

Town of Richmond

Request for Special Appropriations

Request for Fiscal Year: 2025

Organization's Name: **Our Community Cares Camp, Inc**  
Address: **PO Box 503**  
City, State, Zip: **Richmond, VT 05477**  
Website address: **https://www.ourcommunitycarescamp.org**

**A. GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Program Name: **Our Community Cares Camp**
2. Contact Person/Title: **Susanne Parent, Executive Director**  
  
Telephone Number: **802-434-6006**  
E-mail address: **occcvt@gmail.com**
3. Total number of individuals served in the last complete fiscal year by this program:  
**44 Staff 86 Campers, and 59 Extended School Year children = 188 Individuals.**
4. Total number of the above individuals who are Town residents:  
**17 Staff 28 Richmond Campers and 35 ESY/Part 2 = 80 Richmond Residents**
5. Please, attach any documentation that supports this number. **Graph Attached**  
Percent of people served who are Town residents:  
**40% Staff 33% Campers 58% ESY/Part 2**
6. Amount of Request: **\$3,000**  
Total Program Budget: **\$160,600**  
Percent of total program budget you are requesting from the Town of Richmond:  
**1.87%**
7. Please state or attach the mission of your agency: **Attached**
8. Funding will be used to:  
 **Maintain an existing program**                      \_\_\_\_\_ **Expand an Existing Program**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Start a new program**
9. Has your organization received funds from the Town in the past for this or a similar program? **Yes**  
If yes, please answer the following:
  - a. Does the amount of your request represent an increase over your previous appropriation?  
If yes, explain the reason(s) for the increase. **No**
  - b. Were any conditions or restrictions placed on the funds by the Selectboard? **No**
  - c. If yes, describe how those conditions or restrictions have been met.

## **B. PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

1. Statement of Need: Identify the issue or need that the program will address (use statistical data to justify the need for the program). To what extent does this need, or problem exist in the Town of Richmond?

**Approximately 1 in 4 children enrolled in Richmond Elementary and Camels Hump Middle School receive free or reduced meals during the school year. An additional number of children come from families where living costs (rent/mortgage and childcare) exceed 45% of their income, and funds for enriching activities like music classes and summer camp are unavailable. There is a great need for quality activities and positive role models for young people.**

2. Program Summary:

- a. Identify the target/recipients of program services. Specify the number of Town residents your program will serve during the fiscal year and explain the basis upon which this number is calculated. Indicate any eligibility requirements your program has with respect to age, gender, income or residence.

**OCCC will continue to serve referred children and youth from grades K - 12 with summer food and a summer enrichment day camp for the month of July for children in the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District. For teens in grades nine and above, OCCC offers job training opportunities through our Counselor and Counselor in Training Programs. This program provides high-quality summer employment and training for local high school and college students as well as a few local adults.**

- b. Identify what is to be accomplished or what change will occur from participating in the program. How will people be better off as a result of participating in the program? Describe the steps you take to make the project known to the public, and make the program accessible and inclusive?

**OCCC has proven to be a staple of the community for the past 14 years, providing enrichment and food service to children, internship opportunities for youth, job training, and development for young adults. This program has clear results for participants and their families. It allows children from less affluent families to experience summer camp. Counselors provide children with positive role models and friendships that last longer than camp. Families have four weeks during the summer when their children can attend a local, safe, fun, and educational camp for FREE. This helps reduce the stress that summer often causes families trying to work and afford to send their children to a quality program. OCCC also provides youth job training to local teens. We also provide gap employment for several district employees who are unpaid through the summer.**

**Through Our Community Cares Camp, we work closely with school principals, guidance counselors, behavior interventionists, special educators, and Howard Clinicians to reach families and identify students who will benefit from this service and provide support for their applications to the camp. We promote the camp through social media, our website, local newspapers, and Front Porch Forum. Additionally, we have former staff and participants table community events throughout the year to reach families, campers, and donors. OCCC has worked hard pre-COVID to have a public appearance**

**whenever possible and will continue to do so now that we are all learning to live with COVID.**

3. Program Funding:

- a. Identify how Town funds, specifically, will be used (i.e., funds will provide “X” amount of units of service.)

