

HOMEFRONT

FALL 2020 | COMMITTEE ON TEMPORARY SHELTER | cotsonline.org



Community Outreach and Volunteer Specialist Romy Theisen (far right) talks with youth volunteers at First Congregational Church of Burlington this fall. Socially distant and virtual COTS speakers are available to chat with community, business, and school groups.

COTS in a time of COVID Services adapted, dignity preserved

The spring issue of COTS Homefront dropped in the mail in mid-March in what seems like a decade ago.

The world – and COTS – still look familiar but also quite different than life before the COVID-19 pandemic. At our core, though, COTS staff members continue to serve people in our community facing homelessness with dignity and respect.

“COTS was incredible in making sure that staff were supported ...,” said Emily Sikorski, Waystation Assistant Coordinator. “We had one of the earliest and most intensive disinfecting and cleaning programs (working as a team) to minimize the chance the spread of COVID-19. I’ve never felt as grateful for COTS and the values we uphold as I did during that initial, very frightening, period of the virus.”

Want to volunteer?

If you would like to learn more about ways to get involved, please email volunteer@cotsonline.org. Thank you!

COTS acted quickly in March to move and isolate our most medically at-risk guests to prevent their exposure and the spread of the virus. We revised our procedures and protocols to keep guests and staff safe. These included enhanced cleanings, mask requirements, social distancing, and offering remote support services.

We have continued to adjust our programs to respond to emerging needs and improve our services in the ongoing months.

“If we can turn this into an opportunity to build better structured supports for people who have nowhere to go, then it may just be the one positive thing to have come out of COVID-19.” EMILY SIKORSKI

COTS works in collaboration with our state, city, and nonprofit partners to make that sentiment a reality, on every level.

continued on page 2

HOW TO VOLUNTEER IN TIME OF COVID

COTS revises procedures to keep everyone safe

Volunteers are an important part of our COTS community. With the new challenges created by COVID-19, we got creative to continue to safely engage volunteers.

In March, we temporarily suspended all volunteers, and then in July, with new protocols in place, we began to slowly – and in limited ways – re-introduce volunteers to our programs.

Among the changes, we now have:

- Limited the numbers of volunteers on site and restricted the opportunities;
- Required mask-wearing, handwashing, health screenings, and temperature checks before each volunteer shift;
- Added virtual and remote volunteering as a new way to support guests.

Front-desk volunteers, providing a warm and friendly voice on the phone, were among the first to return after the installation of plexiglass barriers and floor decals to remind visitors of 6-foot social distancing guidelines. Other administrative volunteers also began to help organize in-kind donations to ensure our guests who needed these items received them in a timely manner.

For our Daystation, we took *continued on page 3*

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COVID continued from page 1

On-site support

We launched a new and robust mobile outreach team that provides on-the-ground direct services, meeting urgent and emergency needs while also working to move people toward permanent housing solutions amid a pandemic.

COTS has supported 665 adults and 51 children in area hotels since March. Many of these individuals and families were in shelters, doubled up, or precariously housed before the pandemic began.

"I am so awestruck with the generosity of our community in donating to COTS for just about anything the clients in motels need to make their stays a little better," said Tammy Santamore, COTS Mobile Outreach Coordinator.

The mobile outreach team focus on housing goals. They also have provided everything from toiletries to diapers to activity bags for children. The team has connected clients with health-care providers, helped refill prescriptions, and added minutes to client phones so they can stay in contact with critical supports.

At the start of school, the mobile outreach team delivered backpacks to the children. "It may seem small to give a backpack for a family who has some financial resources, but for the parent and child receiving it – who are experiencing homelessness – it's life-changing to help their child get a solid footing at school,

and to feel just a bit more like they have the same opportunities as their classmates," Tammy said.

Prevention outreach

The COTS Housing Resource Center's staff members provided remote services throughout the early days of the pandemic. They continue to offer a hybrid model of remote and on-site services to households at risk of becoming homeless, as well as guests in our program spaces and in area hotels.

"The housing landscape has changed more in the past six months than in my previous four years at COTS," said Sophia Senning, COTS Housing Resource Center Coordinator.

COVID-related housing resources and support are available through the state and federal funding. These include rent stabilization and utility assistance, as well as increased service capacity to help landlords and tenants learn about and access these temporary relief measures.

The HRC team has adapted quickly to understand these evolving opportunities (and their eligibility requirements), and then connect clients with housing and related resources, which include more short- and medium-term subsidies.

We have "more flexibility and support when addressing barriers to housing as well as more opportunity for support moving into housing," Sophia said. "Unfortunately, there is still an affordable housing shortage."



The COTS Daystation and other programs altered door entering and exiting protocols, as well as added plexiglass barriers and floor decals to remind of social distancing.



COTS Housing

During the statewide stay-at-home orders, COTS began delivering groceries and prepared meals to our elderly and high-risk residents of our low-income permanent housing, as well as guests staying in our shelters.

We have connected residents with supportive services, as many have struggled to navigate the many, many changes in our daily lives. Other residents have been affected by the economic fallout of the pandemic, including job losses and reductions in hours.

We also made structural changes, including fully remodeling a singular outdated bathroom in The Wilson, which provides permanent affordable housing to 23 residents, into two modern and accessible restrooms.



In our shelters

We have reduced the maximum capacity in our all of shelters to enable social distancing. COTS also has installed additional plexiglass barriers and new fresh air exchangers.

Staff in the Waystation worked to revise shelter procedures and policies through a lens of restorative justice vs. “rules and regulations.” While the rules for maintaining a safe, congregant shelter setting with the added challenge of a global pandemic, it’s the approach toward how staff and guests interact with one another that has shifted.

“The end result is that our program, while still upholding the same values and preserving peaceful enjoyment for everyone, feels miles away from where it was before the virus hit,” Emily said.

What’s next

COTS provided on-site flu shot clinic for guests and staff this fall. We follow public health and safety guidelines to keep our guests and staff well. And, we work to stay engaged with supporters and broader community through digital communication. Please follow us on social media and sign up for email newsletter for the most updated information about changes in our programs, services, and most urgent needs.

Above: COTS staff delivered donated meals and groceries to elderly and at-risk residents of COTS’ affordable housing as well as guests at our shelters during the stay-at-home order. Left: COTS remodeled an aging bathroom at The Wilson into two modern and accessible restrooms for residents.

VOLUNTEER *continued from page 1*

precautions to decrease shared items. In order for guests to maintain 6-foot distancing while eating a noontime meal, we updated our meal donations procedures. We now no longer allow volunteers to serve meals from our warming kitchen. Instead, we request volunteers drop-off donated individually wrapped meals that can be stored safely, re-heated and distributed as needed over a few days.

In our family shelters, volunteer engagement plays an important role in supporting children and parents. This summer, we offered a few, limited in-person outside volunteering opportunities. However, in-person volunteering inside shelter is not a possibility.

