

Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF)

Nurturing a love of reading and writing among children throughout New Hampshire and Vermont



CLiF's Year of the Book Begins September 2012



Enthusiastic young readers choose books to take home

We're excited to announce CLiF has created a new children's literacy initiative for the 2012-2013 school year. We call it **Year of the Book!** It will debut in elementary schools in Brownington, Johnson, and Newbury, VT, as well as Berlin, Pittsburg, and Pittsfield, NH.

The six Year of the Book schools were chosen out of a group of 21 excellent applicants. Each school has a significant percentage of students scoring below state standards on reading and writing tests as well as a high number of students who qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Year of the Book will supplement existing children's literacy efforts through a grant of more than \$20,000 worth of literacy programs, support, and books for one school year.

Each Year of the Book recipient school will receive a total of six literacy

programs, such as writing workshops and author visits, brand-new books for school and public libraries, storytelling programs, and mini-grants for teachers to support literacy initiatives in their classrooms. **Every child who participates will also be able to choose ten brand-new books to keep from hundreds of popular titles.**

"The Year of the Book would be a miracle for my classroom," said Sherry Montminy, kindergarten teacher at Brownington Central School in Brownington, VT. *"I have children who have no books at home. I have children who have never been to a library. I have children who don't have stories read to them at home. The Year of the Book could be the catalyst to help change that."*

CLiF modeled Year of the Book after our three-year Community Literacy Awards, which began in September 2011 and enable children and families from three

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northern communities to take part in several CLiF programs and receive brand-new books each year.

"Until recently, CLiF offered programs on an individual basis," said CLiF Program Director Suzanne Loring. *"We hope to have a greater positive impact on children by engaging them more regularly with a variety of programs and literacy support."*

As we've done with our Community Literacy Awards, CLiF will work with a team of professional evaluators throughout the year to measure the impact of Year of the Book. We'll make sure to keep our supporters informed with regular updates on our progress!

CLiF's New Programs Aim for More Impact

Ever since CLiF began 14 years ago we've conducted regular follow-up research after our presentations. Those results, together with the enthusiasm and wide smiles of the 130,000 children we've served, indicate beyond any doubt that CLiF programs have a very positive impact on low-income, at-risk, and rural young readers and writers.

The question is: *How much impact is CLiF having on children, and how long does it last?*

Until recently, most children we serve attend a CLiF presentation (e.g., author visit, three days of writing workshops, storytelling, book donations) only once or twice per year. We've long suspected it takes more than an inspiring few hours, or even three or four days of wonderful CLiF programs, to *fundamentally* increase a child's love of reading and writing and alter their literacy behavior in those important areas for months or even years.

That's why last year we initiated our three-year Community Literacy Awards in Colebrook, NH, Stratford, NH, and Lunenburg/Gilman, VT. Every child from birth to age 12 in those high-need towns now participates in six to 12 literacy-related events each year. Local coordinators ensure the programs are linked as much as possible and are designed to meet local needs and interests.



Duncan shares laughs and stories with fellow readers

We've hired educational research firm WestEd to study these programs. Over three years we will spend \$30,000 to measure the impact of our programs on local children.

Initial results have been so encouraging that we are now starting CLiF's Year of the Book. This exciting new initiative provides many inspiring CLiF events to every child in a deserving school for an entire school year (please see cover story). WestEd will help us assess the impact of this new initiative as well.

Thanks to your loyal support, CLiF continues to heighten its ability at "Opening Books, Opening Minds, Opening Doors."


Duncan McDougall
CLiF Executive Director

Who's Who

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Suzanne Loring Julia Rogers

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Summer Readers

Every June, July, and August, CLiF presenters visit children's summer programs in communities across New Hampshire and Vermont. They share great books, tell inspiring stories, and talk about the power of reading with children up to 12 years old. After every event, each child can choose two new books to keep.

If your summer program serves low-income or at-risk children, we encourage you to apply for a CLiF Summer Readers event. Download an application at www.clifonline.org or contact Julia Rogers at julia@clifonline.org.