**The requested funds help cover food, camper program costs, and enriching activities such as music, art, cooking, physical activity, and STEM.**

**In 2022, the OCCC camper cost to attend four weeks of summer camp was \$1,132.00. The requested funds would cover about three Richmond children. This past summer, we had 28 Richmond campers.**

- b. List the other agencies to whom you are submitting a request for funds for this program and the amount requested. How would this program be modified should revenues be lost?

**OCCC will continue to submit grant applications to several philanthropic organizations and private foundations, soliciting donations from individuals, local businesses, and sponsoring fundraising events. Additionally, OCCC receives a reimbursement from the USDA for summer food served, which helps support the food program. OCCC has a cushion from COVID stimulus grants.**

**C. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**

1. Describe your agency’s capability to provide the program including its history, previous experience providing this service, management structure and staff expertise.

**OCCC has been a core part of the community for the last 14 years. It has grown incrementally each year in the number of children it serves, feeds, and nourishes during the summer or by the programming it provides. There is a proven track record of the camp’s success, with almost 20% of 2022’s graduating class having participated in the camp.**

**Most of the staff were themselves campers, therefore understanding the camp’s core values. Professional Development has increased to include training from Howard Clinicians and the Peace and Justice Center. Staff’s open communication and meeting regularly help ensure the success of staff and campers with the likelihood of movement and shifting between groups.**

2. How will you assess whether/how program participants are better off? Describe how you will assess program outcomes. Your description should include: what (what kind of data), how (method/tool for collecting the data), from whom (source of data) and when (timing of data collection).

**Each year, there are anonymous surveys sent to staff, campers, and families after camp completion. OCCC also connects with the MMUUSD superintendent, school principals, and other key staff to assess how the program is working. Participants are surveyed each week during camp on different data points – friendships, games/activities, food, art, music, and cooking. We use all of the data to guide the planning of next steps.**

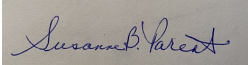
3. Summarize or attach program and or service assessments conducted in the past two years. **2022 and 2023 Annual Reports Attached**
4. Does your organization have a strategic plan and a strategic planning process in place? **No. It is our goal to undertake this project.**  
- If yes, please attach your plan.

The strategic plan should include a mission statement, goals, steps to achieve the goals, and measures that assess the accomplishments of the goals.

5. What is the authorized size of your board of directors? **5-9 Board Members**  
How many meetings were held by the board last year? **11 Board Meetings**

I, the undersigned, confirm the information contained herein is accurate and can be verified as such. I understand and agree that if the requested funds are approved, the disbursement of funds are subject to all conditions established by the Richmond Selectboard.

Signature of Applicant



Date: October 1, 2023

Susanne Parent, Executive Director

Print Name of Applicant and Title

FY 24 Budget				
	INCOME		EXPENCES	
	Grants	56,000		
	Income	90,000		
	Restricted Income	10,000		
	In-Kind	4,600	Advertising	100
			Bank Fees	300
			In-kind	4,600
			Meetings	100
			Other Costs	1000
			Postage, Mailing	1000
			Print/copy	100
			Accounting Fees	1500
			Outside contracted services: Staff from Peace and Justice Ctr to provide workshop/PD to staff for diversity and equity.	2000
			Telephone	20
			Books, subscriptions	150
			Fundraising expense	250
			Accident Ins	230
			Directors/Officers Ins	1950
			General Liability Ins	1400
			Workers Comp Ins	2100
			Food	9000
			Payroll Processing Fee	2000
			Payroll Tax	10000
			Salaries	118000
			Supplies	3300
			Transportation & Mileage	1500
				160,600.00
				\$160,600



# Our Community Cares Camp

## Mission, Vision, & Core Values

### **Mission:**

Creating a caring, nourishing community for Chittenden East children where every child can find success.

