

Children’s Literacy Foundation (CLiF)

*Nurturing a love of reading and writing among low-income, at-risk and rural children throughout New Hampshire and Vermont*

## Connecting Communities Through Reading & Writing



Students in Campton, NH at the story walk created by their Year of the Book grant

Because CLiF believes strongly in creating a culture of literacy, we introduced two grants that allow more creative, individualized, community-based literacy support. Our **Community Building grant** offers partners funding to more formally connect children with their own community through programs such as Senior Reading partners, Pen Pals, 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten, and songwriting and poetry workshops. Our **Revive Your Literacy Programming grant** gives \$500 to those groups that have partnered with CLiF in the last five years to reboot activities started during their CLiF grant.

Despite COVID, CLiF sponsored Community Building and Revive grants in schools, libraries, and out-of-school-time programs in the past year. Applications repeatedly addressed issues of funding cuts, loss of materials, learning gaps, and reduced face time with students, all due to COVID.

One Community Building grant supported a mentoring program where elder community members read with students. They shared letters to get to know each other and shared books virtually and, eventually, in person. One community member sent this note to the coordinator: *“The letters I have received from Student X and Student Y are so WONDERFUL!!! They mean so much... Thank you thank you thank you for setting this up.”*

Typically, CLiF offers the Revive grant during the school year, but due to the COVID disruptions, we opened it for summer programming support. **This year’s recipients used grants to offer e-books to fifth and sixth graders in Manchester for summer learning, replenish lost library collections in Nashua, create a mural in Seabrook, and build “take and make bags” in four sites in Vermont and New Hampshire.** The Bennington Free Library put together bags with activities and books plus written recommendations for books and activities, specifically for preschoolers. *“Because we were not able to offer hands-on experiences as part of our in-person preschool storytime, this grant allowed us to extend the learning and literacy experience beyond the*

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*library. Children and families went home with activity bags in hand, excited to continue to read and create. We know that young children learn best by “doing” and we were able to continue this commitment to literacy with CLiF’s Revive Grant!”*

CLiF celebrates our partners for all they can accomplish with some funding, their knowledge of their community, and their own creativity!



A young reader in Brownsville, VT practices reading

# CLiF's Very Deep Bench

This is a very exciting time for CLiF! Last year, we had the largest attendance at CLiF events ever. Next year, we hope to break ground on a new CLiF headquarters in Waterbury Center, VT (more news to come!). And in spring, 2023, after leading CLiF for 25 years, I'll step down as Executive Director and pass reins to a new leader. (A search firm will help us find that individual.)

Some have asked "What's CLiF going to be like without Duncan?" I'm positive the answer is: "Inspiring, productive, and stronger than ever!" because CLiF has one of the deepest 'benches' of any nonprofit around:

- **Staff:** Did you know my fellow staff members include a former non-profit executive director with 10+ years experience, a former Vermont assistant attorney general, and a Pushcart Prize nominee? CLiF has one of the most skilled, innovative, and hard-working teams of any nonprofit in the Twin States.
- **Presenters:** Many of CLiF's 64 presenters – professional authors, illustrators, poets, storytellers, and graphic novelists – have given CLiF presentations for 10 to 20 years, and they'll continue inspiring thousands of children for decades to come.
- **Volunteers:** For untold years these beloved folks have helped CLiF sort, label, and pack a zillion new, high-quality children's books. They are family to us.
- **CLiF Advisors:** This team of experts includes a professor of education, reading specialists, librarians, and a prison program coordinator, and they provide decades of wisdom.
- **CLiF Directors:** CLiF's Board of Directors is a cohesive team packed with experience and expertise. As a group, they have served on more than 75 boards, chaired multiple building campaigns and leadership transitions, and held senior leadership positions at for-profit and nonprofit organizations. I learn from them all the time!

In total, there are more than 110 people actively involved in CLiF's operations. When we put this seasoned team together with a new, purpose-built headquarters, and a dynamic new leader, I can't wait to see the amazing things CLiF will accomplish!



