

Trending Up

“The unemployment rate trends continue to point to overall improvement in the labor market. ...However, the jobs survey showed a decline of 1,900 jobs over the month [April 2010]. This volatility in monthly numbers can be expected during periods of economic recovery. ...And in Vermont, the trends continue to be positive.”

– Patricia Moulton Powden, Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Labor

ReSOURCE is a small, but effective, contributor to positive trends in Vermont’s unemployment rate. Our stores, appliance and computer repair departments, deconstruction service, job skills training, and YouthBuild programs employ 57 people, 5 full time Americorps members, and training placements for over 100 trainees each year.

As an employer, ReSOURCE strives to provide a safe workplace where people can learn and grow while earning a living wage. Many of our training graduates have become valued employees and many others have gone on to a wide array of careers. Graduates have gotten jobs in the ski industry, at the University of Vermont, work in retail, on construction sites, and have become journeyman electricians. There are many heartwarming success stories, a few less than stellar tales, and many goals still to meet.

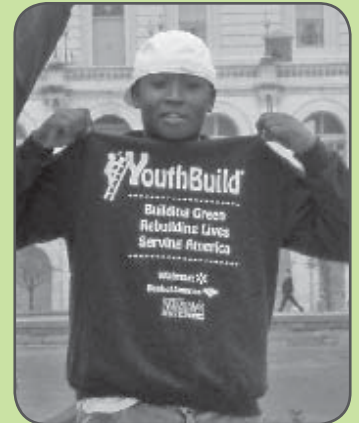
Since 2002, our Apprentice-style training program has successfully graduated 56 individuals in appliance repair, office administration, computer repair, and retail management. Twelve graduates found employment in appliance repair, 5 in computer technology, 4 in heating and cooling, 4 in retail, 3 in delivery, 2 in auto repair, 2 own their own business, 2 work in the food service industry, 2 in maintenance, 2 in security, 2 in manufacturing, and so on. The placement rate for these grads is 85.71% at an average wage of \$11.54 per hour.

Since 2004, when ReSOURCE adopted the YouthBuild program, 64 at-risk youth have graduated with their high school diploma and marketable job skills. Twenty graduates have gotten jobs in the field of construction, 7 are in automotive repair, 4 went on to higher education, and many more went on to be employed in jobs ranging from health care to running a printing press. YouthBuild graduates enjoy a 96.88% employment placement rate with an average wage of \$10.66 per hour.

Our programs and services help secure employment for youth and adult workers while providing relief from poverty and contributing to a safer environment. This issue of ReNEWS will introduce you to employed graduates, current ReSOURCE employees, and some of the staff who help make it all possible.

Somalian YouthBuilder Graduates with Flying Colors

Abdi Dayo spent 12 years in a Kenyan refugee camp. After arriving in Vermont, he attended Winooski and Burlington High Schools. Abdi had a hard time acclimating to high school.



Abdi at the YouthBuild conference in Washington, DC

He was failing his classes and it was doubtful that he would graduate

and get his high school diploma. Abdi dropped out of school and went to work at a local factory packaging soap.

One thing Abdi quickly learned—to succeed in his new country and be a responsible father to his son, he needed to get his diploma and eventually carve out a career instead of trying to simply find a job. He was referred to YouthBuild through Vermont Adult Learning.

Abdi completed YouthBuild’s month-long orientation period with near-perfect attendance. While in YouthBuild, he also worked the overnight shift at the soap factory.

Abdi graduated from YouthBuild in December 2009 with his high school diploma and is enrolled in the Community College of Vermont’s Introduction to College Studies class. He is also working as an interpreter for the Association of Africans Living in Vermont and is earning enough money to support his family. Abdi’s goal is to pursue a degree in social work and help other refugees thrive.

The mission of ReSOURCE is to protect the environment by reducing the amount of reusable and repairable items dumped in landfills; give individuals in transition valuable job skills, technical training and more opportunity; and alleviate the effects of poverty by making vital household goods and building materials available to low income Vermonters.

