

A Crack in the Rock

VRRP's Volunteer Newsletter

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VRRP is a local program of the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

Inside This Issue

Out of a Crack <i>By Judy Scott</i>	1
VRRP Benefit Dinner <i>By Deirdre Smith</i>	2
Free Tax Prep	2
VRRP Welcomes Matt Thompson and Marcia Stone	3
ESL/ELT News	4
Kenya: Violence Paralyses Western Towns	4
Workshop on Social Justice and White Privilege	5
Child Care Subsidy	7
Community Buzz!	9

VRRP's Mission

The Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program brings hope and opportunity to the lives of refugees and immigrants. We act to defend human rights, promote self-sufficiency and education, and forge community partnerships through a full range of services and programs.



Photo: Rose McNulty

Out of a Crack

By Judy Scott

Driving to work a couple of weeks ago, I heard the news that we had lost one of our heroes, Sir Edmund Hillary. It got me thinking about what it takes to be truly heroic. When he accomplished the excruciating feat of scaling Mt. Everest, no one had ever done it before. No one knew if it could be done without oxygen. Doubt, in any situation, is a powerful contributor to failure. Accomplishing something that no one else has ever done requires extraordinary perseverance but I think it falls less into the realm of the heroic and more into the realm of the superhuman.

It was Tenzing Norgay and Sir Edmund Hillary together who accomplished that feat. It was a team that succeeded, not an individual. There's something heroic about a person who takes on a goal, not knowing whether it can be done, and who is willing to trust in others, not knowing whether they can do their part.

To my mind, what makes Tenzing Norgay and Sir Edmund Hillary true heroes is not Mount Everest. It's the effort they made during the rest of their lives to raise money to bring schools and

medical facilities to remote areas of Nepal. Again, they each took on a goal, not knowing how it would turn out, not knowing if others would do their part, and this time it made an enormous difference in people's daily lives.

In my book, heroism in its finest form also requires a precious sort of trust that most of us haven't learned to develop. It's a willingness to accept the best efforts of other people, without knowing exactly how things will turn out. It takes a special kind of strength, a special kind of faith, to carry on in spite of doubt in the best efforts of other people, and in your own as well.

I've been thinking about this in the context of a friend of mine, Becky Wang. I met her years ago at a monthly crafts group where a number of women gathered, each one to work on her own project while we all talked about our families, our work, and our interests. I remember hearing about her college-age daughter who was planning to do a semester in Nepal. She wanted to study the language first and had managed to find a Nepali woman living in Burlington to give her lessons. Becky got to know the teacher and learned

Our world often seems to be a hard, rocky place. Manmade and natural disasters strip people of what they need to survive. But Vermont is a crack in the rock, widened by the smiles, persistent efforts, and adventurous spirit of its people. Thanks to 230 volunteers, we are offering a new life to people who have endured the harshest conditions in hopes of a new opportunity.

that she and her husband had had to leave their three children behind in Nepal with their grandmother. They wanted to bring the children to join them but, with limited English and limited understanding of immigration requirements, they had no idea how to go through the process. Becky didn't know anything about immigration either but she knew English and she knew how she'd feel if she'd had to leave her children behind. So she took it on.

They worked on it together for years. It was complex and there were many bureaucratic frustrations. At first, they didn't know each other well but they had to place trust in each other in order to work together. They never knew if they would succeed in the end.

But one evening, Becky couldn't come to crafts group because she and the Nepali couple were in Boston meeting the three children at the airport. At that time, I'd never seen a family coming back together after years of separation so I had no idea how it feels to witness the conjunction of intense irrational joy with a totally rational sense of rightness. Since that time, I've been

Continued on page 8

VRRP Benefit Dinner to Help Start No-Interest Loan

By Deirdre Smith

Three weeks ago, people of all different backgrounds came together in the Hauke Conference Room at Champlain College to support the creation of a no-interest loan program to benefit former refugees. All of the 130 people who attended the dinner were able to dine on delicious ethnic food while viewing Nepalese, Tibetan and African drumming and dancing. The event and the idea of the no-interest loan program were largely orchestrated by an amazing volunteer, Supriya Serchan. Supriya was able to bring together people from UVM, Champlain College, VRRP and elsewhere in the community to ensure the success of the dinner so that the loan could become a reality.

