to go out in the world and make your own good luck.”

### GRANT ROUND-UP

Thank you to the following entities providing generous support to Laraway

- Lintilhac Foundation
- Green Mountain Fund
- TGIF -- United Way of Lamoille County
- VT Department of Education
- VT Community Garden Network

## Green Mountain Fund: Grant fuels summer fun and learning

Laraway was fortunate to receive a grant from the Green Mountain Fund, administered through the Vermont Community Foundation. Grant monies were designated for recreational opportunities for kids in our programs.

From Frisbees to basketballs, swimming

trunks to slides, it was “Christmas in July” as Laraway was able to purchase items from our longstanding Wish List.

Engaging in healthy play while promoting physical fitness helps our kids develop meaningful, therapeutic relationships with Laraway staff.

A 9-year-old whose family could not afford swim trunks summed it up best: “I could swim all day!”

For more information on Wish List items, contact Katherine at 802-635-2805 x 205 or [Katherines@laraway.org](mailto:Katherines@laraway.org)

## Community Thank You’s

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations for their generous donations:

- Jon and Meghan Reese
- Garrett Electronics, Garland, Texas
- Johnson State College
- Chuck’s Bikes, Morrisville
- Vermont State Parks

*What our kids said about Laraway’s summer program:*

**“I’ve never been on a boat before. This is cool.”**

*Quote from a 14-year-old following an educational tour of Lake Champlain*



## Brian's Story: Tools for Success

Brian\* smiled as he sat outside Laraway School early one summer morning. He adjusted his glasses and offered a friendly handshake. He had twenty minutes before heading to his job at Sears in Morrisville, Vermont. At 16, Brian demonstrates an industriousness his employer appreciates.

Raised in Central Vermont, Brian seems most comfortable in the outdoors.

"I like to ride 4-wheelers, fish, and hunt, especially deer and partridge," Brian observed. "I used to go to deer camp with my dad and uncles when I was a kid. I was thirteen when I started to hunt. I just like being outside in general."

Brian came to Laraway after experiencing difficulty in his school of origin. Four years later, Brian has gained academic and social confidence. He's working on an extended oral history project, conducting interviews and recording stories about his family's deep Vermont roots. Brian's studies at Laraway are complemented by practical work experience in a retail environment.

Asked about his job, Brian said, "I put together washers, dryers, refrigerators...I stock shelves, I carry things out for customers." He's comfortable with a screwdriver in one hand and a detailed equipment manual in the other. Brian is able to apply book knowledge to real-world situations.

"The customers are always usually nice to me," Brian observed. "My boss is great. He lets me take breaks whenever I need them."

"Brian is a very hard worker," commented Barrett Draper, Manager of the Morrisville Sears. "He's opened up a lot and he's easy to have a conversation with."

"When I first came to Laraway I didn't feel really good about it," Brian recalled. "I thought it would be like every other school I attended. I figured I wouldn't accomplish much. I used to never talk to anybody. I was quiet and shy. Now, I talk with everybody."

"Laraway got me into mechanical things—using tools and building things." Reflecting on his future ambitions, Brian offered the following: "I'd like to eventually own my own business, one that teaches people how to build things like old-fashioned furniture."

Laraway's goal is to equip each of the kids we serve with the tools they need to find their success in the world. Brian seems well on his way.



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dogs and mewling kittens, kids in Backpack's Summer Program strengthened their social skills under the careful tutelage of Laraway behavioral interventionists while participating in community service of the tail wagging type.

"Volunteering at the Animal League teaches the kids patience, tolerance and really good social skills," observed Backpack staffer Matt Alden.

Gentle caring offered to pets awaiting new homes was rewarded with a cooling dip in Lake Elmore. Summer at Laraway is about learning. It's also about being a kid and taking advantage of all that Vermont has to offer in fair weather fun. It's also about learning the lessons that animals can teach.

\*Student names changed to protect confidentiality



## MISSION

**Empowering children, youth and families to develop awareness of their abilities and assets to live safe, fulfilling lives.**

### Board Member Profile: Carrie Lambert

*Carrie Lambert, a licensed Certified Public Accountant, owns and operates the public accounting firm of Carrie Lambert & Associates in Morrisville, Vermont. She brings over 20 years of accounting expertise to her role as treasurer of Laraway's Board.*

*Active in the community, Carrie's civic involvement also includes board membership on the*

*Morristown Development Fund and service on the finance committee at Puffer United Methodist Church.*

*Asked why she makes time to serve on Laraway's Board, Carrie offered the following:*

*"Kids are our future. Laraway has developed a reputation of successes in helping troubled youth and I would like to contribute in helping those successes continue."*

**Thank You  
for supporting  
Laraway's work in the  
community!**

**Jingle Nail Run**  
Saturday, December 6th  
In Stowe

Save the date!

### LARAWAY YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

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Laraway is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to identifying and building on the strengths of children and youth with emotional, behavioral and mental health challenges, through alternative education and therapeutic foster care.