In response, our staff worked with guests to identify their current needs and develop new strategies to support families through virtual volunteering through Zoom. We also worked with outside volunteers, including a local Brownie troop and members of National Life Group, to create “activity kits” that included paper, games, markers, coloring books. Members of Club AFECT (University of Vermont early education and social work students) then engaged children in shelter virtually, using new digital tools and activity kits.

Our shelter staff also identified children who needed homework help. Again, volunteers were matched with students to assist them via video conferencing tools. Our remote volunteers also are good at having fun, hosting virtual dance parties and group games.



Longtime volunteer Bill Talentino greets visitors at our main office’s front desk. Plexiglass and floor decals were installed in response to COVID-19.

Ending veteran homelessness achieved

VA declares Chittenden County reaches milestone

Chittenden County is now the 79th community in the United States to declare an end to veteran homelessness.

“The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Department of Veterans Affairs are pleased to confirm that the Chittenden County Continuum of Care (VT-501) has ended homelessness among veterans,” wrote Beverly Ebersold, USICH Director of National Initiatives, in a letter to Winooski Mayor Kristine Lott and Burlington Mayor Miro Weinberger in August. “We are confident that the infrastructure and systems you have built will ensure that any veteran experiencing homelessness in the region will get the support they need to quickly obtain a permanent home.”

COTS’ Canal Street Veterans Housing was an important part of our community reaching this goal. The facility, constructed in partnership with Housing Vermont, provided a mix of transitional and permanent affordable apartments and began welcoming residents in 2011. In addition to housing, the COTS Canal Street program offered on-site supportive services to veterans and their families for nearly a decade.

Through last year, 84 veterans who were homeless entered the Canal Street program; more than 70% of participants in the program met or exceeded the VA’s critical stable housing benchmark.

The building continues to benefit veterans and people facing homelessness. Of the 29 total units at Canal Street, many current residents are veterans, graduates of the Canal Street program, or were previously homeless or at-risk of homelessness.



TAMIRA MARTEL

Vermont veterans, including the VFW State Commander and members of Essex VFW Post 6689, visited Canal Street to present a plaque to COTS Development Director Becky Holt in memory of Kevin Maloney, a member of the volunteer Canal Street Housing Veterans Committee who passed away in 2018. Kevin’s family also joined for the presentation. Marty Martinez, Ed Von Sitas, Michael Viens, Rodney Myers and Kevin worked closely with COTS to make Canal Street a reality – and the building is a lasting legacy to their commitment to support veterans.

Canal Street’s main floor has a community room space for programming.



GARY HALL

Canal Street Veterans Housing in Winooski was completed in January 2011. The multi-story building was constructed by a partnership between COTS and Housing Vermont with a mix of public and private funding.



JONATHAN FARRELL

COTS supports students in our family shelters

Remote learning and hybrid schooling have created added challenges for students, parents, and teachers alike. This is especially true for children who are also experiencing homelessness.

Throughout the summer, we strategized new ways to support our families – though structural changes as well as in the ways we provide services. “Through conversations with parents, I sought to understand the remote learning experience in shelter and relay its impact on families to those designing the hybrid model,” said Fiona Mahurin, COTS Children’s Education Advocate.

Thus far, we have:

Improved our Wi-Fi in shelter

We installed new routers with boosters and upgraded our high-speed internet this summer. This allowed us to accommodate multiple users online simultaneously with strong Wi-Fi connection throughout our shelters.

Purchased new furniture and educational resources

We purchased lightweight, folding desks and chairs along with portable lap desks so children could set up a personalized learning station almost anywhere. We also ordered additional art supplies, enrichment materials, books and games. These purchases focused on facilitating social and emotional learning, addressing issues such as problem-solving, decision-making, friendship, and conflict management. We also developed spaces that naturally cater to self-directed learning and play filled with sensory, fine/gross motor, imaginary play, and mindfulness activities, as well as math and language “manipulatives” that require little to no instruction and all could be easily cleaned and sanitized regularly.

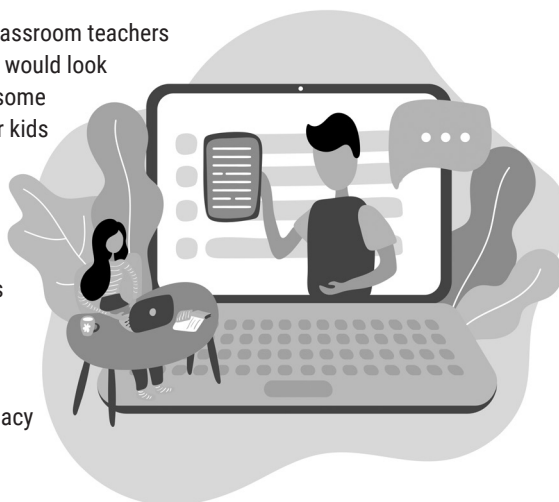
Re-evaluated spaces in shelter for students to study

While some families preferred their children use our shelters’ communal spaces for remote learning, other parents wanted a private space for their child to learn successfully and comfortably. A mom in shelter described the shame her child experienced after witnessing the economic disparity made visible by seeing the homes of classmates through the screen. The mom then purchased and hung posters in their room to make it “look cooler.” This conversation, along with many others, led to the repurposing of underutilized spaces within shelter to create additional private or semi-private study spaces to help facilitate remote learning.

Facilitated conversations between families and their schools

Staff helped parents meet virtually with classroom teachers to understand what a remote-learning day would look like. “This helped ease a lot of fears that some families in shelter had about sending their kids back to school,” said Patrick Sheehan, COTS Family Shelter Coordinator. Our Children Education Advocate also helped families navigate team IEP meetings as parents advocated for additional supports or worked to develop better solutions for their children.

“I am continually inspired by parent advocacy through the changing realities of school during a pandemic,” Fiona said.



COTS Web site redesigned

AmeriCorps member Dawn Ippolito, who served for a year at COTS, redesigned the COTS Web site this summer, with the new site debuting this fall. The new site is mobile responsive, making it easier and faster for people seeking help to find critical information and connect with COTS.

Among the major changes:

- A responsive Web site with mobile-first design;
- Improved accessibility;
- Simplicity in design and minimalist navigation.

Continue to visit our Web site over the coming weeks, as we deepen our content and ways to interact with COTS digitally.

Creating an accessible Web site with mobile-first design was important to COTS as we work to pay attention to all levels of our services and communication, particularly in a time of more remote connections.

COTS Walk goes virtual

Our 31st Annual COTS Walk – “One World. Many Journeys Home” – went virtual in May. We are happy to share that thanks to our community’s incredible generosity, we raised more than **\$235,000** to support COTS programs. Thank you!

To create our virtual experience, we offered a new online Walk activity each weekday throughout the month of April. These engaging and educational activities are designed for all ages and can be done at any time, *including right now*. Visit www.cotsonline.org/cotswalk to check them out.

On our May 3rd Walk Day, COTS debuted **FIVE** Virtual COTS Walks for supporters to travel. The first option is entirely online:



Online COTS Walk

This Walk is one you can take, entirely online from your phone or computer, to explore the COTS shelters, housing, and programs with special video messages from friends of COTS. There are four additional Walks that people can choose – and personally design, following health and safety guidelines. Each Walk comes with a small booklet (a “zine”) that you can download from the COTS Virtual Walk Web site to read as part of your Walk experience that will help you learn more about COTS’ mission, programs, and results.