The dinner raised almost \$2,000, which will go towards the creation of the no-interest, revolving loan. After an application process, in which ideas for the start-up of a small business are presented to a committee, the loan will be given to a former refugee. As the business grows, the refugee must then repay the loan, so that it can be given to another member of the community. However, responsibility does not end merely at repaying the loan. Beneficiaries will

serve on the committee that determines which business idea should receive the next loan; thereby increasing awareness as well as involvement.

The Benefit Dinner was a wonderful example of what can happen when the diverse citizens of Burlington work together to make something happen. The fact that lifelong Vermonters, recent out-of-state transplants, refugees, and immigrants all took part in making the dinner happen was reflected in the celebration itself. As people found their seats, they were treated to the wonderful fiddle-playing of Robert Resnik. An opening speech by VRRP Director Judy Scott was then followed by two Nepalese dances which extolled the entrepreneurial nature of the hard-working Thakali people. Later on in the evening, the Tibetan Association performed two traditional Yak Dances, involving an amazing Yak costume that many people might only have seen photos of before, if even that. The performances didn't stop there. Abdullahi Hassan and Omar Hussein both took center stage, Abdullahi as a storyteller, while Omar sang a song he had written. The final performance of the night was a thrilling performance by Jeh Kulu, a

West African Dance Group. The audience was truly captivated by each performance that evening, but that was only half of it.

The performances were a feast for the eyes and ears, but those were not the only senses satisfied. A wonderful meal was provided by Serchan's Ethnic Foods and complemented by bread and salad from Great Harvest and Black River Harvest, respectively. If the dal, curry and rice were not enough, a delicious Indian ice cream, Kulfi, was served for dessert. The vegetarian meal was extremely delicious and there was plenty for everyone to enjoy.

Numerous hours of hard work went into the preparation for the dinner and many hours still lie ahead for the loan program, but that has not stopped anyone yet. Since the number of people interested in attending the dinner greatly exceeded expectations, plans are already in the air for another fundraising event. We appreciate everything that has already been done to make the creation of a no-interest, revolving loan program a success and look forward to being able to share these successes with you in the future.

Free Tax Preparation!

It's that time of year again. Free tax preparation for people who made less than \$40,000, is now being offered by IRS-certified tax assistants through Casey Family Services, the City of Burlington and other Chittenden County Sponsors. Three different tax prep sites are available for daytime, evening and weekend hours.

Call 2-1-1 today to schedule an appointment!



VRRP Welcomes Matt Thompson and Marcia Stone to its staff!

Please welcome Matt Thompson, our new Employment Counselor. Matt joined us at the end of November, after working in Washington, DC as an employment counselor for Catholic Charities. The winter season is always a difficult time to find jobs, but Matt has already made a strong impact on VRRP's ability to branch out to new employers and to strengthen ties with older employers, in order to help our clients find consistent employment. Matt is very appreciative of all of the work that volunteers do to help our clients find work and adjust to living in Vermont.

Where are you from?

I am originally from Baltimore, MD and lived in the Washington, DC area for the past nine years. My wife and I wanted to relocate to a smaller, friendly, close-knit community (preferably with mountains). We are thankful to have found just such a place here in Vermont.

What interested you specifically in VRRP?

I was an Employment Counselor for refugees and asylees in Washington, DC and actually learned more about all the amazing work that VRRP does through reading VRRP's volunteer newsletter on-line. I am excited to be working for an organization that receives a lot of interest and support from the local community.

Have you had any past experiences that drew you to this type of work?

My first encounter with refugees and displaced people was as an Earlham College student, meeting Holocaust survivors in Israel and Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during a

Continued on page 6



Over the past few months there have been many changes here at VRRP. Valuable staff members have come and gone and even changed positions while remaining in the office. These changes have created space for new faces with exciting new ideas to join our staff. One of these new staff members is Marcia Stone, Coordinator of Volunteer Services. Marcia is extremely enthusiastic and wants to begin implementing new programs that will help build the capacity of the volunteer program and provide more support to everyone serving as a volunteer. She is eager to hear your ideas and can be reached at 338-4627, or mstone@uscript.org.

