

NEWS

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

Children's Literacy Foundation

Summer 2022

Vol. 24, No. 1

Family Literacy Celebrations Return!



CLiF presenter Marty Kelley leads a Family Literacy Celebration in Boscawen, NH

One of the most meaningful aspects of CLiF's \$25,000 Year of the Book grant are the opportunities it traditionally provides for schools to invite families to come share literacy and learning experiences with their students. For the last two years, COVID has made scheduling such events nearly impossible, so CLiF was thrilled to welcome back Family Literacy Celebrations to six of our 11 Year of the Book schools this spring!

Schools hosted a community meal, followed by activities and a book giveaway for all children in the family. Events highlighted fun around books and stories, incorporating games, music and family storytelling.

The report from Newport, Vermont:

"The family event was amazing! It was, for many of our families, their first time in the building, and for others their first time at our school in two years! So many families came in smiling and children

were so excited to share their school with their family members. I am so very thankful for all that this grant has done for our school and our community! Families' first experience with NCES was so positive, inviting and joyous!"

From Farmington, New Hampshire:

"We were ecstatic when we finally had the opportunity to host our first in-person Family Literacy Night. It gave our students and their families, as well as the staff members who volunteered their time, a much needed opportunity to come together outside of the normal school day. We had over 100 guests in attendance and received so much positive feedback that there are plans to make family events a monthly occurrence in the 2022-23 school year!"

We hope to see this joyful trend continue in the school year ahead!

What's Inside

An Exciting Time for CLiF!	2
Summer Reading Hits the Road	2
Inspiring a New Generation of Readers	3
Getting a Head Start on Early Literacy	3
Finding Silver Linings on Zoom	3
CLiF Back in Prisons Again	5
CLiF Presenter Wins Caldecott Medal	5
Celebrations of Community and Creativity	6
Go Stowe! A Community's Generosity	6
News from CLiF's Presenters	6
Compelling CLiF Collaborations	6
Map of CLiF Sponsorships	7

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 planned giving. Your lasting support will help uplift thousands of young readers and writers for decades to come.

To learn more about planned giving opportunities, contact us at 802-244-0944 or clif@clifonline.org.

Thank you!

 /cliforg

 @cliforg

 @clifonline



Contact

Children's Literacy Foundation
1536 Loomis Hill Road
Waterbury Center, VT 05677
802.244.0944 • clifonline.org
info@clifonline.org

Staff

Duncan McDougall, *Executive Director*
Meredith Scott, *Program Director*
Jana Brown, *Program Manager*
Sarah Hall, *Communications Manager*
Kat Lane, *Data/Office Manager*
Danny Gancioppo, *AmeriCorps VISTA Member*

Board of Directors

Mark Beams, *Chair*
John Vogel, *Treasurer*
Leslie Williams, *Secretary*

Lisa Ferneau	Duncan McDougall
Michele Gravelle	Kathy McGowan
Zach Haggerty	Rick Mills
Dr. Sandy Kelsey	Posie Taylor

Board of Advisors

Mary Ann Cappiello

Jonathan Clark	Jen Kusnarowis
Deborah Dutcher	Julia Rogers
Toni Eubanks	Rubi Simon
Jess Kell	Michele Tine
Jane Knight	



Duncan wows a crowd with an emphatic storytelling presentation

An Exciting Time for CLiF!

Here's just a small sample of what's going on

This year will be the most exciting, busy and productive period of CLiF's history!

- **New Headquarters:** After 24 years operating out of my cramped garage, CLiF is finally getting the space it needs! We've purchased a 1.3-acre parcel of land in Waterbury Center, VT, 2 miles from our current office. Construction will begin in September. *Our efficient, purpose-built headquarters will act as a catalyst, enabling CLiF to serve many thousands more children and families in decades to come.*
- **Building Campaign:** Buildings and land are not free! We're actively raising funds toward the \$2 million project. More news soon.
- **Leadership Transition:** *In Spring 2023, after 25 years leading CLiF, I'll be stepping down as Executive Director.* We've hired a search firm, and plan to interview candidates later this year. If you or someone you know might be interested in running an award-winning nonprofit that makes a difference in thousands of young lives, please contact me.
- **Strategic Plan:** After six months gathering input from CLiF's Board, staff, stakeholders, partners and supporters, we recently completed our 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. It serves as CLiF's road map. Let us know if you'd like a copy.
- **CLiF Programs:** As this newsletter illustrates, *even while undertaking all the major projects above, CLiF has simultaneously continued to provide inspiring, time-tested programs to children in every corner of NH and VT.*