Traditional COTS Walk

A walk of your own choosing, reflecting on COTS missions, programs;

Mindful COTS Walk

A walk that focuses on your senses to raise awareness and see the often-hidden face of homelessness in our community;

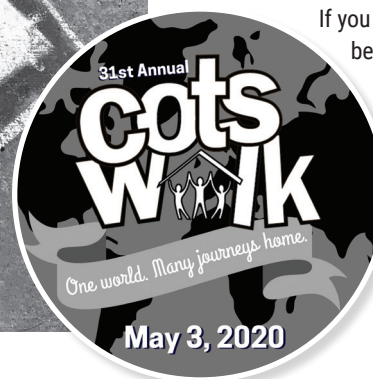
Nature COTS Walk

A walk to explore the harmony of nature and reflect on the lessons we can learn from it, as we work to support humanity locally and globally;

Night COTS Walk

A walk to make you look up – at the stars – as you consider our personal and communal aspirations.

If you haven’t taken the Walk before, we hope you will check it out virtually this year!



There are nearly 25 daily Walk activity packages for supporters to explore to learn more about COTS and have some fun, too.

Our Walk would not be possible without our sponsors generous support:

Children & Families Sponsors

City Market Onion River Co-op
National Life Group
Pomerleau Foundation, Inc.

Media Sponsors

Star 92.9
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Instrumart
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Northeast Delta Dental
Northwestern Vermont Board of Realtors
Queen City Printers, Inc.
Redstone Commercial Group
SeaComm
Stephen & Burns, Inc.
The University of Vermont Medical Center

Generous Inkind Sponsors

Cabot Creamery Co-operative; Vermont Lake Monsters; W.B. Mason

Challenge Walkers

INDIVIDUALS

Meredith Ackel; Beth Anderson; Scot Barker; Mary Candon; Jason Crooks; Denise Danyow; Bob Duncan; Jonathan Farrell; Leslie Griffiths; Joyce Hagan; Judy and Clif Hamel; Andrew Hanson; Zoe Hart; Elizabeth Hazen; Becky Holt; Sydney Holt Barker; Dawn Ippolito; Stephen Kiernan; Michael Lipson; Rita Markley; Jeffrey Martin; Nan Mason; Reagan Murphy; Lucy Samara; Sophia Senning; Evan Stainman; Gillian Taylor; Thyleen Tenney

BUSINESS

Baystate Financial; Cabot Creamery Co-operative; Champlain Investment Partners; Definitive Healthcare; Employees' Community Action Council of General Dynamics; KeyBank; Marvell Semiconductor

SCHOOL

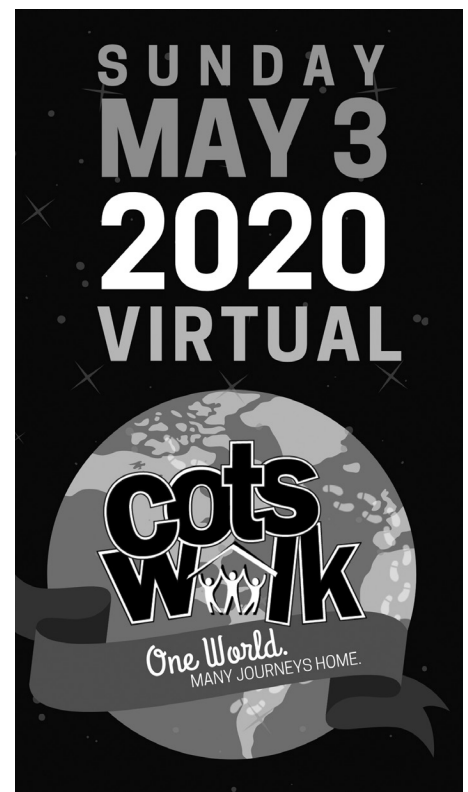
Burlington High School
Rice Memorial High School

FAITH

All Souls Interfaith Gathering; Essex Catholic Community (Holy Family/St. Lawrence Parish & St. Pius X Parish); First Congregational Church of Burlington; First Unitarian Universalist Society; Sisters of Mercy; St. Catherine of Siena; St. James Episcopal Church; United Church of Fairfax; United Church of Underhill

COMMUNITY

Taylor Family Unite; The Holt Barkers; The Stefanowicz Family



There are four "zines" that supporters can download, print, fold, and take to read on their personal Virtual COTS Walk. Download yours at: cotsonline.org/cotswalk



Daily Walk activities include stories to read, recipes to cook, a few TikTok dances, and artistic endeavors, such as chalk drawing messages.



This year's Virtual COTS Walk included several videos from our supporters. The Blewer-Bohjalian family – artist Victoria Blewer, actress Grace Experience, and author Chris Bohjalian, with their new pup, Jesse – shared a special message with our Walkers.

It Takes a Village

Donations, Drives, and COTS Wish List

Gadue's partners with COTS to dry clean winter coats donated by the community to help keep our guests warm through their Coats for Kids and Families program.

Starter Bakery, in partnership with **Hotel Vermont**, donated to COTS as part of their Long Haul Initiative supporting causes related to housing, education, and nutrition.

Evolution PT & Yoga hosted a Yin & Restorative benefit for COTS.

Burlington Furniture Co. donated 1 percent of their sales in the month of September to support COTS, which they have generously done for more than 20 years.

SEABA invited COTS to join in the fun providing a coloring page for this year's Kids Hop as part of the **2020 South End Art Hop**.

Sherpa Foods donated items from the COTS Wish List in honor of their son Aiden's birthday.

The Pajama Program drive collected 86 books and pajamas for children in COTS services.

The Children' Literacy Foundation donated boxes of high-quality, new books to children with COTS. "During a time when schools and libraries are closed, children need access to fun, inspiring books now more than ever," Executive Director Duncan McDougall wrote to us this summer before delivering his donation to us. (photo at right)

Carters donates baby clothing for guests in family shelter monthly.

Hanes for Good donated 500 pairs of socks as part of their **2020 Hanes Sock Drive**.