Marcia grew up in Charlotte, Vermont and happily still lives there. She laughs that this is hardly exciting compared to those she works with at the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program! Her family was one of the founding families of Charlotte and she is an eighth generation resident. Her roots run deep and she is proud to share what Vermont is with our new families. Marcia is married and has three children. Her oldest daughter lives in California and is doing the Silicon Valley thing and her youngest is a freshman at Southern New Hampshire University. Her son and his family live within walking distance of her home.

Marcia's husband is involved in town politics, trains harness race horses and is learning to cook dinner!

Marcia's youngest daughter is the person who introduced her to VRRP. Sadie was working on a graduation project at her high school and wanted very much to work with refugees from Africa. She contacted Judy Scott and Judy helped her make that a possibility. At the time she was not yet eighteen and so Marcia went along with her on her visits to help her family from Somalia. Marcia says that she thinks it took her about seven minutes before she was totally captivated with the Somali family that

they were visiting. She loved how open and receptive they were, how easily they smiled and laughed and how beautiful they were from the inside out. The clincher was their brand new baby girl! "That was it...I was a goner!"

Marcia has a varied background in human growth and development, psychology and issues related to children and families. Her work history has been with children, families and communities as a teacher and principal. These experiences, coupled with event planning, private catering, customer

Continued on page 5

New ESL books have arrived at the Fletcher Free Library!

The Fletcher Free Library is excited to announce the addition of a large selection of new ESL books to our collection! New materials include teacher and tutor resources, workbook series, picture dictionaries, TOEFL test preparation material including workbooks and audio programs, citizenship guides and exam preparation books including the USCIS Civics and Citizenship Toolkit and flashcards, and a large selection of new audio material including Pimsleur English courses. The Pimsleur series is also available online from the library's website: www.fletcherfree.org. With a library card, individuals can access the library's downloadable audio database and search for books and materials to download to their computer or mp3 player.

For books in other languages, check out our new collections of Arabic, Hindi, Japanese, Chinese, and Korean fiction in addition to many other language collections. The library will also be adding two collections titled "Road to Citizenship" and "Family Health" available in Spanish, Chinese, and Russian.

Tutors and students alike will find a wide variety of resources for English-language learning available at the Fletcher Free Library. All ESL students and tutors receive a free library card regardless of residence in Burlington. For more information, or to schedule a tour of the library's resources, please call Amber Gaster at (802) 865-7211.

New Grant for VRRP's English Language Department!

VRRP's English Language Department is pleased to announce it received a grant from the Vermont Humanities Council to supply materials for English classes in both Washington and Chittenden Counties. Learning English is an essential part of adapting to life in the United States for new arrivals. VRRP provides free classes for students of all levels at multiple locations in an effort to help them overcome this challenge. The generous grant from the Vermont Humanities Council has allowed us to purchase necessary books and workbooks to sustain this comprehensive program. Thank you Jan Steinbauer and VT Humanities Council!

Kenya: Violence paralyses western towns as political crisis deepens

(IRIN news) (January 2008) (<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76453>)

NAIROBI, 28 January 2008 (IRIN) - Increasing violence and tension in several towns in western Kenya continue to hinder the provision of basic services such as health, education and transport, in addition to causing untold suffering to thousands of people displaced since the unrest began in late December.

Since 26 January, violence has paralysed Nakuru, the Rift Valley provincial capital, and Naivasha, in the same province. The violence spread on 28 January to Kisumu, Kakamega and Turbo, paralysing public transport and disrupting schools.

Jeanine Cooper, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Kenya, said: "I think we have hit a higher level of uncertainty in terms of humanitarian action and ability to respond," adding that Nakuru and Naivasha had been considered "safe areas" and that the clashes there "raised the question of which other areas are really safe."

"We are working to improve the sharing of information so we are not left with situations we've seen such as a hospital running out of supplies or a camp that empties overnight," she told IRIN.

"A solution in the political arena [between President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga] is not necessarily going to address all the underlying issues, resolve the humanitarian crisis or end the violence."

