LOOKING BACK AT 2019

WHERE WE WORK: BENNINGTON & NORTH BENNINGTON
To select the towns in which to launch our county efforts, we look at certain demographics, household income, nutrition intake, and health outcomes, as well as readiness. We work with our stakeholder group to assess need based on this data and readiness based on qualitative interviews. Bennington and North Bennington were selected by the local stakeholder group with an official launch in August 2018. We celebrated one full year of working in these communities in 2019!

STAKEHOLDER GROUP
ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED:
Abbey Group, Bennington Area Trail System, Bennington College, Bennington Free Clinic, Bennington Free Library, Bennington Rescue Squad, Blueprint for Health, Center for Restorative Justice, Child Advocacy Center, Community College of VT, Green Mountain Express, Mindful Paths, Mount Anthony Union Middle School, Sacred Heart St. Francis de Sales Parish, Seedlings, Southwestern VT Council on Aging, Southwestern VT Supervisory Union, Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, United Counseling Service

WE WORK ACROSS SECTORS
BUSINESSES
Improving wellness policies, increasing healthy food options, encouraging movement, and making worksites breastfeeding friendly.

SCHOOLS
Improving wellness policies, bringing mindfulness to classrooms, encouraging school meals best practices, and launching walk-to-school days.

MUNICIPALITIES
Improving town policies, enlisting civic engagement, making towns more walkable, and increasing healthy food access.

MEET YOUR LOCAL RISEVT LEADER
ANDREA MALINOWSKI
Andrea Malinowski is the Program Manager for RiseVT-Windham County, leading the efforts in 2019 to work with a multi-sector stakeholder group, review and award amplify grants to improve health and wellness, and implement initiatives in Bennington and North Bennington. After working full-time raising her four children, in 2012 Andrea opened a health and fitness center in Bennington, Optionz Health & Fitness. Andrea is a certified Health Coach, and she coaches the local outdoor recreation group, Training For More. Through Training for More, Andrea hosts running training groups for adults and children of all abilities preparing for 5k races to marathons, as well as group activities including hiking, bike riding, snowshoeing, and more!
Amplify Grants distributed in Bennington and North Bennington. Each funded initiative ties into at least one of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention 24 Strategies to Prevent Overweight & Obesity.

Total grant funds distributed to infuse healthcare reform funds into Bennington & North Bennington, increasing opportunities to embrace healthy lifestyles where Vermonters live, work, learn, & play.

The Bennington RiseVT Program Manager led 5 projects in 2019. The projects collectively served the entire spectrum of ages, from pre-natal to older Vermonters. These projects have crossed multiple sectors, including schools, municipalities, and childcare centers, and several were community-wide initiatives. Many included infrastructure improvements, while others included community engagement activities, and leveraging policy changes.

RiseVT supported the Bennington community through a grant to help support breastfeeding. The funding made it possible to offer the weekly breastfeeding support group, Milk & Mamas, to twenty-four families. Beyond the weekly class, the group also set up an online support system through Facebook in which moms who did not feel supported before are now able to reach out for information and connections to local breastfeeding resources. In the grant period, the group also planned a World Breastfeeding Week with representatives from Southern Vermont Medical Center, Circle of Life (providing holistic health and midwifery services), Vermont Department of Health, home birth specialists and many others! The grant allowed the group to identify and acknowledge a local daycare for their commitment to supporting breastfeeding moms and employees. They visited, educated, and recruited 21 new businesses to display “Breastfeeding Welcome Here” stickers in their windows. Bennington is now more aware of the breastfeeding support systems that are currently in place and continues to grow these services.