### **Vision:**

Developing a rich culture of community that includes health, safety, happiness, gratitude and citizenship that the campers carry with them throughout their lives.

### **Core Values:**

**Nutrition:** Combating food insecurity by serving campers two meals a day prepared with fresh, high-quality food and helping them make healthy food choices.

**Community:** Fostering an inter-generational community of inclusiveness and diversity, and service. Encouraging campers to continue service in their greater community.

**Opportunity:** Offering access to a variety of activities such as art, music, sports, creative play, gardening, and cooking.

**Discovery:** Supporting each child to discover new talents, for each child to glimpse more of their potential.

**Encouragement:** Create positive, supportive relationships with caring teens and adults, reinforcing good choices in food and behavior.

**Empowerment:** Inspiring children to envision their future and work for the common Good.

**Racial Equity:** Learning to understand, see, and disrupt racism in our community.

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Jana Brown ~ Connie van Eeghen ~ Jessica Johnson ~ Gretchen Muller ~ Kyle Silliman-Smith

2023 Our Community Cares Camp was another fun summer! We completed our 14th summer offering a free camp! Each summer seems to pose its own uniqueness. This year, we had the flood disasters, which people are still reeling from today. The camp and MMUUSD were closed for a week. Each year, we seem to come back stronger despite any adversity that comes our way. We operated the camp as we have traditionally done. Children were engaged, active, and happy with the variety of activities we had this year, from field trips to STEM.

OCCC assisted our loving community this summer after the flood event by organizing and operating a pop-up meal site at Richmond Congregational Church. This event was free to anyone who could get to the meal site. We mobilized many people throughout our community. The event was posted as a Facebook event and was posted and reposted on Front Porch Forum in many towns. We heard from people as far away as New York and Maine, all wanting to assist. Drop-off meal collecting centers were at Palmer's Maple in Jericho and Trinity Baptist Church in Williston. We received a great start from Feeding Chittenden, who was ready and eager to jump in and help. They donated 100 premade meals, two boxes of fresh fruit and vegetables, and a box of various-size diapers. People brought large batches of food for us to heat and serve walk-ins. We also asked for water, containers for meals-to-go, and non-perishables for the households who didn't have power. When people came to eat, we sent them meals to go, and then they could "shop" the tables of non-perishable foods. OCCC brought meals to Richmond Rescue, the Town Garage, the Fire Station, and the Fire Station in Bolton. Richmond was under a boil water notice. We brought large batches of food, individual meals, and non-perishables to Richmond Terrace and the Sterling House for three days.

Dozens of food boxes were delivered to families throughout Richmond and Bolton. Many food boxes were prepared for working groups around the area, such as on Esplanade St., Johnny Brook Rd, and in Jonesville. We contacted Chittenden County Hunger Counsel, and OCCC brought three carloads of food to a distribution center in the Barre/Montpelier area once the roads were opened. OCCC also delivered five carloads of non-perishable items to the Cambridge/Johnson area as their food shelf was wiped out. One carload was dispersed by walking door to door (tent to tent) to people who had no power or water. OCCC received such generous amounts of non-perishable items that we brought boxes to our local Richmond food shelf and the Hardwick Food Pantry.

We aim to continue our mission of giving back and helping provide for our community. Many OCCC members, from the chefs, campers, directors, and staff who, helped in many ways. They delivered, prepared, heated, served, organized, and lovingly sat with people who came to eat. Food is our Love Language.

Before the flood event, we knew the demand for our camp was high. Within ten days of opening the summer registration, we had 66 registrants and needed to pause the registration and start a waitlist. We knew that additional registrations would come in from guidance counselors, principals, and clinicians.