The need for CLiF's work is greater than ever, and despite COVID's many challenges, CLiF's efforts to assist deserving young readers and writers have never flagged. *Thank you for helping make CLiF's work possible!*

Duncan McDougall
CLiF Executive Director

Summer Reading Hits the Road!

Each summer, thousands of books leave the CLiF library to travel across Vermont and New Hampshire and find new homes with excited young readers! Our CLiF presenters visit destinations old and new, as our network of communities continues to expand each year. From the island of South Hero in Lake Champlain to the seacoast of New Hampshire, CLiF presenters share stories and host book giveaways at libraries, summer school programs, summer meal sites, camps, summer recreation programs and parks. We love celebrating the diversity of programs and locations that we visit each summer and the thousands of kids and families served by CLiF's Summer Readers grant.

The last two years have been challenging for our school communities, and studies on how



Participants in a CLiF Summer Readers program display their new books

the pandemic has impacted literacy skills have reached some concerning conclusions. *One study found that early reading skills were at a 20-year low, with children from historically underserved backgrounds disproportionately affected.* Now more than ever, it's essential to keep kids reading over the summer, and literacy resources are greatly needed. CLiF stands ready to meet these challenges with our lineup of inspiring storytelling presentations and a robust selection of new, high-interest books for young readers!



Inspiring a New Generation of Readers

In May, CLiF Executive Director Duncan McDougall traveled to Hill, NH (pop. 1,089) to give a Rural Library presentation. This was a special event for him. *Twenty-four years earlier, Hill was the site of CLiF's very first presentation*, where Duncan read stories to all the children in town, and delivered \$750 in new children's books to the Hill Public Library, located in a large closet in the elementary school's basement. Some of the kids in attendance at this recent event were children of the kids Duncan met in 1998! Much has changed since then. Hill's library now has its own building. CLiF has supported roughly 90% of all the rural libraries across NH and VT – many sponsored multiple times. And instead of one event and \$750 in books, CLiF's Rural Library program now provides multiple presentations by different CLiF presenters, \$2,500 in new books for the public and school libraries, a mini-grant for the public library



A new generation of readers in Hill, NH, site of CLiF's first ever presentation in 1998

for family programming, and two new books for every child to choose and keep.

Commented Brian Connelly, Hill's principal and superintendent:

"The kids were hanging on [Duncan's] every word, and the happiness and joy of being able to choose their own books could be seen in each face. CLiF is a champion of literacy and we are most thankful and grateful for all of the support we have received over the many years."

Getting a Head Start on Early Literacy

This spring, CLiF focused on early literacy partnerships for preschoolers with our At-Risk Children grant. Inspiring children to love reading at a young age and creating early access to high quality books is a key part of CLiF's mission. We served three parent-child centers in Vermont: the Orange County Parent Child Center, the Rutland County Parent Child Center, and the Family Center of Washington County; and one in New Hampshire: the Berlin Head Start program.

One preschool teacher shared the impact the grant had on his program:

"The Children's Literacy Foundation provided us with a literacy event, as well as many books for our school and for our students and their families. Local author Eric Pinder came to share his stories, but more importantly he demonstrated that anyone can be a storyteller. Spending time in each classroom, he supported the students in crafting their own stories, enriching their



A teacher shares a book with a young reader in Berlin, NH

appreciation for literature. The students of the Berlin Head Start program greatly enjoyed the event, and they are still enjoying the books provided."

Access to books from a young age creates the best opportunity for young children to develop strong early literacy skills and to become lifelong readers. As part of our commitment to early literacy, CLiF celebrates bringing stories and books for both classroom libraries and home libraries to our youngest emerging readers.