Connect with CLiF Online

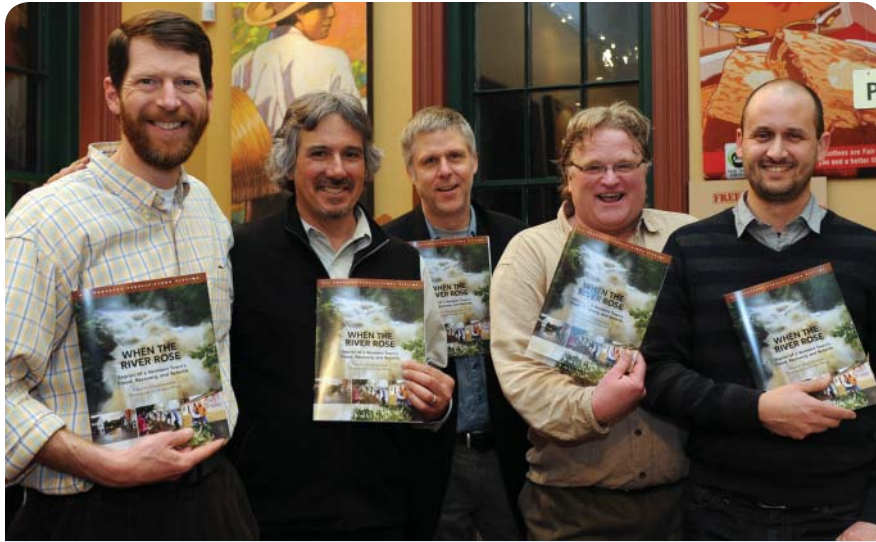


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Do you Tweet?
Then please follow us @cliforg
We'd love to stay in touch!



Books, Songs, and Big Rigs



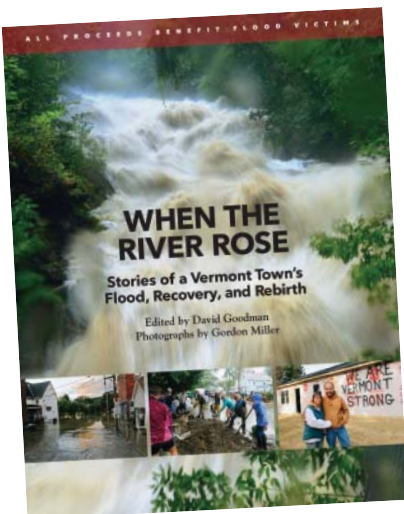
The When the River Rose team at our kick-off event in Waterbury, VT. (L to R): Duncan McDougall, David Goodman, Peter Holm, Gordon Miller, Matt Bushlow

The Power of Stories

Last September, CLiF's Duncan McDougall and Matt Bushlow departed for unknown territory: the world of book publishing. The idea was to publish a collection of first-hand stories about the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene. The storm caused widespread flooding in CLiF's hometown of Waterbury, Vermont. **The goal was unusual: to use those stories to help rebuild a town.**

When the River Rose: Stories of a Town's Flood, Rebirth, and Recovery has been even more successful than we hoped. **We've already sold our initial print run of 1,250 copies. That means nearly \$25,000 has been donated to ReBuild Waterbury, a local nonprofit program dedicated to helping citizens rebuild their homes.**

A crack team of professionals — editor David Goodman, photographer Gordon Miller, book designer Peter Holm, and librarian Nancy Daigle — joined Duncan and Matt in donating their services. National Life Insurance Group of Montpelier, VT donated the initial printing. Dartmouth Journal Services of Waterbury has donated the second printing of 1,250 copies. This gives us a chance to raise another \$25,000.



"We're amazed that the book has sold so quickly," says Matt. "More than 30 small bookstores and businesses in Vermont have sold the book without commission. And hundreds of people have purchased copies. It's heartening to see such support for one community from across the state."

You can purchase *When the River Rose* online at www.whentheverriverrose.com for \$20. There you can also find a list of Vermont stores that have the book in stock. If you know of a store that may want to sell *When the River Rose*, call Matt Bushlow at 802-244-0944.

It was tough competition for attention at this year's Big Rig Day in Swanton, Vermont. In addition to the parking lot full of dump trucks, buses, fire trucks, police cars, army vehicles, and other big rigs, the cafeteria of Missisquoi Valley Union High School was packed with activities focused on crafts and food. But as soon as Robert Resnik and Megan Butterfield started singing, it was as if all other activities ceased.

Robert and Megan performed at Big Rig Day as part of a CLiF Bookmobile Grant to the Franklin Grand Isle Bookmobile, which received \$2,000 worth of new books. Robert is best known as the host of Vermont Public Radio's *All the Traditions*, but is also a fantastic children's performer. He and Megan played hits like "Baby Beluga," "The Ants Go Marching," and Bob Marley's "Three Little Birds" to a large crowd of enthusiastic tots. They also shared their love of reading and writing. Megan talked about *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, while Robert captivated the kids with a rousing rendition of *Green Eggs and Ham*.