Special thanks to those who have donated from our wish list or set up donations drives: **Erin Perry** donated much needed socks, hats, mittens, and gloves; **Betty and Marvin Libson** donated bottles of toothpaste, shampoos, razors, Lysol wipes and spray, and spaghetti sauce; **Holly Burnham** donated winter boots and coats; **CVS** donated 20 boxes of assorted items; **Don Leopold** donated soaps; **Ronald McDonald House Charities of Burlington** donated several boxes of napkins; **Andrew and Leslie Griffiths** donated Hanes Eco smart sweatshirts and sweatpants; **Jacqueline and Glen Bolster** donated spring treats and gift cards for children in family shelter; **Ron and Laura Sheehan** donated spring baskets for children; Vermont Child Health Improvement Program donated personal toiletries; **Vermont Department of Health** donated assorted winter socks, gloves, hats, toiletries, and wipes; **Vermont Business Magazine** donated ad space; **Mary Reck** donated soaps and head coverings; **Helen Toor** donated a vacuum cleaner; **Travis Counter** donated a towel, sheets, and a pillowcase; **Lakeside Pharmacy** donated a tent; **Joe Moriarty** donated pads; **Shannon Kahaly** donated food and toiletries; **Maria Jackson** donated boxes of twin mattress pad protectors; **Laurie Mason** donated mattress encasements; **Hope Lodge** donated totes filled with hygiene products; **Morgan Van Blunk** donated homemade knit hats; **Malissa Morgan** donated assorted items; **Courtney Thomas** donated a shower curtain and a pillow; **Nikki Gerlach** donated a dinnerware set; **Kate Seitz** donated books



COTS Community Outreach & Volunteer Specialist Romy Theisen picks up donated school supplies at Staples.



AmeriCorps Racquel Bozzelli (far left) and COTS Community Outreach & Volunteer Specialist Romy Theisen (far right) share backpacks, stuffed with school supplies, with our friends at our nonprofit partner and neighbor, the Sara Holbrook Center

and medical supplies; **Sherpa Foods** donated blankets, pillows, towels, laundry baskets, ear buds, and food; **Christina Deeley** donated highlighters, mechanical pencils, rulers zipper file bags, and waterproof shower liners; **Essex Free Library** ran a drive for hats and mittens; **Allison Dennehy** donated books; **Susan Littlefield** donated kids winter coats; **Jenny Hughes** donated a Lowe Alpine backpack; **Mary Ellen Henry** donated knitted winter hats; **Marcia Piper** donated a hair salon gift card.

COVID-19 Response

We received donated masks from several supporters: **Hanes** donates 3,500 cotton masks; **Temple Sinai**

Reform Jewish Congregation donated cloth face masks made by members; **Elaine Horseman** donated cotton masks; the **Mountain Mamas** also donated homemade masks.

We received much-needed cleaning supplies, in particular when these items were impossible to find to purchase: The Senft-Miller family donated paper towels, hand sanitizer, and wipes; **Jennie Walker** donated latex gloves, hand sanitizer, baby wipes, antibacterial wipes, toilet paper, and tissues; **Amanda Grant** and **Ben Schacher** donated disinfectant liquid and wipes; **Evan Stainman** donated cleaning supplies, including bleach and spray bottles;

Jessica Radbord donated bleach; **Sarah DeGray** donated disinfecting wipes and bleach; **Jason Fiedinger** donated cleaning wipes; **Anna Burke** donated bathroom cleaner; **Robin Perlah** donated disinfectant spray; **Patricia MacCubbin** and **Ernest Prentice** donated toilet paper, tissue, and several cleaning supplies; **Robin Redden** donated toilet paper and disinfectant wipes; **Emily Mott** donated disinfectant wipes; **Seventh Generation** donated disinfectant cleaning supplies; **Sarah DeGray** donated disinfectant wipes and bleach; **Jason Fiedinger** donated disinfectant wipes; **David** and **Barbara Lamonda** donated medical supplies and paper towels.

Local businesses and many individuals also helped provide hand sanitizer to COTS: Laura Sorkin; Green Mountain Distillers; Burlington International Airport; Smugglers Notch Distillery; HomeBridge Financial Services; Caledonia Spirits; and Dr. Daniel Krymkowski.

Dealer.com donated hand sanitizer as well as professional cleaning services to the Waystation and the Daystation, allowing COTS to increase the frequency of our shelter cleanings.

COVID-friendly, creative-learning kits were created for children in shelter: Thank you to National Life Group; Kristen Cooper; Jennifer K. Warfield; Robin Bell; Colvin; Alison Duback and Williston Brownie Troop #30217.

Meals and Food Support

Sugarsnap Catering provided meals at a reduced cost, many of which were supported by outreach to their customers. We are grateful to the many individuals and partners who have purchased Daystation meals through this partnership.

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Volunteer Pamela Smith helped count and organize hundreds of donated school supplies.



During the stay-at-home quarantine, COTS staff delivered donated meals and groceries to our family shelter and housing residents.

It Takes a Village

Thank you for providing lunch to the Daystation: **New Moon Café; Colchester-Milton Rotary Club; Tania Batley; Michael and Lisa Perrin; Sherpa Foods; Tom Hartshorn; Sarah Blakely; All Souls Interfaith Gathering; College Street Congregational UCC; Love & Blessings; Burlington School Food Project; Mansfield Hall lunch; Bueno Y Sano; Evan Stainman; Sugarsnap Catering**; and **Feeding Chittenden.**

Thank you for supporting meals at our family shelters: **Dealer.com; Tyson Meats; Eric Svensson of Coffee Quality Laboratory; Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains; Starbucks; Champlain Investment Partners; City Market Onion River Co-op; Sugarsnap Catering; Dunkin Joy in Childhood Foundation and Dairy Farmers of Americas.**

Thanks to the **Intervale Center** for including COTS in their Fair Share Program that helps provide fresh food to our guests in shelter, and **COSTCO** for donating a gift card each month to help support COTS Daystation meal program.

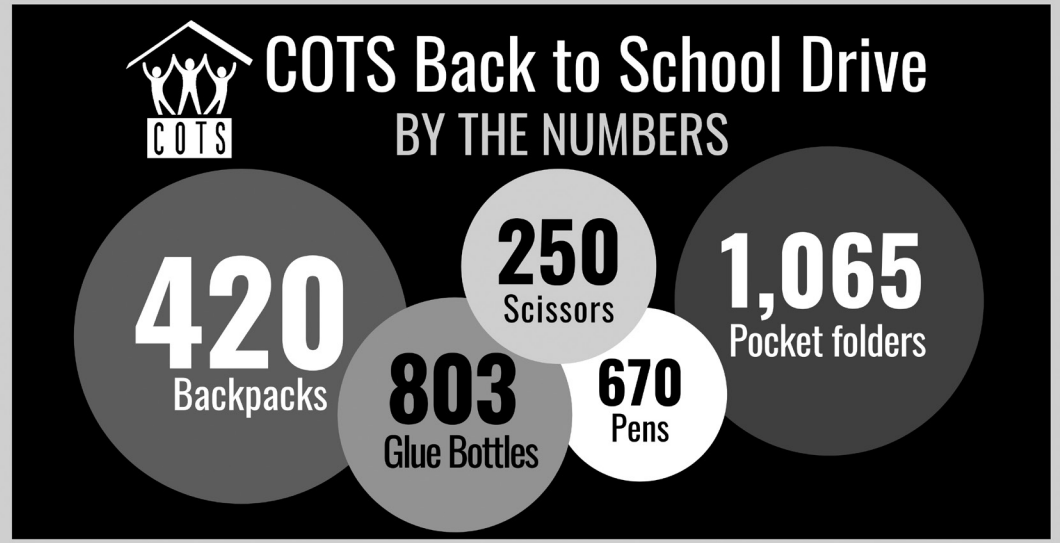
Volunteer Highlights

Thank you, **Tyler Raymond** for your longtime commitment to the COTS Daystation as regular volunteer. We appreciate you also helping with the COTS front desk reception several times in the past months.