Finding Silver Linings on Zoom

A CLiF winter highlight is usually the Community Literacy Conference, an annual convention of all our Year of the Book schools (now over 100!) to share ideas on making reading and writing fun. Due to COVID, we've hosted our last two Community Literacy Conferences over Zoom. While we've missed the in-person interactions, we did find some benefits to the virtual model:

- **Increase in new participants:** Opening the conference to all partners meant that 31.5 percent of attendees were new to CLiF conferences.
- **Flexibility of timing:** Splitting the conference into three sessions over consecutive Wednesdays allowed for more participation. Eighty-five percent of spring conference attendees strongly approved of the schedule.
- **Balance of presentations:** Focusing on one topic per session allowed for a deeper dive; 100 percent of participants agreed that they received program ideas they could use right away.

"I attended all three sessions of CLiF's Community Literacy Conference, and I was greatly impressed with the sessions and the presenters. Thank you for making this conference so accessible to so many of us."
– 2022 Conference Attendee

Our sincere thanks to the many educators dedicated to remaining energetic and encouraging during this trying time. We welcome all ideas on how we can continue to support you!



Community Literacy Conference presenter Kymberlee Powe led a virtual session on building diverse classroom collections

CLiF Back in Prisons Again

After a long hiatus due to COVID prison lockdowns, CLiF is delighted to be back working face-to-face with incarcerated men and women and helping them connect with their children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews through literacy.

This spring, CLiF conducted in-person seminars in men's and women's prisons. These seminars help inmates become more comfortable and successful sharing books and stories with their kids. At the end of each event, the participants select new books for the children in their lives and write a personal note in the book. CLiF volunteers then package and mail the books home to the young readers.

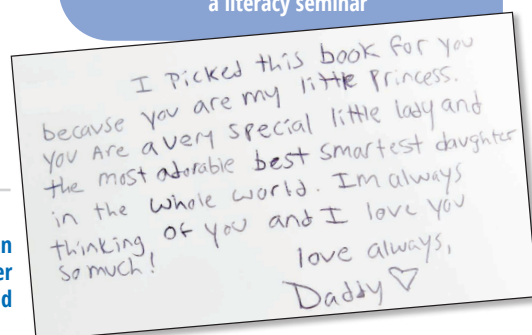
Wrote one participant:

"The many books I have been able to send my two young daughters especily in the last year are the only connection they have from me. They love getting the books. This program has ment so much to me through my incarceration. [CLiF] has inspired me and taught me how to better read to my girls too. Thank you for remembering us in these tough times. Keep up the great work!"

A note from an incarcerated father to his child



Leading incarcerated men through a literacy seminar



CLiF Presenter Wins Caldecott Medal

This January, author, illustrator and longtime CLiF presenter Jason Chin won the Caldecott Medal, the award given annually to "the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children." Chin was honored for his work on *Watercress*, a semi-autobiographical book by Andrea Wang that recalls her experiences growing up in rural Ohio, as the daughter of Chinese immigrants. (Wang received a Newbery Honor for the book.)

In *Watercress*, the protagonist gains appreciation for her heritage after gathering the titular leafy green on the side of the road with her parents. Chin has said he hopes the book helps shed light on the immigrant experience.

"I think that if there are children who are immigrants, or the children of immigrants, and they read this book, I hope it makes them feel seen. Because if you're in that position, and you feel like you don't belong, that's a very lonely feeling. And for children that aren't closely connected to the immigrant experience, I hope this book gives them a window into what other kids in their class or in their community might be feeling."



Caldecott winner Jason Chin on a visit to a CLiF Year of the Book school in Castleton, VT

Chin chose watercolors for his illustrations because they are "common to both Chinese and Western art," and studied Chinese landscape paintings to inspire his color selections and brushstrokes. His work is also infused with personal emotion, as he explained in his illustrator's note:

"When I was painting, I drew on my own memories of exclusion, loss, and guilt with the hope that they might seep into the art and add another layer to Andrea's remarkable story."

A Vermont resident, Chin grew up in New Hampshire, and was inspired to become an illustrator by a childhood experience that ties into his role as a CLiF presenter today.

"When I was a child, a children's book illustrator came to my school to present, and it changed my life. She inspired me to find joy in books, and I learned that a career as an illustrator was possible. As a CLiF presenter, I have the opportunity to present to kids in our region, and it's one of the most important and rewarding things that I do."