After the show, every child present at Big Rig Day got to choose two brand-new books to keep from a colorful collection of 600 titles.

"This year's Big Rig Day was the biggest and best in our history — over 300 children attended," said Deb Grennon, director of Franklin Grand Isle Bookmobile. *"I think people knowing that CLiF was there giving away books and providing a great performance helped draw the crowds."*



Megan Butterfield and Robert Resnik singing at Big Rig Day

Reading with Families in Rutland



Two proud owners of new books at the local middle school in Rutland, VT

While children played in the next room at Rutland County Head Start, Duncan McDougall gave a 20-minute seminar to parents on why they should read with their children as often as possible. Duncan spoke with parents about the impact books and reading can have on a child's development. Then he described ways to

make reading with a child fun and easy, even if one isn't a strong reader.

Duncan's guidance was timely for several parents in the room. Head Start programs nationwide support low-income families and their children. Just minutes earlier, parents had listened to Bridget Martin of

Vermont Adult Learning give a presentation about her agency's adult literacy classes. During the talk, several parents raised their hands to ask questions about how they could study for and take the GED test.

Minutes later, their children came in and Duncan read them *My Friend Rabbit* by Eric Rohmann, a Caldecott Medal winner. It's a perfect book for very interactive storytelling in a room of very active kids! When the book was finished, each child selected any two brand-new books to keep. For many of these children, the two CLiF books will represent a significant addition to their personal collection.

"Most of our children have limited appropriate books in the home," said Kelly Todriff, Family Service Program Manager for Rutland County Head Start. *"One parent reported to me later that her daughter slept with her new books that night because she was so excited to have them. I even had four parents ask if Duncan can come back to Head Start again. They also loved listening to the story!"*

Kids Helping Kids

Harry Hopper was only eight years old when he began supporting CLiF. At his eighth birthday party, Harry collected donations from attendees and sent CLiF a check for \$200. *"My mom works with children and shared with me that some of her students do not own any books of their own,"* Harry explained. *"I couldn't believe it! I think that all children should have the opportunity to have books."*

Harry's mom, Heidi, added, *"Our family has a deep-rooted love of books. We believe in CLiF's mission to serve the children and families of New Hampshire and Vermont. We love CLiF!"*

Harry, now 13, still contributes to CLiF every year through his birthday party fundraiser. This past year, he raised over \$350, which went towards our literacy programming in New Hampshire and Vermont. *"I had over 20 friends who came and donated to CLiF this year,"* Harry stated proudly. *"The parents love it — it supports a good organization and it saves the planet from more 'stuff'!"*

CLiF also receives new books as in-kind donations from children's birthday parties and other events. It's always a thrill to see kids taking the initiative to help other kids.



Harry Hopper (holding basket) and friends hold up their donations to CLiF

A huge thanks to Harry and all of our young supporters! We are truly inspired by your efforts to make a difference in the lives of other children. If you are the parent of a child who would like to raise money or new books for CLiF for his or her birthday, bar or bat mitzvah, graduation, or other holiday, contact Julia Rogers at julia@clifonline.org. As Harry so nicely put it, *"It's true, the old saying: It is better to give than receive."*



Young readers listen in Lancaster, NH (pop. 3,400)

books are getting loved to death. The library serves children in Lancaster and seven nearby communities. That's why a town of 3,400 residents has more than 4,000 registered library users!

On a crisp March morning Duncan gave two energetic, inspiring literacy and storytelling presentations to 220 children from kindergarten to sixth grade in the elementary school. He then visited the public library for songs and stories with 30 bouncy tykes from two local childcare centers. Each preschooler went home clutching two new books they had chosen, and each childcare center was given a small collection of new CLiF children's books.

"It was a wonderful day," commented Ronnie Zajac following CLiF's visit. "The children were so excited, including a first-grader who dragged his astonished mother to the library that afternoon. 'I don't know what happened at school today' she told me, 'but my son really wants to get some of those books about stars and the universe he heard about.'"

Two weeks after Duncan's visit an envelope arrived at the CLiF offices bearing lovely thank-you letters from students. One young girl wrote: *"I have not been to the town library, but since you got those books I will be there for sure now."* Just what we like to hear!

CLiF Brings the Universe to Lancaster Children

Lancaster, NH, located a two-hour drive from the nearest city, is known as "the gateway to the Great North Woods." In the 1700s and 1800s its streets echoed with the hammering, sawing, and grinding of carriage factories, saw mills, and potato starch mills. Recently, this northern community rang with different sounds — the shouts, gasps, and laughter of children.