Duncan McDougall  
CLiF Executive Director



Duncan spinning tales at the CLiF Year of the Book kickoff in Lisbon, NH

## Who's Who

### CLiF Staff

Duncan McDougall • Executive Director  
Meredith Scott • Program Director  
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Erika Nichols-Frazier • Communications Manager  
Kat Lane • Data/Office Manager  
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## To Contact CLiF

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## Your Legacy with CLiF

Can you imagine what your life would be like if your childhood lacked books and opportunities to read and write?

If children's literacy is among your priorities, please consider including CLiF in your legacy plans. Your lasting support will help uplift thousands of young readers and writers for decades to come.

To learn more about planned giving opportunities, contact Duncan at 802-244-0944 or [clif@clifonline.org](mailto:clif@clifonline.org).

Thank you!

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## It Was a Fully Booked Summer!

CLiF's Summer Readers program was in full swing this summer with in-person, outdoor visits to schools, libraries, recreational programs, summer camps, summer enrichment programs, and a variety of other locations across Vermont and New Hampshire. Our amazing network of CLiF presenters jumped into action, sharing stories, logging miles, hosting book giveaways, and inspiring children to dive into summer reading. We were all grateful for the opportunity to safely connect in person this year with summer partners and friends both new and old. CLiF also continued our virtual author series this summer, allowing our partners multiple opportunities and formats to engage with our talented presenters and discuss summer reading.

This summer, CLiF partnered with 75 organizations across the two states, served more than 12,000 kids, and gave away 24,000 brand new books to excited young readers. One of our longtime partners at the Shedd-Porter Public Library shared, "The CLiF event was fabulous because it attracted families to the event that don't usually



Author Ann Braden signs books for eager readers at the Green Mountain Girls Camp

go to the library or attend events... It's a **WONDERFUL** introduction to the library for them; not only do they get free books, we introduce them to the services the library can provide. CLiF helps with our community outreach and it's a win for everyone." The impacts of underdelivered learning during the pandemic fall more heavily on some rural and economically disadvantaged children, and CLiF will continue to extend our resources to all the corners of Vermont and New Hampshire to provide books and literacy materials to eager young readers and writers.

## Connecting Families During Prison Lockdowns



Sending a special book and writing a note to a child at home

CLiF has multi-year partnerships with five prisons in Vermont and New Hampshire. All of them have been under full or partial COVID lockdown for much of the past two years. That meant families and children were not able to visit their incarcerated family member, and CLiF presenters could not enter prisons to work face-to-face with inmates. In response, CLiF:

- Increased the CLiF children's books onsite at the prisons

- Recorded seminars to help inmates become more effective at sharing books and stories with their children and grandchildren. Inmates watched the seminars on tablets.
- Had inmates select books from the onsite CLiF collections, or gathered requests from inmates about new books they wanted to send to their kids. CLiF volunteers selected the books at the CLiF office, packaged them, and mailed them to the children. Whenever possible, inmates added personal notes in the books. One wrote: "I wanted to get you a book so you know your still on my mind all the time. Maybe you could read it to me sometime. Don't ever forget how special you are to me or how much I love you kid!"

Thanks to CLiF, many hundreds of children stayed connected to their incarcerated family member during an extremely challenging time.

## CLiF Builds a New Headquarters

Since CLiF's founding in 1998, the number of events we hold, children we serve, and books we give away have all increased more than one hundred-fold. The only thing that has not increased over the past 24 years is the size of CLiF's office!

CLiF's six staff members work in a cramped 800-square-foot space above Duncan's garage. CLiF's donation library of 15,000+ new books, and our tireless volunteers who help process and pack the books, are shoehorned into a 450-square-foot space down below.

After a two-year search, we're excited to report we've found a 1.4 acre property near our current office in Waterbury Center. In spring 2022 we'll start building a new headquarters that will give CLiF:

- A professional work environment for our hardworking staff
- A vastly more efficient donation library, enabling CLiF to process thousands more new, high-quality books for the children who need them the most
- Welcoming and functional space for supporters and volunteers
- The ability to add additional staff members as CLiF continues to grow

We'll soon be conducting our first **Capital Campaign** in almost a quarter-century to help pay for the new building. We hope you can help us make this dream a reality! More news soon.



