

## Community Hope and Action (CHA)



CHA is a group of individuals and organizations from the greater Townshend area, in partnership with West River Valley Thrives, who work together to bring hope to the West River Valley by creating opportunities to connect with neighbors and friends through monthly substance-free dinner and entertainment events in Townshend.

This year's event dates are:

**10/20, 11/17, 12/02, 1/19, 2/16, St. Patricks Day 3/16, 4/20 and Green Up Day 5/4.**

Like our Facebook page ([facebook.com/lethopein](https://facebook.com/lethopein)) for more information and updates on events and meetings.

## Calling West River Valley Community Members

Volunteers are the driving force behind our substance abuse prevention efforts here at West River Valley Thrives. West River Valley community members possess a wide variety of talents and skills; together we can create positive change in our community. We welcome you to share your talent with our coalition.

Let us know how you'd like to get involved by emailing Program Coordinator, Nick Plante, at [wrvthrives@gmail.com](mailto:wrvthrives@gmail.com) or calling the office at 802-365-4700. You can also drop by one of our coalition meetings. Our next meeting will be in early December.

### In Partnership with...



**Brattleboro Area Prevention Coalition (BAPC)**  
Brattleboro VT  
(802) 257-2175



**Deerfield Valley Community Partnership (DVCP)**  
Wilmington, VT  
(802) 464-2202



**Greater Falls Connection**  
Bellows Falls, VT  
(802) 463-9927  
Ext 212



**The Collaborative**  
Londonderry, VT  
(802) 824-4200



Engaging and Inspiring healthy communities.

If you have any questions about our work, upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, or would like to receive digital copies of our newsletters and announcements, please contact us at: [WRVThrives@gmail.com](mailto:WRVThrives@gmail.com) or (802) 365-4700

# West River Valley Thrives

Serving the towns of Brookline, Jamaica, Marlboro, Newfane, Townshend, Wardsboro, and Windham



## Dash to the Dam October 20th

Race along the scenic West River Trail

*Prizes Games Food Drinks*

**Sign-in begins at 9 am**  
at the Townshend Dam Recreational Area  
3845 VT-30, Townshend, VT 05353.

**Race begins at 10 am**  
Participants will be bussed to the starting line at 9:45 am.

**To register:**  
Go to [www.wrvthrives.com](http://www.wrvthrives.com), scroll down and hit the register button. You can also contact Nick by phone (802-365-4700).

**This is a Halloween race, so we welcome runners and spectators alike to dress up in costume!!!  
You may even win a prize!**

Adults: \$20 Children under 15: \$15 Children under 5: FREE

*Please be aware that this is a nature trail race with areas where belongings need to be carried. For this reason, we suggest that you do not bring a stroller on the trail.*



### Sector Highlight



**Karren Meyer-  
Parent Sector  
Representative**

Our readers may know Karren by one of the many hats she wears; she is the L&G Driver Education teacher, Refuse to Use coordinator, and the mother of two children:

-Patrick, who is an alumnus of Leland & Gray and is currently attending Keene State College.

-Ainsley, who is currently attending 8th grade at Leland & Gray.

Karren has been a part of the coalition for the last 5 years. She says that she wanted to be involved because as a parent of two she knows how important it is to talk about substances with kids early and often.



## Community Conversations Vermont's New Marijuana Law



Steve Tavella, Director of WRVT, introduces panel members (L to R): Cindy Hayford, Sen. Becca Balint, Cassandra Holloway, Hanako Jones, Sgt. Ryan Wood, Heather Smith, and Kurt White

On Sep. 26th, WRVT hosted a paneled community discussion to have an honest conversation about Act 86, the recent VT law legalizing adult recreational marijuana, and how it impacts teens. The panel was comprised of a diverse set of local experts from law enforcement, counseling, prevention organizations, mental health, and VT legislation. They discussed many topics including what the law does and does not mean, challenges and expectations for enforcement,

thinking about what we are communicating to our children, and (lack of) research on the long-term effects of THC on brain development. After a thought-provoking series of discussions, the audience was invited to comment and ask questions. With laws and culture shifting, it is important to have open dialogue like this in our communities.