Thousands displaced

Anthony Mwangi, the public relations manager of the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS), said on 28 January that the organisation was conducting an assessment of the situation in Naivasha, where tens of deaths have been reported.

"The number of those displaced is running into thousands; we can't give a figure because the displacement is still going on as Naivasha is still volatile today," Mwangi said.

He said KRCS was helping in the retrieval of bodies, ferrying the injured to hospitals and providing aid to the displaced, who have sought refuge at police stations and at the town's prison.

KRCS had reports of a resurgence in violence in Kakamega and Kisumu but the organisation had yet to establish the extent of the humanitarian fallout.

Hezron Makobewa, director of a Kisumu medical organisation, the OGRA Foundation, said on 28 January: "Kisumu is at a complete standstill today, all roads are barricaded and no-one can enter or leave the city. The events in Naivasha and Nakuru at the weekend seem to have ignited violence afresh here."

He said gangs of youth had barricaded roads, checking the identities of passers-by. "People are leaving their homes in droves but it is difficult to get out of town," Makobewa said.

Continued on page 7

WORKSHOP PLANNED ON “SOCIAL JUSTICE AND WHITE PRIVILEGE”

Vermont is one of the ‘whitest’ states in the U.S. and yet instances of racism and issues of race affect many communities in our state. Having celebrated the witness of Martin Luther King Jr., it is appropriate that we explore together ways of dealing with the reality of racism in our communities and local institutions.

A community workshop entitled “Social Justice and White Privilege: Facing Reality, Building the Vision” will be held at St. James Episcopal Church, Essex Junction, on Saturday, February 9th, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. The workshop is being offered in partnership with community groups and the Peace and Justice Center. Leaders will be members of the Peace and Justice Center, the Dismantling Racism Commission of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont and the Task Force for Uprooting Racism of the Vermont United Church of Christ.

The morning session will look at history and personal histories. The afternoon will address white privilege and institutional racism, both of which undermine justice. The workshop’s goals are to learn from one another, increase personal awareness, and consider how individual and corporate action can work to dismantle racism in our communities.

Racism is prejudice with power, and power resides in the white dominant culture and institutions. We are called to seek justice and to respect the dignity of every human being. Until we can rid faith communities, local institutions and the dominant culture of racism, many will continue to enjoy the unfair advantages of being white, simply on the basis of their color, not by virtue of anything earned.

St. James Episcopal Church is located at Champlain Exposition Fairgrounds Gate F on Lincoln Street, Route 2A, in Essex Junction. Pre-registration is encouraged and a five dollar donation will cover lunch and materials. All are welcome, including youth. If you have any questions, please call Margy Zabriskie, at 802-863-4571 or email at amzab2@verizon.net. To register, please call St. James, 802-878-4014 or email contact@st.james.org.

Marcia Stone

Continued from page 3

support and owning a small business have taught her skills that she will share and put to good use at VRRP as the Coordinator of Volunteer Services. Marcia has always had a passion for helping people and she states that she just can’t imagine anywhere else that she would rather be than working with the people at VRRP!

Marcia has already started to set goals and share her ideas for our Volunteer Program and she wants to stress that this is an excellent time for any feedback that volunteers would like to bring to her.

Marcia wants to be sure to let everyone know that she will be in training for a few weeks so may not get back to you immediately but she promises that she will get back to you as soon as she can. She looks forward to meeting each and every volunteer so please stop by to say hello if you are in the area, or come to a Volunteer Open House (in February on Thursdays between 11:00 and 1:00).



Matt Thompson
Continued from page 3

semester-long peace studies program. It was deeply moving to listen to stories from survivors of unimaginable tragedies and to learn how they still have it in their hearts to work for peace. While a graduate peace & conflict resolution student at American University, I participated in a Quaker-run summer work camp in Burundi, helping a local peace group of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa to rebuild destroyed houses so that refugees and displaced persons could return to their communities and begin the difficult process of reconciliation. This small effort felt like a needle in a haystack, in a populous country still raw from trauma, fear, and uncertainty. But witnessing the joy and hope that such efforts brought to individuals reinforces my belief that any act of kindness, no matter how small, is worthwhile. The optimism and ingenuity of the local peacemakers, who had so few resources to draw upon was inspiring. Upon returning to the U.S., I wanted to do something to help refugees rebuild their lives.