Carol, Margaret, and Jim, some of our awesome volunteers in CLiF's cramped donation library

# Books and Live Theater Go Together Like Frog and Toad

In 2020, theaters everywhere went dark. This past summer, audiences eagerly returned to live performances. The CLiF team was delighted to partner with [Lyric Theater of Burlington, VT](#) to give away free Frog and Toad books at their outdoor performances of the beloved classic series by Arnold Lobel. The cast sang and danced, inspired by *A Year of Frog and Toad*, which follows the seasons through the life of our favorite amphibian duo. During intermission, kids even learned one of the songs and dances. **CLiF gave away roughly 600 new books to families at the six performances in and around Burlington, including at Fletcher Free Library and the Shelburne Museum.** Families were thrilled to get outside and enjoy live theater, and the kids were especially excited to add new books to their collections! The events kicked off a busy summer of storytelling



Families enjoy Frog and Toad in Burlington, VT

and book giveaways for CLiF. The performances were a great way to get kids jazzed about the stories of Frog and Toad and to engage families in literacy, while providing high-quality books for summer reading.

# A Young Man Gives Back

During the pandemic, [Zach Haggerty](#) was looking for a way to make a difference in his home state. He learned about CLiF's programs and decided to sponsor an At-Risk Children event in Middlebury, VT, where he went to college. He said, "I chose to raise money for CLiF because of the incredible impact they make on such a wide footprint of communities within both New Hampshire and Vermont, in addition to the wide variety of awesome programs and events that are supported! I was an avid reader from a young age and consumed a wide variety of genres, from mysteries and science fiction to biographies and nature books. Some of my favorite books as a kid were the Hardy Boys series, and I remember passing the time in many a long car ride, staying up probably well past my bed time, and lots of time at home crushing as many of the great stories that I could!"

Zach got to work contacting his friends, family, and colleagues, and spreading the word about CLiF's work. **He even organized a 5k run to raise funds and awareness of the critical importance of literacy, especially among low-income, at-risk, and rural kids who may lack the resources they need to succeed.** Together, Zach and his community sponsored the At-Risk Children program at Mary Hogan Preschool in Middlebury and gave the childcare program a new library, a fun storytelling visit with Duncan, and two new books for each child to choose for themselves.

Zach said, "CLiF has done phenomenal work throughout its 20+ year history and reaches so many young readers in the communities they serve (350,000 children served...how awesome is that!?). Childhood literacy and access to books can often be taken



Runners who sponsored CLiF's At-Risk Children Program in Middlebury, VT

for granted, and CLiF helps provide resources that can make a difference on so many levels. Plus, in my experience, the organization is made up of an incredible team that is both fun and inspirational to work with, and clearly dedicated to the task(s) at hand!"

He added, "Childhood literacy should be important to everyone because it can open so many doors, whether it is into a new world of imagination as a young reader or into an important skillset for later in someone's life and career." Huge thanks to Zach and everyone who helped him make a difference in the lives of children. Zach's hard at work raising funds for kids in Hardwick, VT this year.

## Making the Library the Cornerstone of the Community

CLiF welcomes twelve rural public library partners for the 2021–2022 school year, six in Vermont and six in New Hampshire. Five are new partners for CLiF, two are reapplying after more than ten years, five work with CLiF regularly through our Summer Readers program, and two connected with CLiF when their local school had the Year of the Book grant. Applications shared a common theme – COVID resulted in closed buildings, limited virtual programming, and largest reductions in use being in the children’s collection.

Librarians see the CLiF Rural Library grant as a chance to reconnect with their community and also become more visible to new community members. Many see the grant as an opportunity to further develop new initiatives such as “take and make bags,” circulating materials such as puzzles, board games, and telescopes. One library wrote that CLiF can help meet their goal of making *“the library the cornerstone of our community - a place patrons can turn to in town for books, information, and programming.”*

COVID allowed many libraries time for collection development, strategic planning, and addressing facility needs. Libraries continue to learn about how they serve their whole community. One librarian wrote, *“We connect with state and local partnerships to be sure families have access to resources above and beyond library materials including food, clothing, internet access and support, vaccine registration, Adult Ed, employment, medical and emergency services, and more.”* CLiF aims to help our partner libraries solidify their relationship with the school, their youngest readers age birth–5, and families and caregivers. We wholeheartedly agree with another librarian who stated, *“Regardless of age and ability, the power of storytelling and sharing has a way of connecting people from all walks of life.”*



Author/farmer John Churchman and Laddie share stories.