The occasion was the Rural Library Sponsorship CLiF awarded to the Weeks Memorial Library. CLiF's Director Duncan McDougall came to town with \$2,000 in new, hardcover children's books selected by children's librarian Ronnie Zajac to strengthen her well-used collection. *"This gift helped us acquire lots of books we didn't have, including some older classics that got worn out."* It's small wonder her

CLiF Welcomes Gretchen Stern!

After a year as CLiF's office manager, Julia Rogers moved recently into her new role of program coordinator. That meant we needed someone to keep the CLiF office running smoothly, from our book library to our volunteers to our donor database. *We scrutinized dozens of resumes and interviewed a handful of impressive candidates before we offered the position to Gretchen Stern of Calais, VT.*

"I thrive on opportunities to learn, think on my feet, and venture into new territory," says



Gretchen. *"On a personal and professional level, the position and CLiF's mission and vision are a great fit for me."*

Gretchen joins us from the Biomass Energy Resource Center (BERC) in Montpelier, where she was an education coordinator. We're excited to have Gretchen's eye for detail and experience in education, communications, and office management applied to CLiF's day-to-day operations.

Voices of Kids

Everyone at CLiF loves being around kids. They make us laugh. They make us think. They inspire and motivate us to get better at what we do. We thought you might like to hear the voices of a few children with whom we have connected through our programs.



Two students read a new book together

A Young Student's Story from a CLiF Writing Workshop

About My Dad

My father is very nice. We throw the baseball. We throw the football. We play games together. He treats me the way I want to be treated. He respects me. He helps me when I need it. He helps me on my bike. He does what's best for me. He keeps his promises. He shows people respect. He takes me everywhere and he looks out for me. After school he asks me how my day was. He keeps me safe.

A Note from a Child to a CLiF Donor

"Thank you for the books. I can't wait to read them. I like nonfiction books. I like learning about sharks, frogs, and birds. They are all interesting things, don't you think? I love to read. It's really fun. I'm reading a really good book. It's fun to drown into the story."

A Child Looking at a Table of CLiF Books

"These are cool. I'm glad you guys came back. You know, all my books at home are CLiF books."

The New CLiF E-News

As loyal subscribers to CLiF News, you receive updates about CLiF's programs, presenters, and progress in your mailbox twice a year. **If you're curious about what we're up to the rest of the time, we encourage you to sign up for our monthly email update, CLiF E-News.**

When you sign up for CLiF E-News, you will receive one email to your inbox in

the last week of every month. When you open it, you'll see more of the colorful and friendly photos and updates you expect from CLiF. You'll learn about what Duncan and other CLiF presenters have been doing, and find links to fun and informative stories on our blog, Inspire Kids.

CLiF E-News also offers links to recent press coverage of CLiF's work, including stories from the Associated Press, Vermont Public Radio, *Champlain Business Journal*, and WCAX-TV. We also feature Duncan's compelling op-eds about children's literacy, which have been published in papers across New Hampshire and Vermont.

If you enjoy CLiF News, consider signing up for CLiF E-News. It's more of what you love about CLiF, delivered to your inbox every month. **You can sign up at www.clifonline.org. Just click on Contact Us and follow the directions.**

How Will You Be Remembered?

At CLiF, we do *everything* we can to open the doors of imagination and opportunity through literacy. If you share our desire to inspire the next generation of young readers and writers, please support CLiF through a **bequest** or **planned gift**.

You'll allow CLiF's work with children to continue for decades to come. Please contact us if you'd like to learn more about how to include CLiF in your planned giving. If you've already taken this step, kindly let us know so we can share our thanks.

For more information contact Duncan at clif@clifonline.org or 802-244-0944. **Thank you!**