Thank you, **Isaac Steinzor** for your help organizing and counting in-kind donations. Your help made all the difference in distributing donations to people in COTS programs and with our partner organizations.

COTS Back to School Drive

Thanks to the generosity of **KeyBank, Staples, Homebridge, Star 92.9, WCAX-TV, Vermont Lake Monsters, Rhino Cares** and numerous individual donors, our COTS Back to School Drive was a huge success. Throughout the monthlong drive in August, we collected nearly 7,000 school supplies from the community. Backpacks, with supplies for school children preparing for the start of school and remote learning, were distributed to families supported by COTS or our community partners: **Burlington Boys & Girls Club, King Street Center, STEPS to End Domestic Violence, Spectrum Youth & Family Services, and the Sara Holbrook Community Center.**



Thank you, **Pamela Smith** for helping to make the Back to School drive such a success. We appreciate your hours counting, organizing, and stuffing backpacks for children in our community.

Bill Talentino, thank you for your dedication to COTS in all respects. We are grateful to you for being a warm voice over the phone and helping countless people receive the services they need.

Linda Chiasson, thank you for your front desk support. In such unforeseen times, your help is truly needed and so much appreciated.

We would also like to give special recognition to our incredible AmeriCorps volunteers who served with us this past year, responding in extraordinary ways to tremendous needs during the pandemic: **Kirsten Fry**, Daystation; **John Mullen**, Housing Resource Center; and **Dawn Ippolito**, Development.

Our youngest supporters

Desi Hong started second grade this fall at Hinesburg Community School, but earlier this summer, over Father's Day weekend, he was busy being a budding philanthropist. Desi held a yard sale at his Nana's house in Colchester to help people who are facing homelessness. He raised \$453.51 to donate to COTS. Desi had seen a man on a corner with a sign that said: "Homeless, Anything Helps." He first thought of sharing part of his snack with him, but the light turned green too quickly, and his mom suggested there might be another way to help. Desi then decided to have a yard sale to sell some of his unused toys. When he and his parents met with COTS Development Director Becky Holt via Zoom to talk about his donation to COTS, Desi shared how he wanted to grow up to be a builder, and that one day each year, he was going to build houses for people who were experiencing homelessness. Desi is among of the many young supporters of COTS this year, who shared hats and other essential items from the COTS Wish List.



Thank YOU!

These generous businesses and organizations provided in-kind and financial support to COTS during our fiscal year 2020 (October 1, 2019–September 30, 2020). In addition to the names here, hundreds of individuals and foundations have made financial and/or in-kind gifts in support of COTS programs and services this past year. The foundations listed below have requested inclusion in our newsletter:

1st Republic Brewing Company
95 Triple X
A Single Pebble
Advanced Math & Science Academy
Advanced Vision Care
Aerodyme Corporation
Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
The Alchemist Brewery
All Saints Episcopal Church
All Souls Interfaith Gathering
Al's French Frys
AmazonSmile
American Endowment Foundation
American Flatbread
America's Gardening Resource, Inc.
Ameriprise Financial, Inc.
Aplomb Consulting, LLC
April Cornell
Athena Health
The Automaster
Autumn Harp, Inc.
AXA Foundation
The Bagel Cafe & Deli
Bags 4 My Cause
The Bank of America Charitable Foundation
The Bay Corporation
Bed Bath & Beyond
Bee's Wrap
Ben & Jerry's Foundation
Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream
Benevity Community Impact Fund
Bentley University - Office of Undergraduate Admissions
Bessemer Trust
The Big Blue Trunk
Bluebird Barbecue
BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont
BNY Mellon
Bob's Laundry Vending Service, LLC
Bogner of America
Bombas Socks

Borsavage Hospitality, LLC (Lang House)
böswellness
Boucher & Pritchard Funeral Home
Boy Scout Troop 602 – Shelburne
Boy Scout Troop 692 – Williston
Brault's Mobile Homes, Inc.
Breezy Hill Marketing
Brian's North End Automotive
Bueno Y Sano
Burlington Choral Society
Burlington Emergency & Veterinary Specialists
Burlington Furniture
Burlington International Airport
Burlington Parks and Recreation
Burlington School Food Project
Burlington Technical Center
Business Communication Services, Inc.
Butternut Mountain Farm
Cabot Creamery Co-operative
Cady's Falls Nursery
Caledonia Spirits
Carter's
Cedar Ledge Builders, Inc.
Champlain College
Champlain Investment Partners
Champlain Valley Dispensary, Inc.
Chappell's Florist
Charities Aid Foundation of America
Charity Navigator
Charles Schwab
Children's Literacy Foundation
Chittenden County Public Defender's Office
Church Street Marketplace
City Market Onion River Co-op
City of Burlington Housing Trust Fund
City of South Burlington
Coffee Quality Laboratory
Colchester Hockey Boosters
Colchester-Milton Rotary Club

College Street Congregational UCC
Combined Federal Campaign of Northern New England
Common Deer
Community National Bank
Community Shares of Colorado
Co-operative Insurance Companies
Cope & Associates
Copper Leaf Financial
Costco Wholesale #314
Courtyard Burlington Harbor Hotel
CSE, Inc.
Cummings Electric, P.C.
Cushman Design Group, Inc.
CVS
Cx Associates, LLC
Cybergrants
Dairy Farmers of America
Danforth Pewter
Daughters of Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
Davis & Hodgdon Associates CPAs
Dealer.com
Dee Physical Therapy Services, LLC
Definitive Healthcare
Desai Management Consulting
Diemer Properties, LLC
Dok Wright Photography
DR Power Equipment
Duncan * Wisniewski Architecture
Eagle Eye Farm, Inc.
Edmunds Elementary School Choir
El Cortijo
Employees' Community Action Council of General Dynamics
Energy Futures Group, Inc.
Engineering Ventures
Engineers Without Borders VT
The Essex
Essex Alliance Church
Essex Center United Methodist Church
Essex Center United Methodist Church Women
Essex Free Library
Evolution Physical Therapy and

Yoga Studio
Exelon Foundation
Faith United Methodist Church
Faith United Methodist Church Women
Fanny Allen Corporation, Inc.
Far Post Soccer Club
The Farmhouse Group
Farrell Properties
Feeding Chittenden
FHLBank Boston
Fidelity Charitable
First Congregational Church of Burlington
First Unitarian Universalist Society
Flynn Center for the Performing Arts
FoodScience Corporation
Four Seasons Sotheby's International Realty
Frank Webb Home
Fraternal Order of Eagles #3210
The Friendly Toast
Frontstream
Furchgott Sourdiffe Gallery
Fusion Property Management, LLC
G W Tatro Construction, Inc.
Gadue's Dry Cleaning
Gardener's Supply
The Gay & Lesbian Fund of Vermont, Inc.
GE Foundation
GE United Way Campaign
Geri Reilly Real Estate
Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains
Goldman, Sachs & Co. Matching Gift Program
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Gordon's Window Decor
Grace United Methodist Church
Grand Isle Lake House
Greater Burlington YMCA
Great Harvest Bread Co.
Greek Orthodox Philoptochos
Green Mountain Chorus
Green Mountain Distillers

IRA Charitable Rollover

Taxpayers age 70½ and older can increase their gift-giving capacity through the Charitable IRA Rollover by donating up to \$100,000 from their IRAs directly to COTS or another nonprofit of their choice. This enables IRA account owners who are subject to the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) rules to use untaxed money in an IRA as a donation to a charity tax-free. For more information, visit www.cotsonline.org or reach out to your financial advisor.