What has your experience at VRRP been like so far?

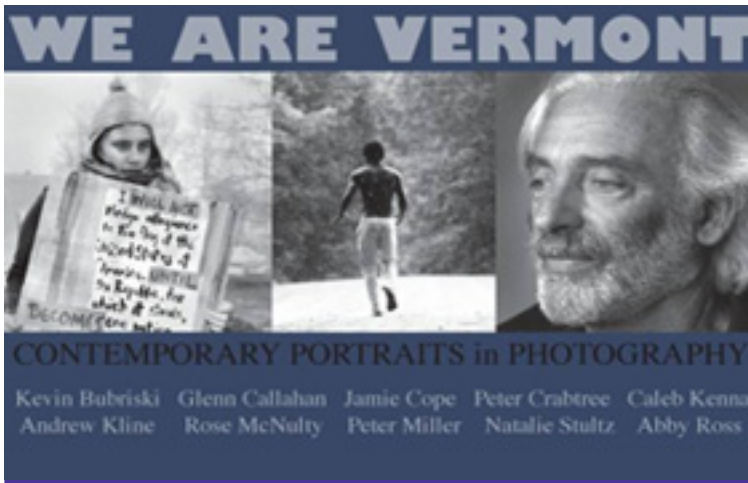
As an Employment Counselor, the best experience is helping a client to obtain a job. Having steady work can help a client feel useful, confident, and alleviate so many layers of anxiety that come with adjusting to a new, very different (and relatively expensive) society.

Now that you've been here for two months, what have you learned about working here that you didn't expect originally?

It continually impresses me to see refugees patiently and creatively coping with snow, cold temperatures, and limited resources.

Based on your experience, what are your goals for this year at VRRP?

In the next year, I hope to expand VRRP's employment education and training available to clients. A little bit of education and mentoring goes a long way in helping refugees adjust to the expectations and nuances of work culture in the U.S. I'd also like to learn some basic phrases in the first languages of our refugee clients.



The Helen Day Art Center in Stowe Vermont recently opened a new show, WE ARE VERMONT: Contemporary Portraits in Photography. The show features portraits of Vermont people taken by Vermont photographers. Two of the artists, Rose McNulty and Natalie Stultz have contributed photographs to our own VRRP Newsletter. The exhibit, which will run through March 22, includes photographs of people from all different parts of Vermont life, including refugees. For more information visit www.helenday.com

Congratulations Jacqueline and Jim!

VRRP is proud to welcome its newest addition, Violet Rose Burns, who was born in the middle of December. Jacqueline will be enjoying a much deserved absence from our office until mid-March. We wish her the best of luck with her new baby and look forward to her return.



Important Changes to Child Care Subsidy Eligibility!

Many of you have spent numerous hours researching child care for the families you work with, filling out forms, and waiting for a spot to open up, all while worrying about the high cost of child care. One of the applications many of you have come across has been the application for Subsidized Child Care and Family Support Child Care, intended to help families to pay for the expensive cost of child care. This application often caused much confusion, but there have been recent changes at the Department for Children and Families (DCF), that should be taken advantage of as soon as possible. Under the new changes, if a family has refugee status, Full Time Family Support as a need will be approved. As a result, the family will automatically be approved for a Full Child Care Subsidy under the Child Care Support Program. Furthermore, these applications must only be renewed once a year. So after the family you are working with decides on a Child Care Provider, make sure you fill out the application so that the family can receive a Full Child Care Subsidy. If your family does not already receive a Full Subsidy, this change in the law could benefit them greatly. If you have any questions, please refer to Child Care Resource at www.childcareresource.org or 1-800-339-3367. To get an application for a Child Care Subsidy, or to ask a specialist a question, email referral@childcareresource.org.



Kenya: Violence paralyzes western towns as political crisis deepens

Continued from page 4

He added that the gangs were using the barricading of the roads as a diversionary tactic. "While they engage the police at the road blocks, other gangs are moving door to door flushing out people who they beat up or even kill," he said.

Makobewa said the number of displaced in Kisumu had gone down to a few hundred but he feared the figure would rise drastically after the resurgence of the latest violence.