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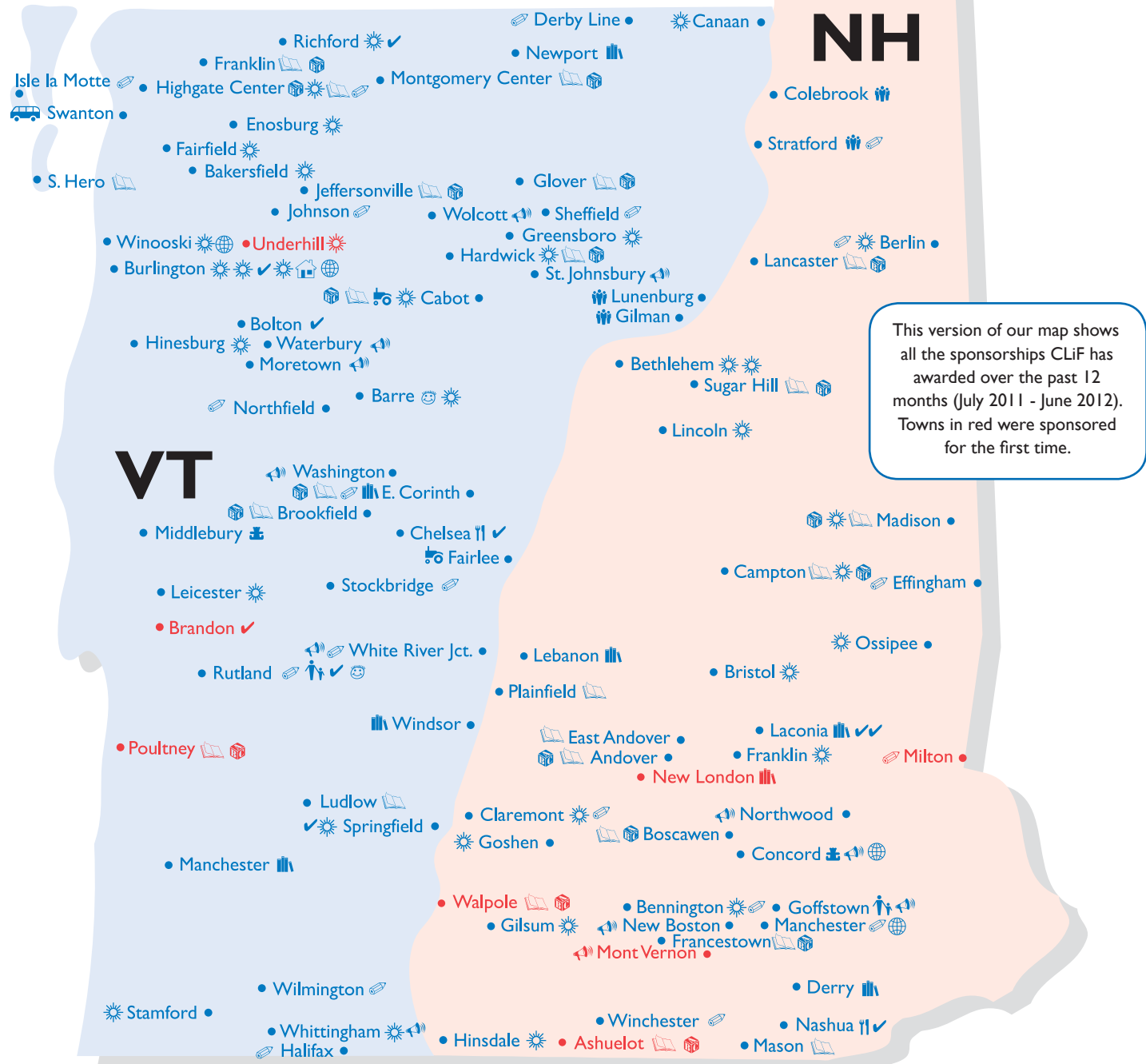
CLiF Sponsorships (July 2011 - June 2012)

Since 1998 CLiF has touched the lives of more than 130,000 children in almost 400 towns across New Hampshire and Vermont. CLiF provides sponsorships to rural public libraries as well as to children served by homeless shelters, women's shelters, low-income housing, and bookmobiles. CLiF works with children's book authors and illustrators to provide presentations to children in rural areas. We send writers-in-residence to elementary schools, award Rainy Day sponsorships to towns facing severe economic challenges, and provide new books and literacy support to children of prison inmates, migrant children, refugee children, children in poverty, Head Start children, children in childcare, families with newborns, and families visiting food shelves.

Legend

Towns CLiF is serving for the very first time are listed in red.

	Rural Public Libraries		Children of Prison Inmates		Head Start
	Author / Illustrator Visits		Migrant Children		Childcare
	Writer-in-Residence		Families with Newborns		Food Shelves
	Shelters		Bookmobiles		CLiF Choice
	Refugee Children		Rainy Day Sponsorships		Book Give-away
	Summer Readers		Low-Income Housing		Community Literacy





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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

When you're done,
please share this
newsletter with a friend!

Note from a young CLiF reader

Thank you for donating money
to the library so we have
more books. I hope you still
have some money so you
can take care of your family

*Author and illustrator Marty Kelly with students after
a CLiF presentation in Madison, NH (pop. 2,502)*

