

LARAWAY YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

LARAWAY... IT'S ABOUT THE KIDS



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Summer 2009

Children thrive in a nurturing environment

Time for transitions!

What an exciting time for us at Laraway! We concluded another successful academic year seeing students graduate, reconnect with birth families, prepare for independent living, and learn strategies allowing them to return to and succeed within their public schools.

Our Summer Program---a blending of community service, academic, and therapeutic recreational activities is fully enrolled. This program provides opportunities for positive personal development for kids from our School and Backpack programs. Kids in our foster care program participate in community-based activities, including recreation, job skills development, volunteerism, and family visits.

Laraway is also embarking on its most significant expansion since first opening its doors to young people almost 40 years ago. We are moving very quickly towards a closing date for a farm here in Johnson. This site will provide a state-of-the-art educational campus and innumerable therapeutic recreational activities for our kids and families. Thanks to the diligence

of our design and engineering team, we hope to have construction permits in hand by July 30. We need to raise \$750,000 to secure financing needed to purchase and renovate the house and barn.

We welcome your support to help make our dream a reality. Donations of any amount are encouraged. You can also help by sharing our exciting news with friends, colleagues and neighbors. Please feel free to contact me at (802) 635-2805 x 201 or GregS@Laraway.org. I'm happy and eager to discuss our project with you.

Finally, please join us for a pre-construction **Open House** at our new location at 275 Route 15 East in Johnson on **Thursday, September 17 from 4-7**. Food, games, music and opportunities to learn more about Laraway and the work we do to support children and families will all be part of the event. Hope to see you there---rain or shine! Stay tuned for more details and have a great summer!

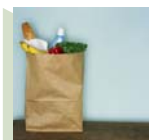
Greg Stefanski, *Executive Director*

Moment in Time

Charlie* volunteers at the Lamoille County Food Share 10 hours per week. He organizes stock, bags food items, and carries clients' groceries out to their cars.

Charlie arrived at Laraway about 2 years ago from an area high school a little shy and a little unsure of what to expect.

"It's more fun here than at my old school," Charlie says. "They do more stuff here."



Laraway affords
Charlie the

opportunity to develop the academic, social and work-ethic skills that will serve him as he works toward his ambition to become a mechanic.

Laraway teacher Rick Aupperlee observed, "Charlie has developed more self-confidence which is great to see."

Lamoille Community Food Share Manager Deb Krempecke said, "Laraway does an impressive job of connecting students with our community...Please accept our thanks for a job well done."

* Name changed to protect confidentiality

Laraway's History Project: Lisa Carrick

Lisa Carrick served on Laraway's Board of Trustees in the late 1990s.

Seasoned by stints as the Executive Director of the Northeastern Family Institute (NFI) and leadership roles at Lamoille County Mental Health, Lisa brought valuable insight on children and youth

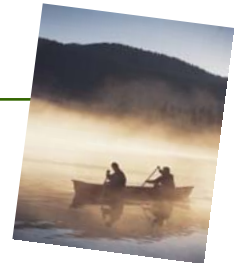
experiencing severe learning and/or behavioral challenges.

"Laraway served kids with mental health diagnoses who were not being served in public schools," Lisa remembers. "It was an exciting time. Laraway was part of a national movement to make programs more therapeutic, less punitive."

"So many of the 'delinquent' kids Laraway served were actually kids with mental health Issues."

Laraway continues its legacy of therapeutic approaches to strengthen, heal, and empower kids to become productive members of the community.

Laraway responds to the needs of at-risk kids and their families by offering innovative strength-based services thru alternative education, therapeutic foster care, and public school based support programs



Community Thank You's

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Blue Prints Etc. | T.J.'s Outdoors |
| VT Campaign to End Childhood Hunger | Susan & Jeff Bond |
| Union Bank | Paul & Mary Dupre |
| North Country Federal Credit Union | Stuart & Alicia Senghas |
| Chittenden Bank | Carrie Lambert |
| | Vermont State Parks |

We appreciate our supporters! If, for some reason, your name was omitted, please contact Katherine Stamper at (802) 635-2805 x 205 KatherineS@Laraway.org



Student Recognition Day!

It was standing room only as 60 friends, family and community members gathered on June 12th to celebrate our students' achievements. One student earned her high school diploma, four are transitioning back to their public high school, and many others were touted for personal strides realized in academic and social growth.