## Creating a Culture of Literacy

CLiF’s Year of the Book began in 2011 as a three-year pilot program in three schools. The program currently engages with a school partner over three school years, with the bulk of the \$25,000 support in the second. CLiF has served 90 schools with books for home, classroom, school and public libraries, creative programming, family events, parent trainings, and author visits. **Goal #1 of Year of the Book is to create a culture of literacy in the school and community by creating enthusiasm for reading and writing in students, families, teachers, and community members, and by encouraging everyone to read and write for pleasure more often.**

This concept of a culture of literacy is challenging to track through data. One way CLiF can evaluate our success is how schools continue to interact with us, their community partners, and with initiatives begun during their Year of the Book. Campton Elementary School a 2017–2018 CLiF Year of the Book school, and Campton Public Library, a 2019–2020 Rural Library partner, dusted off a StoryWalk funded during the Year of the Book to build excitement around their Summer Reading program. Installing the book on the school’s nature trail, families could be outside and share a book. The librarian reported, *“We really needed to find a way to do Summer Reading Program where families could still participate while feeling safe. We accomplished this by having all outdoor or virtual programs...Many children and families participated in this [Storywalk] safe, social-distance activity, some more than once.”*

CLiF Year of the Book serves Pre–K–6th graders in schools with more than 75 kids. Annually, we receive applications from smaller, rural public schools looking for support. CLiF noticed this gap, and true to the nature of our small, responsive organization, **two smaller schools in Stratford, NH, and Roxbury, VT are piloting a new Small School Year of the Book in the 2021–2022 school year.** This grant program shares the goals, features, and offerings of the traditional grant, but scales to better suit schools with smaller student bodies and staff.

See the map on P. 7 for our 13 current Year of the Book school partners, and stay tuned for more stories of creativity and tenacity from communities working through another year of COVID restrictions to celebrate a culture of literacy.



A young reader in Burlington, VT picks out his new books

# Adults Join the Fun: Connecting Caregivers Through Stories

Adults love stories, too! Across different types of CLiF programming, we can't help but notice that the adults enjoy sharing stories just as much as the children. [Whether we are at a correctional facility, a rural library, a school, or an early childhood education program, stories have the power to captivate children and adults of all ages.](#)

The 2020–2021 school year was certainly challenging for children, families, and school communities. As the school year

came to a close, CLiF hosted a storytelling event and book giveaway for the [Lamoille County Early Learning Center](#) through our [At-Risk Children](#) grant. This event put parents and caregivers front and center! The Lamoille County Early Learning Center offers Head Start educational services for children ages three to five and caregiver engagement opportunities. It was tough for adult family members to forge connections with each other during the most difficult months of the pandemic, and this outdoor, socially distanced event



Parents at Lamoille County Early Learning Center in Morrisville, VT pick out new books for their kids

allowed many of them the chance to connect in person for the first time. CLiF storyteller Duncan McDougall hosted a storytelling event for the adults and a literacy discussion to highlight strategies for successfully sharing books with children. Everyone who attended was able to select books for the children in their lives and grab a snack to go on their way home with their children. Now more than ever, stories unite us and foster community through shared experiences that are both fun and enriching for families.

## News from CLiF's Presenters

Picture book author/illustrator [Jim Arnosky](#) showed an exhibit of his artwork at the Alumni Hall of Court Street Arts in Haverhill, NH this fall. The exhibit will also appear this spring in Camden, ME to help celebrate Children's Book Month in the Jean Picker Gallery in the historic Camden Public Library. Jim has written and/or illustrated more than 100 picture books.

Graphic novelist [Marek Bennett](#) received the New Hampshire Governor's Arts Excellence Award in October. His comics were featured in *Turner Family Stories: From Enslavement in Virginia to Freedom in Vermont*.

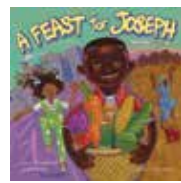
Storyteller [Simon Brooks](#) told ghost stories in the virtual National Storytelling Festival in Jonesboro, TN. He also headed down south to perform live and in-person at the Athens, Alabama Storytelling Festival in October.

