



JANUARY 11, 2016

# TURTLE TRACKS

A WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER FOR THE VERMONT COMMONS SCHOOL COMMUNITY

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**January 13th**

Flynn Matinee: *A Mid-summer Night's Dream*

**January 15th**

Documentary Film Series: *Straightlaced*

**January 15th**

Skiing at Bolton begins

**January 18th**

MLK Day  
School *IN SESSION*

### Vermont Commons Gallery Opening

### *Face to Face, Point to Point* by Amira Silverman '17



*Vermont Commons Gallery Opening*  
**Community Coffee House, Hosted by Elliot Carey '16**



**Superbowl of Birding XIII**

*by Laura Fried*

Winter's premier birding competition is back! This annual birding marathon has us visiting all the avian hotspots on Plum Island and Cape Ann, MA.

In the past, NBNC's youth and young adult teams have tallied nearly 100 species, including gems like King Eider, Razorbill, and Snowy Owl. Open to any interested teens - let us know early if you're interested in joining the team!

[Click here](#) to find more information regarding the Superbowl.

We usually drive down on Friday after school and drive back home Saturday night after the event. We usually stay at a motel in Gloucester.

Want to sign up or learn more? Contact Chip at (802) 229-6206 or [chip@northbranchnaturecenter.org](mailto:chip@northbranchnaturecenter.org)

**First Year Forum for 8th Grade Parents**

Please join us Wednesday, January 20th, from 5:30-6:30pm for an introduction to Vermont Commons' high school experience.

Consider this an opportunity to learn more about what makes Vermont Commons unique for those crucial high school years. We'll spend an informative hour together with Dexter, Ari, and a handful of high school faculty.

RSVP to attend by Friday (1/15) by e-mailing Jill at [jstrawbridge@vermontcommons.org](mailto:jstrawbridge@vermontcommons.org)

**Need Accommodations for Standardized Tests?**

Come see Jenna, our Learning Specialist! She can help you arrange for extra accommodations for the upcoming SATs & ACTs, if you qualify. Jenna can be reached in her office or via e-mail at [jbisset@vermontcommons.org](mailto:jbisset@vermontcommons.org).

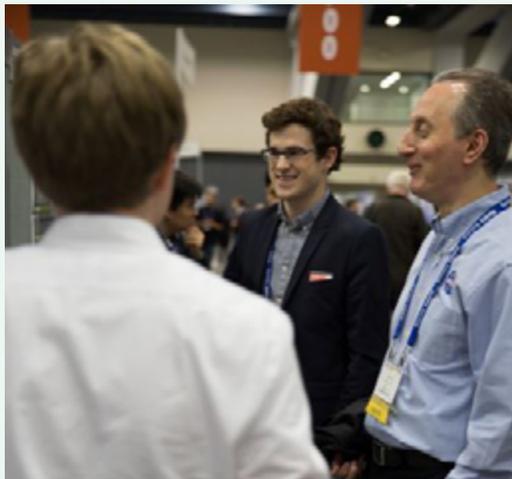
# Chagas Team Presents at American Geophysical Union Conference

by Peter Goff

Lincoln Pierce ('16), Henry Harder ('17) and Anna Hulse ('17) traveled with Peter Goff and Donna Rizzo to San Francisco before winter break. The American Geophysical Union (AGU) conference is the largest scientific conference in the world (with over 60,000 attendees), drawing scientists and engineers from virtually every discipline. Presenters either gave 20-minute oral presentations, or (like our team) 2+ hour poster presentations. You can see less than 1/3rd of the poster hall in these pictures (which was filled with new posters each of the conferences 5 days!).

We were across the isle from the cryogeology section (glaciers and other big cold things). Henry, Anna, and Lincoln took turns manning the poster and answering questions...and did a fantastic job of both impressing their visitors and representing the larger Chagas team.

We went to a couple of amazing sessions, one session of NOAA-funded projects looking into the lightning that forms inside volcanoes...nuff said. The second session we went to was a series of NASA talks looking at the organic chemistry in Saturn's rings and Martian soil. One of the possible explanations of methane production in low-altitude Mars atmosphere was 'biologic sources' (the fact that the NASA scientist dropped that little nugget so casually was only a little less amazing then how nonchalantly the audience accepted it...!!!!) Fun fact, as we were making our way across one of the exhibit halls, Anna spotted VCS student/faculty alum Ruth Heindel! She had just finished presenting her polar research, and was gearing up for her next trip to Antarctica (she's probably reading this from there now!) Anyway, check out the poster hanging in the science wing, and thanks to the families and faculty that supported this project for the last nine months.



