

Youth volunteer in great numbers; many desire acknowledgement

Almost half of Vermont's young people volunteer in their communities, but more than half report feeling unengaged and unappreciated by their communities.⁷⁴ A lack of youth-oriented programming and transportation may contribute to a growing sense of isolation among Vermont's youth.



the FACTS

GIVING THOUGHT

Charity and philanthropy

Both are important acts of giving that improve the human condition, and the two play complementary roles in the lives of donors and the communities that benefit from their giving. Charity often addresses immediate relief, like emergency shelters; philanthropy looks for root causes, like programs that address affordable housing. The Vermont Community Foundation is able to assist donors with both charitable giving and philanthropy.

- Nearly half of Vermont students (49% of girls and 43% of boys) in grades eight to 12 volunteer in their communities, but these percentages are slowly waning. Fewer than half in this age group feel valued by their community.⁷⁵
- One in five Vermont students report that they discuss school with their parents less than once a week. The frequency of these conversations is a commonly used predictor of academic achievement, responsible behavior and community engagement.⁷⁶
- While 61% of Vermonters over age 30 vote, only 20% of Vermonters ages 18 to 29 voted in the last midterm election as of 2002. Nationally, voter turnout in this age bracket was 22% during the same election cycle.⁷⁷ High voting rates are correlated with high social capital, which is a positive indicator of community well-being.⁷⁸

Some youth struggle with intolerance and lack of support

Young Vermonters with physical, developmental and learning disabilities are likely to encounter significant gaps in support at school and at home. When these systems fail them, these youths often enter the juvenile justice system.

Progress reports also indicate that Vermont's students of color, as well as students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning their sexual orientation, continue to suffer harassment.

In more than 30 Vermont high schools and middle schools and at least seven of its colleges, school-based, student-run gay-straight alliances address sexual orientation issues and homophobia.



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- Nationally, only 14% of youth with disabilities enter college, compared to 53% of the general population.⁷⁹
- In 1995, research indicated that approximately 90% of youths in the corrections system meet the diagnostic criteria for one or more mental health disorders.⁸⁰
- Ninety percent of youths incarcerated in Vermont do not have a high school diploma. Fifty percent received special education services.⁸¹
- According to the Vermont Human Rights Commission's 2003 progress report on Racial Harassment in Vermont Public Schools, various forms of racial harassment continue to affect students.⁸²
- Students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or questioning their sexual orientation are twice as likely to be bullied, more than five times as likely to attempt suicide, and at least 50% more likely to use drugs and alcohol.⁸³ In response, at more than 30 Vermont high schools and middle schools and at least seven of its colleges, school-based, student-run gay-straight alliances address sexual orientation issues and homophobia.⁸⁴