Children in Nashua, NH participate in a project funded by CLiF's Revive grant last summer

Celebrations of Community and Creativity

For a second year, CLiF chose to combine our Revive Your Literacy Programming and Community Building grants, providing grantees with more opportunities to meet the needs of their reading and writing communities. This spring and summer, we're partnering with six organizations (three in New Hampshire and three in Vermont) on an array of creative literacy programs. Here's a look at what's in the works:

Supporting Summer Reading programming

- The Campton Public Library in Campton, NH will kick off its "Oceans of Possibilities" summer reading program with a visit from the Whalemobile (a life-sized and interactive inflatable humpback whale). *"The Whalemobile has great curbside appeal, and we believe it will encourage more children to sign up and spend their summer reading!"* The library will also provide a circulating family pass to the New England Aquarium.
- The Berlin Public Library in Berlin, NH plans a spring and summer of garden-based activities, partnering with the Coös County Botanical Garden Club to purchase books on gardening, educate about pollinators and beekeeping, and encourage growing food in small spaces.

Promoting reading habits

- The Blue Mountain Union School in Wells River, VT will host an outdoor Literacy Carnival with games and activities inspired by Mo Willems' Elephant and Piggie books. *"Developing a Love of Literacy' will be the theme of each game in the carnival. Fun and engaging activities will be modeled after many well-known carnival games with some unique new ones!"*
- In Seabrook, NH, The Friends of Seabrook Community in Seabrook, NH will use funds for supplies for a school year Literacy Event and a Summer Reading Carnival. Community leaders will also collaborate with students on writing sequels to some of their favorite books.

Exciting younger readers

- Swanton Public Library in Swanton, VT, and Arvin A Brown Library in Richford, VT, will use funds to bring in readers up to age 5 and their families. In Swanton, the grant will help reinvigorate 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten; while Richford will use it to create educational Grab and Go bags with books and art supplies.

Go Stowe! A Community's Generosity

This spring, CLiF was honored to share in a fundraiser held by Stowe (Vermont) Elementary School's PTO during the school's two-week Read-A-Thon event. Students set a school-wide goal of reading for a combined 60,000 minutes and solicited pledges from friends and family. Half the money raised would go toward new library books; the other half to CLiF.

SES PTO board member Jamie McLimans told CLiF:

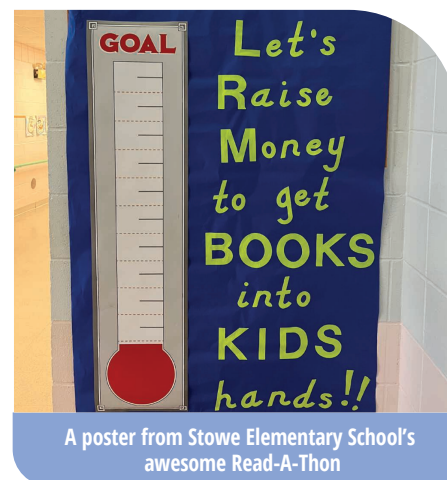
"When we heard that the students had been writing persuasive essays about how the library needed more books, it felt like the Read-A-Thon would be a good opportunity to encourage [them] to take a personal stake in getting more books! However, we also really wanted to include an 'act of service' in our fundraising, and CLiF's mission was a perfect fit. It is an amazing organization making a direct impact on many communities around Vermont and New Hampshire. The students could really relate to the cause, mission and recipients, making it more impactful for them."

Over the course of the Read-A-Thon, the students did an **amazing** job racking up their reading minutes and securing donations. The school community ultimately raised an impressive \$9,000 and donated \$4,500 to CLiF.

Of the fundraiser's success, McLimans said:

"It is clear to me that many people in our community are passionate about books, kids reading books and getting books into the hands of as many kids as possible."

CLiF is very grateful to the SES community for its generosity, and for inspiring enthusiasm around literacy!



A poster from Stowe Elementary School's awesome Read-A-Thon



News from CLiF's Presenters

Christy Mihaly's books *The Supreme Court and Us* and *Patience, Patches* were published this spring. Her upcoming book, *The Ultimate Food Atlas: Maps, Games, Recipes, and More for Hours of Delicious Fun*, is due for release later this year.