He added that parents were getting their children out of schools in fear.

A resident of Kisumu, who requested anonymity, said a gang had raided a local secondary school and a watchman was killed after the police were called in. He added that another man had been lynched at the local bus station.

Roads blocked

Near Turbo, a town on the Eldoret-Webuye road, residents said a trench

measuring 1m deep and 1m wide had been dug on the road near a shopping centre known as Jua Kali. The road links the country to neighbouring Uganda.

"We are now cut off from Eldoret, and this has pushed up the price of most goods as no vehicle can get across the trench," a resident said.

In Kakamega town, the capital of Western Province, sources said 10 houses had been burnt and hundreds of displaced people had sought refuge in police stations. A hostel that used to cater for students at the nearby Western University was among the buildings razed to the ground.

According to government figures, the post-election violence has claimed the lives of at least 680 people and displaced another 255,000. However, the local media estimates that more than 1,000 people have died.

Violence erupted in parts of the country soon after the Electoral Commission of Kenya announced President Mwai Kibaki as winner of presidential elections held on 27 December 2007.

African Union-mandated mediation efforts, led by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, are ongoing, with the team meeting various stakeholders.

The mediation team visited a number of sites for the displaced at the weekend in the Rift Valley province, most affected by the violence.

VRRP's ESL Department will be offering a four week nutrition-based ESL class series for intermediate students at the Sara Holbrook center as part of our ongoing class series in that location. VRRP has been working in conjunction with City Market and UVM to create a curriculum that will inform newcomers about certain aspects of nutrition, with a focus on shopping and eating in Burlington, Vermont. Lessons will help newcomers make healthy food choices, provide tools to make better budgeting decisions when shopping, and educate newcomers about local, seasonal food in Vermont.

Out of a Crack

Continued from page 1

fortunate enough to be with former refugees when we go to the airport to greet their relatives. It's a humbling experience every single time to be in the presence of people whose lives have forced them to the raw edge of knowledge of how important the people we love are.

But back to the story, because this arrival wasn't the end, just the beginning. These kids were college-age. As soon as they were ready, Becky dove into helping them figure out what educational opportunities were open to them and how they could afford to complete their education. They started out at CCV, later transferred to UVM, and, after harder work than perhaps any other UVM student has had to perform, all three will graduate this spring.

Because two people from different cultures took on a goal together, not knowing if they could achieve it, a family has been reunited and the world will soon have three new college graduates in it, eager to do their part to make it a better place. There are quite a few heroic strands in this story.

I've only gotten to know one of those people well. I first met Supriya Serchan over a year ago when she came to me to offer to sell Nepali tea outside the UVM library every Friday so that she could give the proceeds to VRRP. I was impressed then and

my admiration grew with every freezing winter day that she stood out in the bitter cold, offering hot tea to strangers. I've done my share of volunteering, but never anything like that!

This year Supriya came to me with a new idea: to create a benefit dinner to raise money for a loan that would be given to a former refugee in order to start a small business. The dinner was held in January and, thanks to the hard work of Surpiya and Maureen Rees, it was a resounding success. For more details, please see the article on page 2. As I sat at the dinner, which sold out days before the event, I watched and listened to drummers, dancers, storytellers, and singers. I saw Becky, no longer the person on whose efforts an entire family's hopes and happiness depended, happily in the background snapping pictures. I saw Supriya's mother, who'd been cooking for days to feed the crowd, and was now beaming at everyone enjoying her food. I saw Supriya and Maureen, still devoting themselves, as they

Please join us in welcoming Mukiza Noel to our staff. Mukiza is our new Case Manager who will be in training for the next few weeks.

We are all very excited to have him as a new addition to our staff!

had been for months, to making the dinner a complete success. I saw close to 150 people, all having a good time.

I felt dwarfed by the power people have when they trust in each other and work together in good faith towards what is still only a dream. This is what happens when refugees begin new lives in Vermont and when Vermonters choose to volunteer their time to open up opportunities for them. No one knows if the dream can be achieved or even exactly what it will turn out to be but, working together with patience and with trust, we can discover the reality that that dream will become.