Green Mountain Montessori School	Marketplace Fitness	PMI Champlain Valley Chapter	Starter
Green Mountain Multisport	Marvell Semiconductor	Pomerleau Foundation, Inc.	Stephen & Burns, Inc.
Hallam-ICS	MAXIMUS Foundation	Pomerleau Properties, Inc.	Stone Underground Construction
Hameline Wealth Management of Raymond James	McSoley McCoy & Co.	Positive Change	Stonecutter Spirits, LLC
Hanes for Good	The Meredith Corporation	Primary Care Health Providers	Strategic Risk Solutions
Hannaford Supermarkets	The Mervyn L. Brenner Foundation, Inc.	QGenda	Sugarsnap
Harold Hill Consulting	Metropark, LLC (The Hood Plant)	Queen City Printers, Inc.	Summit Properties
Haun Welding Supply	Mirabelles, Inc.	Raymond James Charitable Endowment Fund	Sustainability Academy at Lawrence Barnes
Heartworks School	Mission of Hope	Reach For The Stars Childcare and Preschool	Sweeney DesignBuild, LLC
Heavenly Cents Thrift Shop	Mister Z's Restaurant	Red House, Inc.	Synergy Dance
Hemenway & Barnes LLP	Monelle Vermont	Redstone Commercial Group	TCE Trudell Consulting Engineers
Henry's Diner	Monkey Do!	The Residence at Shelburne Bay	TD Bank
Hill Associates, Inc.	Montgomery & Granai, PC	Resource Systems Group, Inc.	TD Charitable Foundation
Hilton Burlington Lake Champlain	Montstream Studio	Rhino Foods	TELigence Partners
HomeBridge Financial Services, Inc.	Morgan Stanley Global Impact Funding Trust, Inc.	Rí Rá Irish Pub	Temple Sinai Reform Jewish Congregation
Hope Lodge	Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, LLC	Rice Memorial High School	Teucrium Trading, LLC
Horsford Gardens and Nursery	The Mountain Mamas	Richmond Congregational Church	Town of Bolton
Hotel Vermont	Mountain View Animal Hospital	Rick Marcotte Central School	Town of Charlotte
Howard Center – The Resource Center	MSK Attorneys	Rock Point School	Town of Essex
IBM Computershare	Must Love Yarn	Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington	Town of Huntington
IBM Employee Charitable Contribution Campaign	National Life Group	Ronald McDonald House Charities	Town of Jericho
IBM Retiree Charitable Campaign	National Life Group Charitable Foundation, Inc.	Rose Computer Technology Services, Inc.	Town of Richmond
Independent Block, LLC	Network for Good	Roth Real Estate	Town of Underhill
Instrumart	New England Air Systems	Runamok Maple	Town of Williston
Intervale Center	New England Federal Credit Union	S.D. Ireland Companies	Trader Joe's
Irving Oil	New England Floor Covering	Salvador and Babic, P.C.	The Training, Marketing & Technology, Inc.
ISCIENCES, LLC	The New England Patriots	The Schoolhouse	Trapp Family Lodge
J M Smith Foundation	New Moon Cafe	Schwab Charitable Fund	Trust Company of Vermont
J. A. Morrissey, Inc.	NorthCountry Federal Credit Union	SDR Clothing Co.	Union Mutual of Vermont Companies
Jeff Corey Excavating, Inc.	Northeast Delta Dental	SeaComm	United Church of Colchester
Jericho Management Company, LLC	Northern Vermont Oncology Nursing Alliance	Seventh Generation	United Church of Fairfax
JMM & Associates	Northfield Savings Bank	Seventh Generation Foundation, Inc.	United Methodist Women of Montgomery
Joy in Childhood Foundation, Inc.	Northgate Residents' Ownership Corp.	Shelburne Charlotte Hinesburg Interfaith Projects (SCHIP)	United Technologies Matching Gift Program
Kelsey Trust	Norwich University	Shelburne Museum	United Way of Coastal Fairfield County, Inc.
Keurig Dr Pepper	Oh My Dog VT	Sherpa Foods, LLC	United Way of Northwest Vermont
KeyBank	Oil n Go	Sisters of Mercy NE Community	United Way Suncoast
KeyBank Foundation	Old Navy	The Skinny Pancake	University Mall
KeyBank National Association	OnLogic	Slate, LCC	The University of Vermont Athletic Department Club AFECT
La Villa Bistro	Opportunities Credit Union	Smith-Alvarez-Sienkiewicz Architects	Enactus / Rotaract Club Ski Team
Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce	The Optical Center	Smugglers Notch Distillery	The University of Vermont Medical Center:
Lakeside Pharmacy	Our Hearts to Your Soles	Sodexo, Inc. & Affiliates	Lab Clinical Chemistry
Larkin Realty	Our House Bistro	Speeder & Earl's Coffee, Inc.	Larner College of Medicine
Laughing River Yoga	Paige & Campbell, Inc.	St. Andrew's Episcopal Church	Ophthalmology Group
Leonardo's Pizza	Paul Frank + Collins P.C.	St. John Vianney Church	Orthopedics and Rehab Center
Love and Blessings	Paw Print & Mail	Saint Michael's College Edmundite Campus Ministry	Vermont Child Health Improvement Program
Lunaroma	PayPal Giving Fund	Saint Michael's College MOVE Office	
Management Accounting Services, LLC	People's United Bank	Staples	
Mansfield Hall	People's United Community Foundation	Star 92.9	
Manufacturing Solutions, Inc.	Pine Forest Children's Center	Starbucks	
Maple Wind Farm	Pizzagalli Properties, LLC		Ursa Major
			USANA

UVA Club of Vermont
 Vanguard Charitable
 Verilux, Inc.
 Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition
 Vermont Business Magazine
 Vermont Catholic Charities
 Vermont Children's Trust Foundation
 Vermont Coffee Company
 Vermont Community Foundation
 Vermont Cookie Love
 Vermont Department of Health
 Vermont Gas Systems, Inc.
 Vermont Growers Association
 Vermont Gynecology
 Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
 Vermont Housing Finance Agency
 Vermont Information Processing, Inc.
 Vermont Lake Monsters
 Vermont Mutual Insurance Co.
 Vermont Pub & Brewery of Burlington
 Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program
 Vermont State Employees Credit Union
 Vermont Systems, Inc.
 Vermont Zen Center
 VFW Post 1767
 von Trapp Greenhouse
 W.B. Mason
 Wake Robin
 Wallows
 Walmart
 WCAX-TV
 West Meadow Bakery
 Williston Central School
 Williston Federated Church
 Willow House
 Willow's Bagels
 Winburn Law Offices
 The Windjammer Restaurant
 Windmill Children's Center of Cape Cod
 WOKO/WJOY Radio
 WowToyz
 Wright & Morrissey, Inc.
 Yankee Farm Credit
 YourCause, LLC
 Zinnia, Inc.