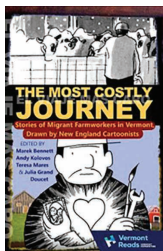
Matt Forrest Esenwine's latest picture book, *I Am Today*, came out this spring. His upcoming book, *A Beginner's Guide to Being Human*, is due out in October.

Terry Farish visited 16 classes on World Read Aloud Day (Feb. 2), reading *A Feast For Joseph*, written with musician OD Bonny. The book's main character is partially based on Bonny, who grew up in a refugee camp in Uganda, before moving to the US. *A Feast for Joseph* was also featured by drag artists Fay and Fluffy on Canada's *The Fabulous Show*, in celebration of "the importance of welcoming new people and being part of a community."

Ted Scheu's latest book, *Night-Night Body*, came out this spring and was heralded as "one of the best bedtime read-aloud stories of recent times," by the Children's Book Review.

Sy Montgomery's new book, *The Hawk's Way: Encounters with Fierce Beauty*, about working with hawks as they hunt, was released in May. *Publishers Weekly* called it "a heartfelt and informative primer, just right for adventure- and animal-loving readers."

Marek Bennett's book, *The Most Costly Journey*, was chosen by Vermont Humanities for Vermont Reads 2022, a statewide, one-book reading program. The book was also shortlisted for the inaugural Graphic Medicine International Collective (GMIC) Award for the outstanding health-related comic project completed and/or published in 2021. Coming soon: *The Civil War Diary of Freeman Colby Vol. 3 (1864)*, a YA+ graphic novel drawn from actual Civil War diaries, letters and sketchbooks!



Sarah Stewart Taylor's new book, *The Drowning Sea*, a mystery set in Ireland, is due for release in June. The Associated Press called it "a joy to read."

Blue, Barry & Pancakes: Enter the Underground Throwdown, the fourth volume in **Dan Abdo** and **Jason Patterson's** graphic novel friendship series for emerging readers, was released in March.

Carolyn Scoppettone has two Highlights Puzzle Readers due out in June and is scheduled to make an in-person visit to the Kellogg-Hubbard library in Montpelier, VT on August 3rd.

Layne Case, who recently received the Excellence in Historic Preservation Award from the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution for the book *Blame It On Revere: The Portsmouth Alarm*, published by her company, AMITY Publications. Layne attended high school with the book's author, Angela Welch, and they reconnected via Facebook 48 years after graduation.



Sarah Dillard's book *Blueberry Cake* was nominated for the 2022 Gourmand Awards, an international cookbook honor. The awards ceremony is scheduled for June in Sweden.



An eager reader with her new book



Help us send
3,000 books in 30 days
to Vermont children

VT D CLIF MEMBER DRIVE SPRING 2022 Children's Literacy Foundation

An image promoting CLiF and VTDigger's spring partnership

Compelling CLiF Collaborations

For a second consecutive year, CLiF enjoyed a successful partnership with independent news outlet VTDigger; teaming up during the organization's spring membership drive to deliver thousands of books to kids in need.

In a note to VTDigger's more than 550,000 monthly readers about this year's partnership with CLiF, Editor and Executive Director Anne Galloway emphasized the value of early literacy.

"A more informed Vermont is a smarter Vermont, and there's no better time to start than at an early age. That's why VTDigger is partnering with the Children's Literacy Foundation (CLiF) this spring to send 3,000 brand new books to kids across the state and raise awareness about the importance of early literacy for the next generation of news readers."

Our collaboration with VTDigger continues through the calendar year with a series of monthly spotlight pieces on various CLiF initiatives. We will share the pieces on our social media accounts; follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for updates!

We're also proud to announce that CLiF will be partnering with VPR and Vermont PBS this fall, during their benefit drive. While the details of the partnership are still being finalized, all of us at CLiF are very excited about the opportunity to collaborate with Vermont's award-winning unified public media organization and spread the word about our mission. Stay tuned!