*When we weren't at our poster, we hobnobbed with celebrities and rode the cable cars up Nob Hill.*

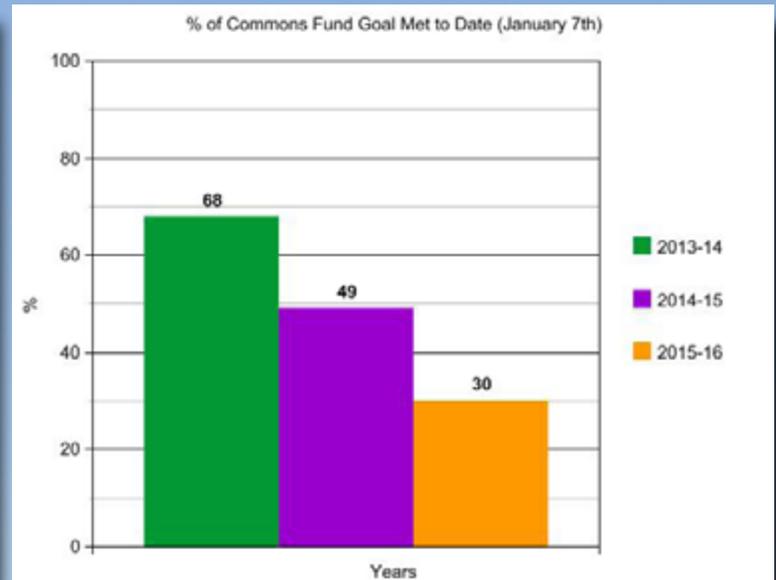
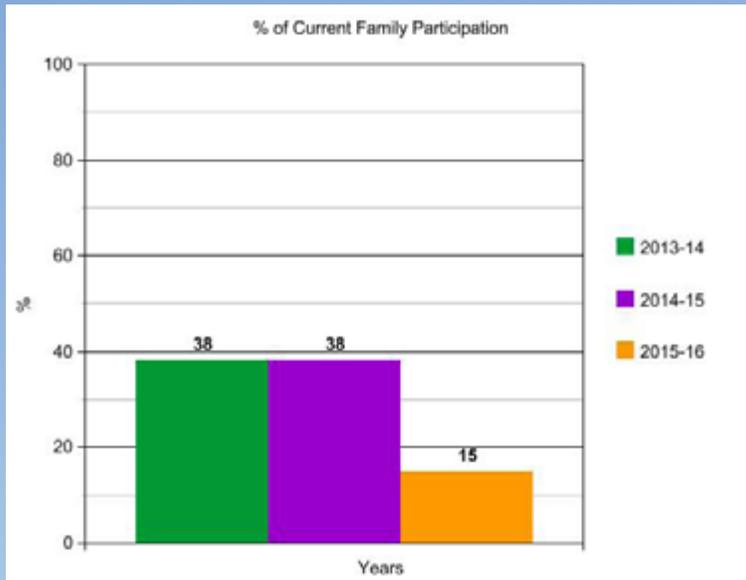
## **Common Hour: Laura Fried**

At this week's Common Hour, Laura Fried, international training expert and advisor to the Institute for Sustainable Communities and the International Water Management Institute, shared her knowledge of textile waste. After a brief and informative presentation of some startling facts, students worked in advisory groups to think about ways that their actions could help these issues. One group started to plan a VCS clothing swap while another discussed the environmental impact of each new t-shirt we produce. Her talk and interactive projects gave us all engaging food for thought.

# The Commons Fund 2015-16

by Staci & Seth Lasker

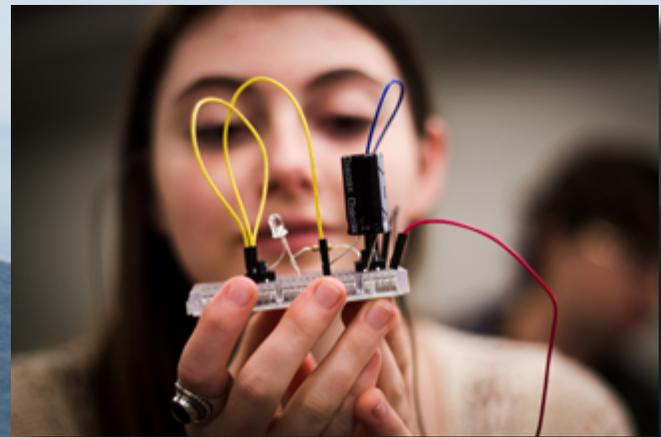
It's a new year and therefore the charitable giving slate has been wiped clean! Below you will see charts of our progress to date on the Commons Fund, both in real dollars and in current family participation. You will note we are a tetch behind.



We have no doubt that we are lagging a little because of the extraordinary generosity shown by this community in supporting toward the capital building project during the 2015 fiscal year.

Please consider a gift *early* in the 2016 fiscal year to help bring our Commons Fund home. It is so important that we meet this goal to provide this extraordinary program that you chose for your child and that *everyone participate* at the level they are able.

[Click here](#) to give securely online, or mail your check into the school attn: Mary Hamilton.



student photos by Amira Silverman '17, background photo by Graham Byers '18

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**ENGAGING STUDENTS WITH THE WORLD**