



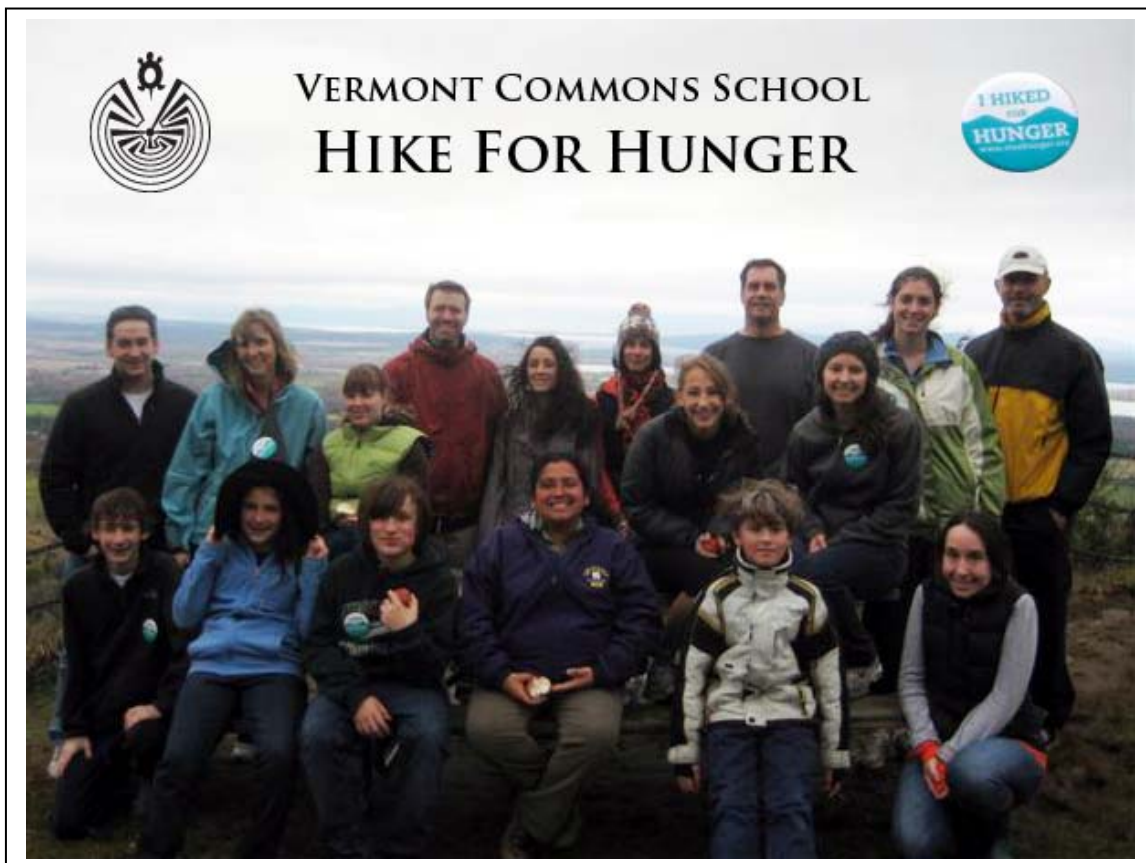
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Press Release

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VCS Hike for Hunger Supports Food Shelf



Braving gale-force winds, about two dozen students, parents and faculty from Vermont Commons School in South Burlington participated in the Hike for Hunger on Halloween morning. The group collected a car trunk full of assorted non-perishable food items for the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf before hiking to the top of Mt. Philo in Charlotte.

Saturday's hike was organized by students enrolled in a unique, semester-long Research & Service (R&S) class at VCS called *Feeding Our Neighbors*. This class involves students volunteering at the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf two days a week. "Most of our work is behind the scenes," explains Christian

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Frey, a VCS freshman from Warren. This translates to chores like bagging coffee, stocking shelves, sweeping the parking lot and taking out the compost and recycling. According to sophomore Sarah Mueller of Enosburg Falls, “The research part of the class is focused on nutrition -- making nutritious soup and trying to bring in a wider variety of food. They already have tons of pasta and beans!”

The R&S program has been part of the Vermont Commons curriculum for more than a decade. Each semester teachers are encouraged to develop new offerings based on their interests and specific needs in the community. *Feeding our Neighbors* was the brainchild of Adriana Comtois, a Spanish instructor at Vermont Commons School. Comtois attended a workshop about place-based education at Shelburne Farms last summer. She then read an article in *Seven Days* about shortages at local food shelves and put the two ideas together. “It seemed like the perfect way to have place-based education address a need in our community,” says Comtois.

About a dozen students in grades 7-12 are enrolled in the class. They organized a food drive in conjunction with the Homecoming Dance that netted 180 pounds of food. Next they’re planning to work with other R&S classes at VCS to harvest local vegetables and make a yummy “Commons Harvest” soup to sell at the Burlington Farmers Market. Proceeds will benefit the food shelf. “The class is *great*.” says Frey. “I had no idea so many people rely on the food shelf. It gives you a nice, warm, fuzzy feeling knowing that you’re helping the community.”

About Vermont Commons School: Vermont Commons School is an independent day school for students in grades 7 – 12. The school offers a rigorous, college-preparatory curriculum that includes a focus on community service and experiential education. As stated in the school’s mission, Vermont Commons School students experience a unique blend of academics and global emersion, master fundamental academic disciplines, grasp the profound interdependence of the natural and human systems they inhabit, and graduate with the values, knowledge, skills and commitment necessary to become ethical and engaged ecological citizens. For more information, please visit www.vermontcommons.org.

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