

Press Release
Vernon Greater Together Community Fund
Grants Awarded

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Organizations Receive Grants Through Vernon Greater Together Community Fund

Vernon, CT (January 23, 2022) – The Vernon Greater Together Community Fund is pleased to announce it has awarded its first round of grants totaling \$18,500. The Community Fund is supported by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and allows local residents to identify community needs and fund solutions that respond to those needs. The Vernon Greater Together Community Fund is supporting the following organizations and projects:

Vernon Historical Society | \$2,500 | To create a community map to promote awareness of Vernon's walking trails and historical markers.

Vernon Arts Center East | \$3,000 | To create an exhibit, classes, and talks on the legacy of Vernon Resident Charles Ethan Porter.

UR Community Cares | \$2,000 | To connect Vernon's older and physically disabled residents to local volunteers with help for home-based assistance.

RHS Project Graduation, Inc. | \$500 | To help cover the cost of Project Graduation, which provides a safe event for high school graduates the night of graduation.

Junior Achievement of Southwest New England, Inc. | \$2,500 | To provide financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship programming for up to 75 students attending Vernon Public Schools.

Interval House | \$5,000 | To be used to offer assistance to residents of Vernon experiencing domestic violence.

Bridge Family Center | \$3,000 | To purchase furniture and therapeutic toys for the counseling center to help provide a warm and welcoming environment for clients.

Throughout the process, the all-volunteer advisory committee, comprised of town residents, made it clear that they wanted to fund projects that would help bring equity to underserved communities, bolster and support non-profits that are proven to support vulnerable residents, and enhance the lives of Vernon residents overall. Each of the awardees exemplifies the goals of the advisory committee.

The application process began with a request sent to local 501(c)(3)s to submit a letter of intent/interest. Organizations were contacted directly by email, with news and updates about the grant process posted on our Hartford Foundation web page and Facebook page. After receiving letters of intent/interest, the committee selected nine applicants to move forward with the application process, and, subsequently, after careful deliberation, selected the seven above awardees.

Dustin Yager, chairperson of the Vernon Greater Together Community Fund advisory committee expressed, "It is our hope that these grants improve the lives of residents in Vernon. We are grateful to have these funds from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving in order to make a difference right here in Vernon. All of the Vernon Greater Together Community Fund advisory committee members have put in such hard work to make this first round of grants happen. We look forward to being able to continue to make Vernon a better place to live and visit.

Throughout 2022, the Vernon Greater Together Community Fund advisory committee is looking forward to expanding the committee by adding more members — with the goal of adding members who better represent the diversity of the community it serves. The committee also plans to begin another grant cycle, and continue to support projects that make Vernon great.

The committee is currently soliciting donations to be used to fund future grant requests. For more information and to donate, residents may visit <https://www.hfpg.org/donors/ways-to-give/community-funds/vernon>.

The Greater Together Community Funds were established in response to feedback received by the Hartford Foundation during its 2018 Listening Tours where town residents expressed the desire for a pool of money that residents could use to make funding decisions on projects that would benefit their local community and their fellow residents. The group processes and subsequent grant funds are intended to support the community in taking ownership around the needs in their town, encourage broad and inclusive civic engagement, and anchor the Hartford Foundation in each town. Because the program has been intentionally designed to encourage broad and inclusive civic engagement, every step to get to the distribution of grant dollars has committee members working on how to achieve inclusiveness in both their decision-making and representation of all their town residents in the committee's processes.

The Vernon Greater Together Advisory Committee will continue awarding grants through a competitive application and review process. To stay updated on future grant opportunities and other announcements, please visit <https://www.hfpg.org/donors/ways-to-give/community-funds/vernon>

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The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is the community foundation for Hartford and 28 surrounding communities. Made possible by the gifts of generous individuals, families, and organizations, the foundation has awarded grants of more than \$837 million since its founding in 1925. For more information about the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, visit www.hfpg.org or call 860-548-1888.