A decade of Cookies for Good Sugarsnap delivers social enterprise with impact

Cookies for Good is a "bake sale every day" for COTS that Cabot Creamery Co-op helped launched and continues as a sustainable revenue source through our longtime partnership with **Sugarsnap Catering**.

Sugarsnap, a Vermont farm-to-table caterer owned by Abbey Duke, donates 35 percent from every Cookie for Good they sell to COTS. In 10 years, that's raised more than \$100,000 to support COTS' shelters, services, and homelessness prevention. Talk about social enterprise with impact!

This year, Sugarsnap, like many other businesses affected by the pandemic, has adapted and worked hard to "stay in business and be useful."

Abbey recently received an anonymous voice mail that has given her more satisfaction than any other feedback she said she has received in her 16 years of running Sugarsnap: "I just wanted to let you all know that there's someone out there that appreciates what you do every day. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

The caller, who also thanked Abbey for providing "quality food that tastes good," was staying in an area hotel, where Sugarsnap delivers three individually packaged meals every day. The catering business, through a contract with the state, feeds 400 people each day in Chittenden County hotels. Many of these guests were in emergency shelters or doubled up before the pandemic, and are connected with the COTS mobile outreach team for housing services.

"I have listened to this voicemail multiple times," Abbey wrote in a recent Sugarsnap blog post. "I played it for the whole Sugarsnap team. It really goes to the heart of why I am happy and proud to go to work every day."

COURTESY OF SUGARSNAP CATERING



How to order

Order a box of Cookies for Good from Sugarsnap Catering as a holiday gift for a business customer, a friend, or a co-worker.

Ten flavors of the locally sourced treats are available: Chocolate Chip; Java Hazelnut; Peanut Butter; Double Chocolate Cherry Almond; Bittersweet Chocolate Orange; Oatmeal Raisin; Lemon Poppyseed; Ginger Molasses Snaps; Coconut Cardamom with Black Sesame; plus the 10th anniversary seasonal flavor to be decided by supporters through online voting under way now. Go to cotsonline.org to learn more.

Sugarsnap is giving COTS supporters a chance to be a member of the "Committee of Tasters (COTS)" and help select the 10th seasonal flavor to celebrate Cookies for Good's 10 years and more than \$100,000 raised in support of COTS. Vote online at cotsonline.org through November 17, and order a seasonal sampler for \$20 to taste the four new cookie choices.

Mark your calendar

Find out more about these events – and how you can get involved – at our Web site: cotsonline.org.

The Great Dee PT Diaper Drive THROUGH DECEMBER 18

This year, the Dee PT drive has gone virtual. Find out how to safely donate diapers at cotsonline.org/diaper-drive. Jason Fitzgerald, Dee PT Exercise Physiologist and Clinical Coordinator, began this extra-ordinary drive in 2007. Now in its 13th year, the drive has collected more than 850,000 diapers for families in need. The diapers are distributed through COTS and our community partners.



The Great Dee PT Diaper drive is now online – so you can socially distant donate and support babies and toddlers who are facing homelessness in our community.



The City Market Tree Sale begins December 2 at the co-op's downtown location. This year, the sale will also be held at the South End store, beginning December 4.

Phonathon

NOVEMBER 30–DECEMBER 3

Our volunteers will call past COTS supporters on these four evenings to thank them for their help and ask them to consider a gift again this year. Be sure to “answer the call,” or go online to donate at cotsonline.org.

City Market Tree Sale BEGINS DECEMBER 2

CITY MARKET

82 S. WINOOSKI AVENUE, BURLINGTON
NEW! The City Market location at 207 Flynn Ave., Burlington also will sell trees, beginning December 4. Moffatt's Tree Farm in Craftsbury once again will supply the trees. Trees cost \$40 with sales continuing until all trees are sold. Volunteers are needed to help with the 23rd annual benefit sale for COTS; this year, there will be additional COVID precautions in place. Visit www.citymarket.coop/cots-tree-sale to volunteer.

City Market also partners with the Intervale Center as part of this benefit: When you buy a tree from the City Market Tree Sale, supporting COTS, the Intervale Center will also plant a tree for you in the spring. Every year, the Conservation Nursery, a program of the Intervale Center, plants 30,000 Vermont-grown, native trees and shrubs along rivers and streams throughout the state. Your tree will live for decades, providing habitat for animals, reducing erosion, filtering pollutants before they reach waterways, and sequestering carbon.

Candlelight Vigil

DECEMBER 21

This year, COTS will not hold our annual Vigil because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We historically hold this event on December 21, the longest night of the year, in conjunction with National Homeless Persons' Memorial Day to honor those who have died while homeless. We invite you instead to light a candle on this night and remember those who have faced the crisis of homelessness amid this global pandemic.

COTS Annual Meeting & Volunteer Appreciation

FEBRUARY 5

Our Annual Meeting & Volunteer Appreciation, regularly scheduled in October each year, has been postponed until February 2021. The event also will be virtual. Stay tuned for more details.

2020 in review *Overall, we helped 1,758 people (including 550 children) last year.**

COTS Shelters

We have currently reduced the maximum capacity in all of our shelters because of COVID-19. This allows us to maintain social distancing and other health and safety guidelines.

FAMILY SHELTERS: 34 families (including 54 children) stayed in a COTS family shelter. We have two family shelters in our community: the Main Street Family Shelter and the Firehouse Family Shelter.

ADULT OVERNIGHT SHELTER: 183 individuals stayed at the COTS Waystation, our year-round program shelter for single adults.

ADULT DAYTIME CENTER: 342 individuals visited the COTS Daystation, a daytime center for adults experiencing homelessness.

Housing Navigation

COTS FAMILY HOUSING SERVICES: 36 families, including those staying in a COTS emergency shelter or the community, received support from COTS staff.

COTS ADULT HOUSING SERVICES: 143 single, adults received outreach and support from COTS staff.

Prevention Support

PREVENTION ASSISTANCE: 172 households (including 200 children) received prevention assistance through the COTS Housing Resource Center.

REHOUSING ASSISTANCE: 83 households (including 60 children) received rehousing help through the COTS HRC program.