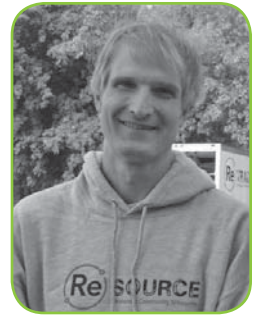
In 1998, ReSOURCE diverted 332 tons of material from the landfill and employed 13 people. In 2009, 1,010 tons of materials were diverted and 57 people were employed.

ReTRAIN's Youth-Build program serves young men and women, ages 16-24, who have not completed high school and have an interest in learning construction skills.

The program provides classroom instruction to help participants earn their high school diploma in collaboration with Vermont Adult Learning and area high schools and hands-on learning to develop vocational and leadership skills.

A Note from Tom Longstreth, Executive Director

The fragile state of the economy has caused some to question the wisdom of investing in environmental conservation, viewing environmental protection as a luxury that we cannot afford. In fact, there is good evidence that a healthy environment is linked to a strong economy and job growth. Our own experience at ReSOURCE provides evidence of the connection between the environment and jobs. It takes a trained and devoted workforce to assess, repair, and resell an appliance, for example. Our deconstruction crew may take longer to complete a full-house take down than a diesel-powered excavator and a big dump truck, but the cost is at least equivalent and the benefits to the community where the materials are reused are substantial. The jobs we create have a ripple effect on our entire state and a direct effect on our communities.



The Toxic Action Center recently released a report, *Putting Waste to Work: Jobs in Vermont's Resource Recovery Sectors*, which describes the jobs created and the potential for more job creation through reuse and recycling. The study looked at the sectors of our waste stream and hypothesized how many jobs could be created if we committed ourselves to zero waste. The study compared landfill jobs to the potential number of jobs created in composting, reuse of furniture, books, clothing, electronic repair and recycling, deconstruction and building material reuse, and recycled paper.

The study surmised that ReSOURCE provides 1 job for every 18 tons of materials repaired and resold, and based on our diversion of 1010 tons of materials, we could provide 1306 jobs for every Vermont landfill job.

ReSOURCE has been dedicated to waste reduction, job skills training, and poverty relief for more than 19 years. Our mission relies on the hard work and dedication of our staff, volunteers, and partners. Together, we provide jobs and future employees, and we teach people valuable skills that make a difference. Reusing everything from books to wheelchairs provides jobs for Vermonters, free or low-cost goods to people in need, and fewer items end up in the landfill. The result is lower stress on our climate, land, and water.

Giving people important work to do and protecting our diminishing resources makes good sense. The more people we put to work through reuse, the fewer repairs we will have to do later—in terms of our economy and our environment.

Thank you for being part of our efforts, and I hope you enjoy this issue of ReNEWS.

Andrew Brown: ReSOURCE's Employment and Transition Coordinator

An important part of ReSOURCE's training programs is helping participants prepare for interviews, write resumes, learn about work environments, and coordinate job shadows with employers and connecting job seekers with potential jobs. As the Employment and Transition Coordinator at ReSOURCE, Andrew Brown does all that and more for our trainees and YouthBuild students.

Andrew began work at ReSOURCE in 2008. He was drawn to the position because of his passion for helping disadvantaged youth realize their potential. "Just because someone has some type of disadvantage, they can still have a productive future," he says.

Andrew's job consists of acting as guidance counselor to all our trainees and students, helping students hone their soft skills: punctuality and attendance, interview skills, resume writing, and connecting trainees with employers or introducing them to college. Andrew also keeps his eyes open for new developments in the job market.

Andrew would like to add a nurse training program to ReTRAIN's roster of job skills offered. He sees this as a growing field with a lot of potential.

One accomplishment that Andrew is particularly proud of is the number of YouthBuild students who have successfully completed the Intro to College Studies course. "A few years ago, there were no YouthBuild students enrolled in the class. Now, three-quarters of our YouthBuilders have completed Intro to College Studies and many have gone on to take and pass other college-level courses," Andrew said.



Andrew (left) helps a YouthBuild partner with his résumé.

"This is a very rewarding job and one of the best experiences I've ever had."

From Volunteer to Excellence Award Winner

ReSOURCE's Employability Skills Training is part of our Work Experience program and supports people who are completing weekly community service in order to maintain benefits while job hunting. Referring agencies look to ReSOURCE to provide a supportive but structured environment that gives participants new skills and readies them for the job market.