[Carolyn Cory Scoppettone](#) had two new books in her *Maggie and Pie* series come out this fall from Highlights Press. More *Maggie and Pie* books will be coming out in 2022.



[Sarah Dillard's](#) latest picture book, *Blueberry Cake*, came out in July and has received starred reviews from *Kirkus* and *Publishers Weekly*.

[Rajni Eddins's](#) Poetry Experience continues online and in person for youth and writers of all ages at Fletcher Free Library in Burlington, VT every 1st and 3rd Saturday from 1–3pm. He also hosts monthly in-person open mics at Kru Coffee in Burlington. See [rajnieddins.com](#) for more information.



[Terry Farish](#) and co-writer OD Bonny's new book, *A Feast for Joseph*, just came out from Groundwood Books. It's a story about

food and missing family far away, and a boy's determination. *Kirkus* writes in a starred review, "A wonderful book that humanizes refugees through a focus on joy in everyday life."

[Matt Forest Esenwine's](#) picture book, *I Am Today*, will be released in late 2021. His book *Once Upon Another Time*, received a positive review from *School Library Journal*, which called it "a near-perfect way to remind children of all their planet has to offer."

[Marv Klassen-Landis](#) helped design a study of creative expression with patients with seizures at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical School and then did one-to-one poetry writing sessions virtually. Data analysis showed that participants who created poetry as well as those who created visual art experienced significant decreases in anxiety compared to a control group.

[Christy Mihaly's](#) book, *Barefoot Books WATER: A Deep Dive of Discovery* came out this fall. Her picture books *The Supreme Court and Us* and *Patience, Patches* will be released in the spring.



Award-winning middle grade/young adult author [Katherine Paterson's](#) new book *Birdie's Bargain* was published by Candlewick Press in October.

[Gina Perry](#) illustrated a new chapter book series written by Dusti Bowling and published by Sterling Kids. The first two titles, *Aven Green Sleuthing Machine* and *Aven Green Baking Machine*, were published in 2021. The third title, *Aven Green Music Machine*, comes out in April 2022.

[Verandah Porche](#) and her songwriting partner Patty Carpenter will record an album of original songs at Guilford Sound this winter. You can hear songs and poems on their Patreon Site: <https://www.patreon.com/pattyandverandah>.