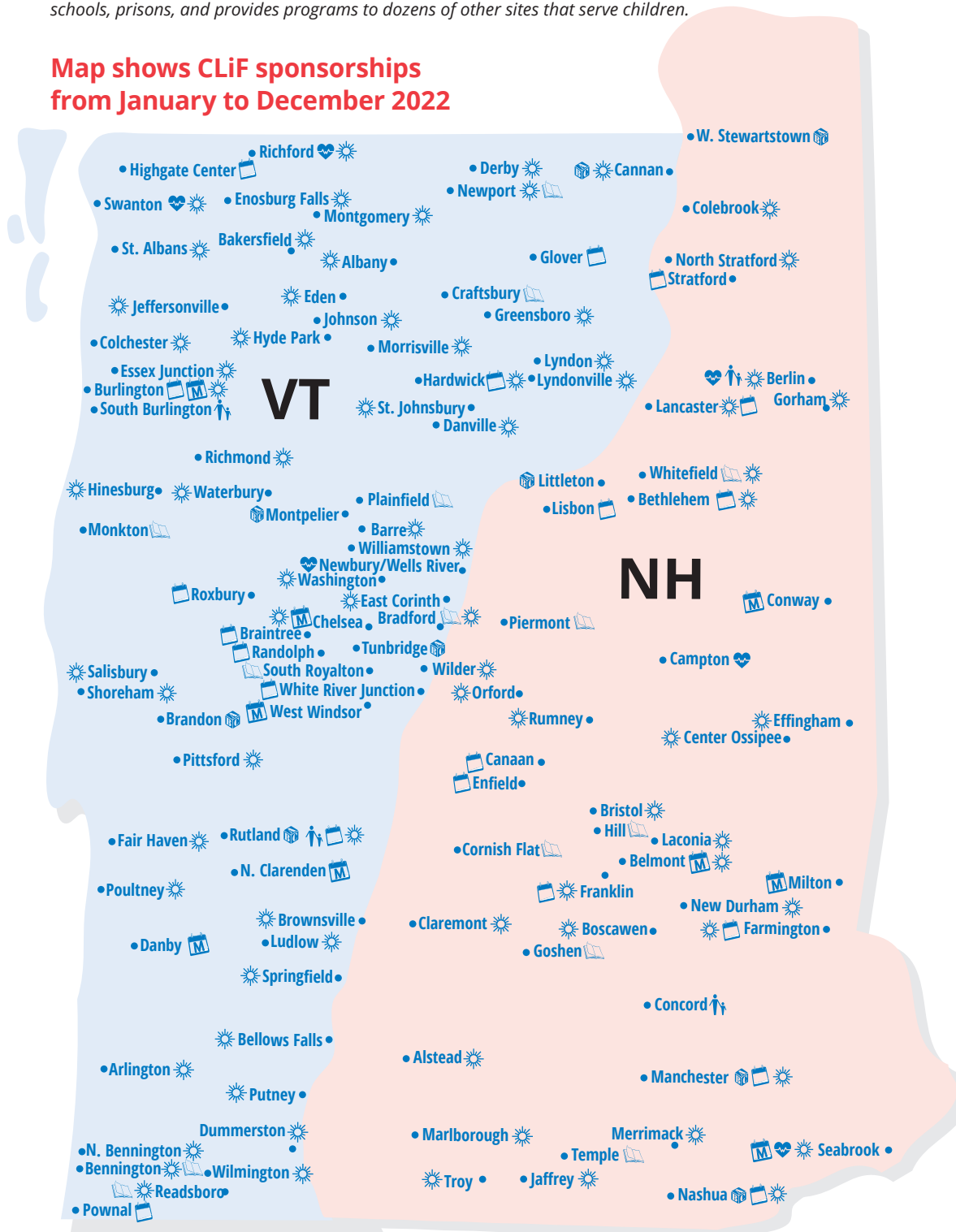
CLiF Sponsorships

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 children at higher risk of growing up with low literacy skills to love reading and writing.

CLiF provides free, inspiring literacy programs and new books to: children of incarcerated parents; refugee, migrant and foster children; children who live in shelters and affordable 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.

Map shows CLiF sponsorships from January to December 2022



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 Incarcerated Parents



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
1536 Loomis Hill Road
Waterbury Center, VT 05677

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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



Scan to sign up for our
monthly E-News bulletin!

A note from a young book-lover