Refugee resettlement is a very small part of the business of the United States but it is full of heroes. Heroes like Supriya and Maureen, like Becky and Supriya's mother, like the former refugees who performed at the dinner, like the newcomers from equatorial Africa who smile as they tell me they're getting used to the cold, and like the volunteers who get a landlord to fix a front door so cold air won't pour into the apartment or who learn how to ride the bus so they can teach someone else. Perhaps our greatest good fortune is to live in a community where so many people are willing to try something new, without knowing whether or not it will ever work, but trusting in each other that something very good will come of it.

VRRP STAFF PHONE DIRECTORY



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community buzz

March Issue

Each month, we pride ourselves on the fact that our newsletter includes articles by volunteers, former refugees, and staff members. Input from such a wide range of people involved in the resettlement process enables us to offer many different perspectives on the experience to our readers.

We would love to include an article about **your** experience, which will help us keep volunteers and community members abreast of challenges, successes, and questions that volunteers face. If you have a wonderful story to share but don't have the time to put it into words, one of our volunteers is a professional writer and has offered to work with other volunteers to capture their stories.

If you'd like to discuss an idea for an article, please contact Marcia at 338-4627 or mstone@uscrtv.org.

Articles for our March newsletter are due February 20th.

SOCKS! SOCKS! SOCKS!

The Burnham Memorial Library was kind enough to conduct a sock drive over the holidays for VRRP, so now we have socks for all of the wonderful families you work with. We have men's and women's dress socks, fuzzy kid's socks, cotton socks, wool socks, you name it! We still have over 250 pairs, along with some winter coats. Come stop by our office and pick up some socks!

Please contact Deirdre at 338-4632, or dsmith@uscrtv.org if you have any questions.

Volunteer Open Houses

Open Houses provide a wonderful opportunity to learn more about our organization, our Volunteer Program, and volunteer opportunities. Marcia and Deirdre will be present to discuss our programs and answer your questions, and we hope that experienced volunteers will stop by during the second hour to share their experiences. While attendance at one Open House is mandatory before beginning service, they are also a great time for new and veteran volunteers to check in with VRRP staff.

In **February**, Open Houses are every **Thursday** from **11:00 - 1:00**.

If evening meeting times are better for you, then you're welcome to come to one of our **March** Open Houses, which will be held every **Wednesday** from **5:30 - 7:30**. We look forward to seeing you there!!

Volunteer Training

WIC: Women, Infants and Children

Tuesday, February 19

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Presenter: Sally Tappan, Department of Children and Families

These trainings aim to provide our wonderful volunteers with the training and support they deserve. For this reason, **we encourage volunteers of all experience levels to join our discussions, learn from our speakers, and share valuable personal experiences.**

Please contact Deirdre (dsmith@uscrtv.org or 338-4632) if you plan to join us for a training. Out of respect for our presenters, **we will cancel sessions if volunteers do not RSVP**. Unless otherwise noted, all trainings take place at the VRRP office.

Book Club

In December and January, the VRRP volunteer book club will read King Leopold's Ghost by Adam Hochschild. This bestseller explores the devastating ways in which King Leopold II of Belgium ruled over the Congo Free State, now the Democratic Republic of Congo, from 1885 to 1908.

We will meet at 5:30 on Wednesday, February 13 at Muddy Waters. Please let Deirdre know if you plan to attend. Likewise, Deirdre will be happy to lend you a copy of King Leopold's Ghost from the Volunteer Library. She can be reached at 338-4632 or dsmith@uscrtv.org.

Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program

462 Hegeman Ave, Ste 101, Colchester, VT 05446

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E-mail: volunteer@uscrtv.org

Volunteer Office Phone: 802-338-4633

Directions to VRRP

Coming from downtown Winooski, follow Route 15 east past St. Michael's College. Continue past Camp Johnson Military Facility. Take a left at the next light and turn into the fort Ethan Allen Complex.

Coming from Essex, follow Route 15 west past Susie Wilson Road. Turn right at the next stop light to turn into the fort Ethan Allen Complex.

Hegeman Avenue is the third road on the right. VRRP is at 462 Hegeman Avenue (the third building on your left — a brick building with a green on white sign out front.)