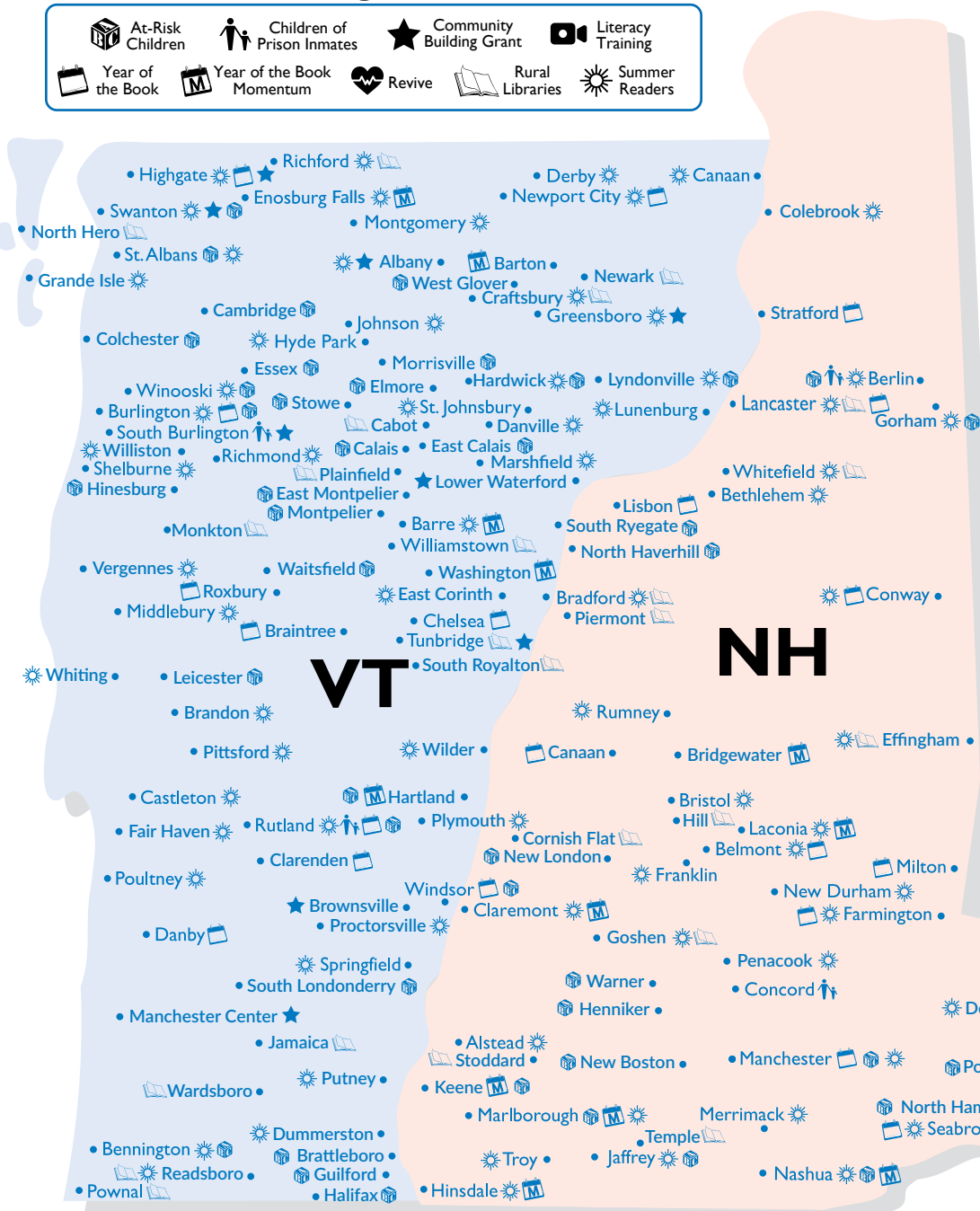
# CLiF Sponsorships (January – December 2021)

Since 1998 CLiF has served 350,000 children in more than 420 towns across New Hampshire and Vermont. Through nine programs—and with the partnership of more than 60 professional authors, illustrators, poets, storytellers and graphic novelists—CLiF inspires low-income, at-risk, and rural children to love reading and writing.

CLiF provides free, inspiring literacy programs and new books to: children of prison inmates; refugee, migrant and foster children; children who live in shelters and low-income housing; and children served by bookmobiles, Head Start, Boys & Girls Clubs, and other social service organizations. CLiF sponsors rural libraries, elementary schools, prisons, and provides programs to dozens of other sites that serve children.

## Legend

At-Risk Children	Children of Prison Inmates	Community Building Grant	Literacy Training
Year of the Book	Year of the Book Momentum	Revive	Rural Libraries
		Summer Readers	



## At-Risk Children

Storytelling presentations and new on-site library for partnering organizations serving at-risk children, a parent seminar, and two new books for each child.

## Children of Prison Inmates

Family literacy seminars for incarcerated parents and new books to send home to their kids, grandkids, or nieces and nephews, plus new on-site children's libraries, storytelling, family events, and the storybook program.

## Community Building

Training with CLiF's professional presenters, new books, and program support for community-based programs.

## Literacy Training

Early educator literacy training using CLiF's videos.

## Year of the Book

\$25,000 in literacy programming, including author visits, workshops, and fun family events, plus new books for ten selected elementary schools in NH and VT, and ten new books for each child.

## Momentum

Additional literacy support following the Year of the Book.

## Revive

Additional literacy support, such as author visits and funding for special literacy initiatives for past CLiF partners.

## Rural Libraries

Two storytelling presentations and new books for rural public libraries and local elementary schools, plus two new books for each child and a program grant.

## Summer Readers

Inspiring storytelling presentations and two new books for each child during the summer.



Children's Literacy Foundation  
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Waterbury Center, VT 05677

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Please remember  
to make your  
year-end gift to CLiF!



*A note from a young reader*

Thank you clif for all the books you  
give to Hillside. I love reading and it  
brings me joy to read and you made that happen.  
So thank you so much.

*A book-lover in  
Burlington, VT shows  
off his new books*



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