Margo Warden, Director of the First Year Experience at Johnson State College and a former Laraway employee, addressed students and guests in a speech that challenged our kids to aim high and be their very best.



On Teaching Science...learning to swim on their own

Aaron McGee's science class at Laraway took on an interesting twist this year. Aaron's students, in partnership with the Lamoille River Anglers' Association (L.R.A.A.) and the Lamoille County Natural Resources Conservation District (L.C.N.R.C.D.), raised brook trout that were released into Vermont's Gihon River.

The L.R.A.A. bought an aquarium chiller for the class from which 200 baby trout were successfully hatched. The science unit included learning about the life cycle of trout, the importance of being good stewards of the environment, and lessons about the students themselves.

One student created a graph predicting when the trout would hatch. Incubation periods typically range from 44 to 144 days and are dependent on water temperatures. Warm water speeds up the process; cold water lengthens the incubation period.

Students learned that tiny alevins emerge from the eggs. Each alevin has a yoke sac on its underside which serves as a food source. Alevins hovered near the bottom of the tank until their yoke sac was consumed and only then were ready to swim up to the surface as fry. Brook trout become parr when they literally earn their stripes— dark vertical bars on their sides. This coloration allows them to blend in with their surroundings, thus staving off hungry predators. Students learned that these amazing transformations all occur in the first year of life. When brook trout reach maturity they will develop the dazzling red, yellow and orange coloration that rivals the fall colors of maples on our mountainsides.



Kim Komer of the L.C.N.R.C.D. visited the class as a guest speaker. She pointed out the importance of maintaining clean, cold, clear, unpolluted rivers to support the dietary source of the trout. A big part of clean rivers and streams is having good buffer zones that filter pollution and decrease erosion. Students learned they each can have a role in protecting these fragile ecosystems. As a coordinator of the Trees For Streams Program, Kim led our students and staff in

planting trees along the Lamoille River in Cambridge and the Wild Branch in Craftsbury. As a school we planted over 350 trees, bushes, and shrubs that will provide improved habitat for land animals and fish.

It is no small coincidence that several students from Aaron's science class opted to join Laraway's Friday Fishing Club which he facilitates with fellow staffers Walter Wendling and Dave Ward. So far they've cast their lines into the Black, Lamoille, Clyde and Gihon Rivers along with Waterman Brook. They wrapped up the year with an overnight trip to Green River Reservoir followed up by a four-day canoe camping trip to Lake Richardson in Maine's western mountains. Memories lasting a lifetime were created as students caught landlocked salmon, perch and brook trout.

At Laraway, we work to support children and youth by encouraging them to take small steps—academic and social—to swim to the top of the water, look around, assess preparation required, and ultimately, dive into life's opportunities. Brook trout are smaller than other trout species. By incubating, caring for, nurturing and ultimately releasing the trout to the wide open waterway of the Gihon River, students learned transcendent lessons about preparing for adulthood.

Just as trout released to rivers require clean, oxygenated waters to thrive, kids entering our communities need welcoming supports, people who will offer guidance along with just enough freedom for kids to eventually learn to swim on their own.



MISSION

Providing opportunities for children and families to recognize their individual strengths while supporting them to grow and contribute within our communities

Board Member Profile: David Bergh

David Bergh has served on Laraway's Board of Trustees since 2008. He is Dean of Students at Johnson State College. David's academic

research involves studying factors which affect college success among first-generation and low-income students.

"I serve on Laraway's Board because I feel the organization is an incredible community asset," Bergh observes. "It provides needed support to children and youth to help

them realize their own strengths and potential so that they, in turn, can become productive citizens living fulfilling lives."

"This is an exciting time at Laraway, with its move to its new location planned for the near future. It's a great time to learn more about Laraway and to consider how you might support its mission."

Laraway goes GREEN!

Prefer to receive this newsletter via email? Email KatherineS@laraway.org, type GO GREEN in the subject line, and we'll take care of it.
Thanks!

Save the Date!
Laraway Open House
Thursday, Sept. 17th
4:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Food * Fun* Music
Info: Kathy (802) 635-2805 x203

LARAWAY YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

P.O. Box 621
Johnson, VT 05656

Phone: 802-635-2805

Fax: 802-635-7273

E-mail: admin@laraway.org



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.