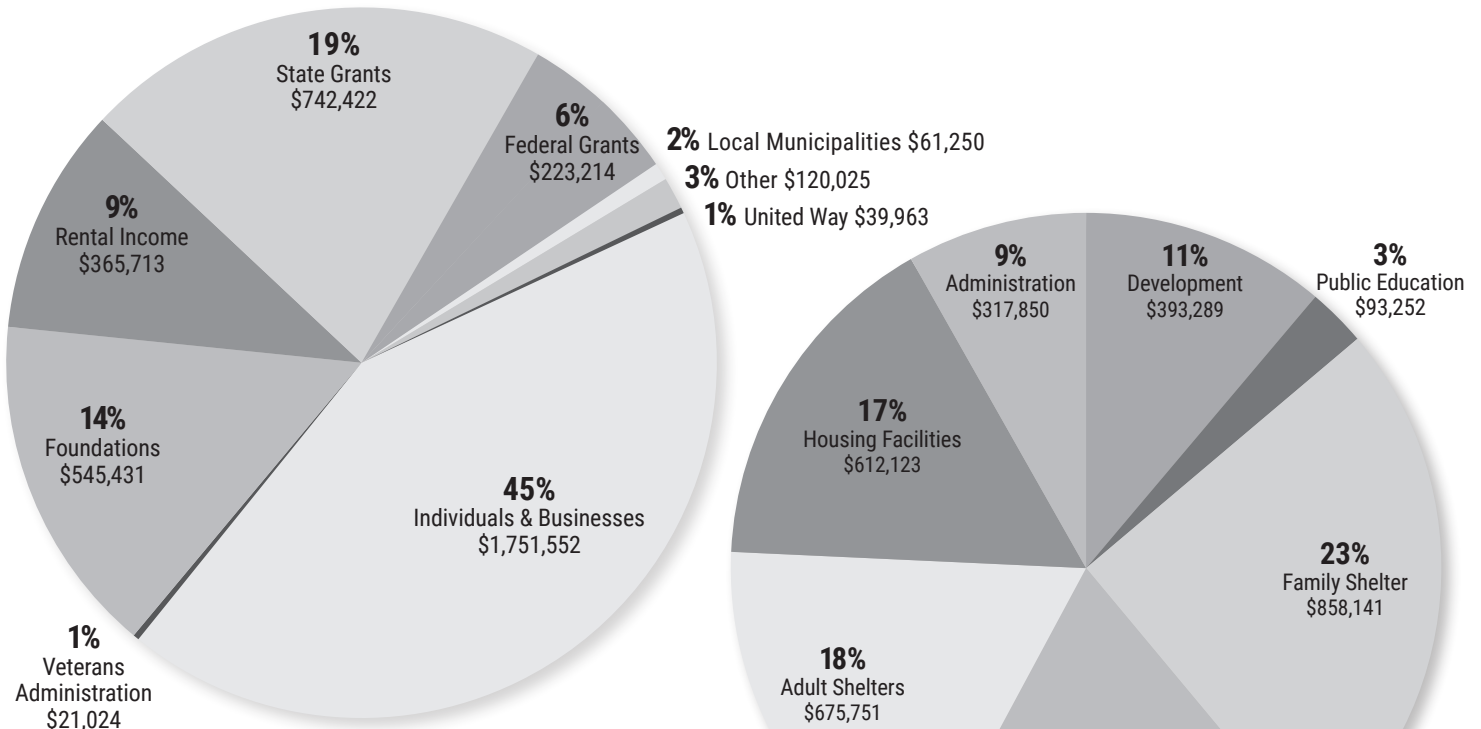
Cots Mobile Outreach Team

HOUSING & SUPPORT SERVICES: 665 adults and 51 children received rehousing and supportive services at area hotels through the on-site mobile outreach team. These are families and individuals who are experiencing homelessness and are staying in area hotels.

COTS Housing

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING: 23 units of housing for families and individuals were offered by COTS at the **Smith House** and **Canal Street Veterans Housing**.

PERMANENT HOUSING: 75 units of housing were offered by COTS at the **Smith House, The Wilson, St. John's Hall, 95 North Avenue** (with Housing Vermont), and **Canal Street Veterans Housing** (with Housing Vermont).



Revenues: \$3,870,594**

Expenses: \$3,654,051

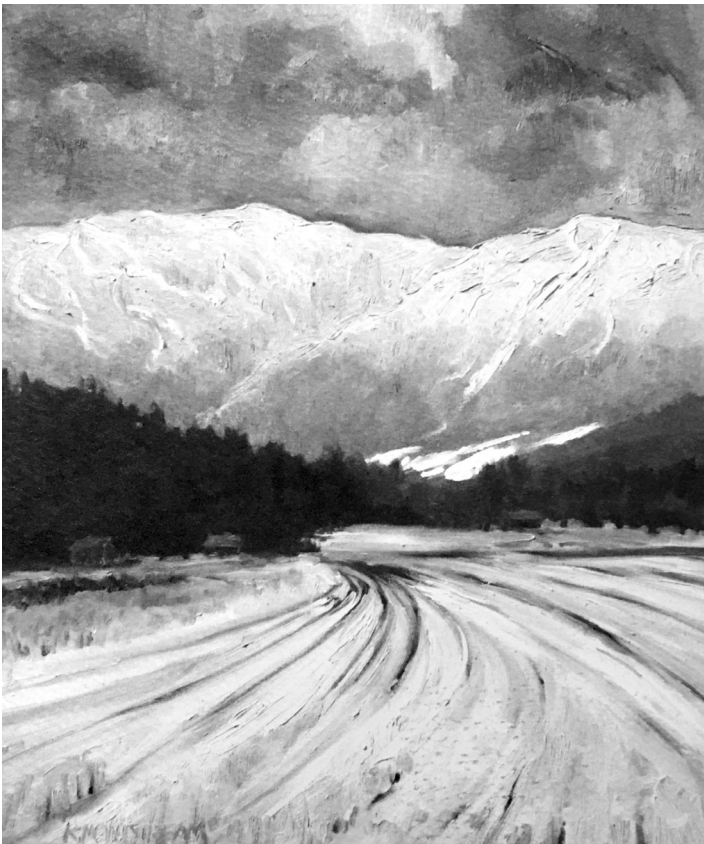
*COTS services provided during COTS FY20 (October 1, 2019–September 30, 2020). The total number of people served by COTS this year does not include those served only by the mobile outreach team and not other COTS programs.

** These are pre-audited COTS numbers for FY20.



COMMITTEE ON TEMPORARY SHELTER
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802-864-7402
www.cotsonline.org

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Send a COTS holiday card

This year's COTS holiday card is a beautiful scene of early snow on Mount Mansfield painted by local artist Katharine Monstream with the greeting: "Let it snow! Let it snow! Let it snow!"

Our cards also include this message: "A generous donation has been made to COTS in your name. This gift of warmth and shelter will help families and individuals who are experiencing the crisis of homelessness make it through the harsh winter months."

A volunteer provides additional personalized messages and signatures. There is a suggested \$15 donation per card.

If you would like COTS to mail the card(s) for you, please include the following with your donation: your name, address, and phone number – and the name(s) and address(es) where you would like us to send the card(s).

How to order:
Contact Gillian at (802) 864-7402, Ext. 210 or gilliant@cotsonline.org.