Janet Babits enrolled in Employability Skills Training and was placed at ReBUILD (formerly the Building Material Center). She was referred to ReBUILD's Building Material Store by Vocational Rehabilitation for Women. Janet was a newly divorced mom of three kids, and as she says: "This placement was exactly what I needed." Within a month, Janet was hired as a staff person with the help of ReSOURCE's Reach Up Volunteer Coordinator.

That first year Janet worked hard; she organized the warehouse space, learned about customer service, and how to keep material donations coming in and going out. As the sole female store employee, she soon outpaced her co-workers and had things looking top-notch in the store and in the lumber yard. "As a single mom, this job really gave me important work to do and enabled me to support my family. I am also amazed at the family connection to this organization. I come from a long line of builders, and we never throw anything out," she said.

Two years ago, Janet was promoted to Building Material Store manager. She supervises two store staff, trains students from our Career Start and LEAP programs, as well as trainees in Employability Skills Training, places community volunteers in the store, and supports YouthBuild students and the Waste-Not-Products coordinator. Within four short years, Janet has become the face of the Building Material Store. Customers rely on her to give them a good product at a good price. She and her team have received numerous Excellence Awards for outstanding performance and going above and beyond.

"I enjoy coming here every day. I love the customers and my co-workers. This is the best job I have ever had," concluded Janet.



Janet stacks reclaimed lumber at ReBUILD's Building Material Store in Burlington.

Thank You

ReSOURCE would like to thank all of its donors: individuals, foundations, corporate sponsors, program partners, collaborators, and volunteers. Without you, our environment, community, and mission would not be as vibrant and dynamic. The following is in recognition of our partners, individual donors, and foundations from **January 1, 2010 to April 1, 2010. Thank you.**

INDIVIDUALS

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University of Vermont
Vermont Adult Learning
Vermont Print and Mail
Wendell's Furniture

ReTRAIN's Work Experience program offers training opportunities to in-school youth, people with emotional or physical disabilities and others with little or no work experience.

Career Start

ReTRAIN's Work Experience program includes Career Start, which provides opportunities for students with learning and emotional disabilities to gain job skills as part of their transition from high school into the working world.

Employability Skills Training

This program supports public assistance recipients who are completing weekly community service in order to maintain benefits while job hunting.

Apprentice-style Training

ReTRAIN's six-month Apprentice-style training program serves individuals who are ready to work but need new skills and employer-recognized credentials for their desired career.

For more information about our ReTRAIN programs, call 802.658.4143 X26 or visit www.retrainvt.org

To make a secure donation online, please visit www.resourcevt.org

Moving On and Up

Shawn Garrett entered ReSOURCE's Apprentice-style Large Appliance Repair training program when he lost his job at IBM.

Shawn had worked at IBM for many years, and knew he needed to expand his skill set, but wasn't sure how to do that or what other careers he should explore. During his six months in training, he developed a love for troubleshooting and repairing large appliances. He also earned his CFC refrigeration recovery certification and natural gas license. Shawn learned to diagnose and repair all types of appliances and provide customer service to a wide range of clients.

After he graduated, Shawn decided to open his own appliance repair business, and five years later, business is going strong. Shawn has also earned numerous safety-related certifications and graduated from Vermont Technical College's Electrical Engineering program. In addition to Shawn's professional commitment, he is also contributing to the greater community. His website states: "Advanced Appliance also assists our local charities in the community by helping with food drives, volunteering at the Haunted Forest, and reconditioning appliances for donations to financially challenged families."



ReTRAIN Orientation Sessions

Apprentice-style Training 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month at 2:00PM

ReTRAIN's six-month Apprentice-style training program serves individuals who are ready to work but need new skills and employer-recognized credentials for their desired career.

Reach Up - Every Thursday at 9:30am. By referral only.

Reach Up helps families with children by providing cash assistance for basic needs and services that support work and self-sufficiency.

YouthBuild For more information call 658.4143 x39

ReTRAIN's YouthBuild program serves young men and women, ages 16-24, who have not completed high school and have an interest in learning construction skills.

For more information about all our training programs, call 658-4143 x26. All sessions are held at ReSOURCE, 266 Pine Street in Burlington.