## Meet Helena Student Assistance Professional (Elementary Schools):



As the elementary school SAP, Helena provides education, screening, and support services to youth who are at high risk for substance use and other risky behaviors. Helena works with the elementary schools in the Windham Central Supervisory Union. She has a college background in nursing, psychology, and photography. Prior to joining West River Valley Thrives, Helena worked in the local school districts of Windsor County. She has worked with many people with mental illness and substance abuse issues, and has a passion for helping others. Helena resides in Springfield, VT. She has three sons, 22 months, 4 years, and 10 years old. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, dancing, hiking, camping, traveling, stargazing, listening to music, baking, sports, fishing, cars, and painting.

## Join Juulie's Army

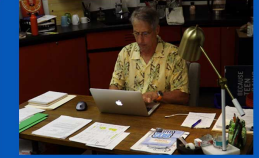
**eBay says that generally, it does not allow e-cigarettes, like Juul, to be sold on its website. eBay's official policy for e-cigarettes/vape products that are sold on their site requires an FDA health warning in the description, the phrase, "I will not sell e-cigarettes and related products to persons that are under 21 years old," in the listing, and signature-verified delivery to ensure the buyer is over 21. However, despite what eBay says, the company does not appear to be enforcing its own policy. Currently, the majority of eBay listings for Juuls do not follow any of the requirements that they say are necessary for "pre-approved sellers."**

**West River Valley Thrives team members, Olivia Moore and Rolf Parker have been looking up Juul listings on eBay and have been reporting the listings, documenting the reports, and documenting violations of the listings. Parker was able to buy Juul pods from eBay without having to sign for them despite eBay's policy. For these products, most shipping is listed as standard US mail and does not need a signature.**

**The purpose of the reports is to try to minimize the opportunities for minors to get Juuls and juuling products (each pod has the same amount of nicotine as 1 pack of cigarettes). The company continues to provide a platform where minors can get nicotine products. While all of the long-term health effects of Juuling are not known, nicotine addiction is a serious condition that can have lasting consequences.**

**If you would like to contribute, join Juulie's Army page on Facebook ([facebook.com/group/juuliesarmy](https://www.facebook.com/group/juuliesarmy))- where you can find step-by-step instructions on how you can help us make a difference.**

## Director's Corner



Change is in the air- you can see it in the leaves, smell it in the air, and feel it in your bones as we start to pull out our sweaters and wool stockings. Despite how much I love the warmth and flowers of summer and how quickly they seemed to pass this year, I always welcome the change of seasons, autumn in Vermont in particular.

Speaking of change, the start of the new school year also ushers in change for our programs, what we choose to do and how we choose to deliver them. This summer, WRVT staff and board members held a one-day strategic planning retreat in July. Among a packed agenda, we reflected on our successes and shortcomings, examined lessons learned, and planned our approach for the new year. The many creative suggestions we received from students, parents, colleagues, our community members, and partners were a large part of that formula. As an organization, we consider ourselves listeners and learners as essential ingredients of our role as practitioners.

Following our retreat, we provided scholarships for five Leland & Gray (L&G) middle and high school youth to participate in the four-day Eastern States Youth to Youth Leadership conference in Rhode Island. We jump started the school year with two school-wide presentations - the first was a presentation on marijuana and its effects on the developing youth brain; the second, an enthusiastic, inspirational and interactive presentation by Eddie Slowikowski ([eddiespeak.com](https://www.eddiespeak.com)) to over 150 L&G students and parents. His central message: To empower youth with the life skills, education, inspiration and hope they need to survive and grow amidst the spectrum of negative influences they face each day. Eddie's message pretty much sums up our own. There is so much we do and advocate for not only for our youth but also for the health of the seven communities we support. I could go on for paragraphs but I am going to hand it over to Nick, our project coordinator, who does such a wonderful job on this newsletter. Please reach out to us with questions, comments, and suggestions. We crave your thoughts and feedback!

In partnership,  
Steve Tavella