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We ultimately took everyone on the waitlist, and they registered and attended camp. One late request came in after camp had started, and we could not accommodate them as that group already had 25+ campers.

We continue our service to the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District through our primary mission of helping address food insecurity and creating an environment where every child finds success. We do this through our core values of providing fresh food that is lovingly and well-prepared. We foster a community of inclusiveness, diversity, and service. Children and youth have a place to discover new talents and learn leadership skills. During camp, children receive positive support from caring adults and help inspire them to envision their future and see themselves as contributing members of our community.

Our Community Cares Camp and many partner organizations are committed to helping end food insecurity in our area. Our camp also addresses the opportunity gap that arises when children from economically stressed families cannot afford the extra enrichment activities like music, art, and sports that help build connections with peers and create a meaningful life. It is challenging to raise children in our rapidly changing world. There can be multiple stressors like sickness, low income, family transitions, etc.

This summer, we provided three pieced-together weeks of food and fun at our summer camp with a caring and safe environment. The MMUUSD Transportation Department helps lift barriers and provides support for our program. Our camp works tirelessly every year to bring our message to the community and beyond. Based on the support our camp receives, we can help that many children. Our goal is to take as many families and children as possible. Even with the COVID-19 pandemic over, we are still seeing an exacerbation of more and more children with trauma, social and emotional concerns, and mental health issues. In addition, families continue to face challenges with childcare care hardships, child protection concerns, substance abuse, family violence, and incarceration. Our camp helps families fill that gap and relieve some family stressors!

Our financial numbers are not quite in for this year. Our Fiscal year ended on September 30th. We are still waiting for invoices and payments to arrive. There were increases in our expenses. The State of Vermont increased its minimum wage, and there were increases in most goods due to inflation and, supply chain demands, and new fuel charges. The camp also received funding from new grantors.

This year, we had 86 registered campers. Some of our later registered campers were by school request, homelessness, and doubled-up households due to the floods. Of that, 29% were new campers, and 71% were returning. An important piece to note is that roughly 47% of our campers have a support plan in school. Most of our campers are mainstream students. We are excited to have campers who attend alternative class environments find success at OCCC.

We served 2018 meals in three weeks to OCCC campers, Part 2, RES COVID Recovery Program, and staff. The USDA meal counting process changed from only free and reduced children's meals being reimbursable to all meals being reimbursed during the school year. This is **NOT** the case for the summer. **ONLY** children who are free/reduced are considered reimbursable meals. For us this year, that is 346 meals, which is only 17% of our total meals. We will be reimbursed about \$1,400 instead of years past at \$8,000 - \$10,000. This was a significant difference for us. Our school district is not considered free and reduced by criteria set by the State of Vermont. As a result of meals being provided at no cost to children

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over the last couple of years, very few families had an incentive to complete the free and reduced meal forms. OCCC has a plan for this to be included as part of the camper registration process.

We packed so much fun, exploring, friendships, music, and more into every minute of camp! Our camp only had two field trips due to the stormy summer. We had our traditional visit from CLiF (Children's Literacy Foundation). CLiF had a guest speaker who is also a local author, Jon Churchman. We received an autographed book of *The SheepOver*. All of our campers, Part 2, children attending the Extended School Year, and the COVID Recovery program chose two new free books to take home.

Campers enjoyed our Art Program again this year. Campers created weaving projects, explored many items from nature to make paintings, and really loved Perler bead creations. Friendship bracelets were a big hit this year. Many "monsters" and habitats were made out of the plethora of materials in the maker space.

We were outside every chance and played games like kickball, wallball, gaga ball, badminton, basketball, soccer, and chalk art. In addition, we had several "water days" with different water activities, water balloons, sponge painting, etc. Buddy Dubay taught children to explore music, instruments, and singing.

Our Cooking Program, led for the third year by Kira Mincar, a UVM Graduate with a bachelor's degree in Nutrition and Food Science, was again back to its total capacity! Cooking continues to be a favorite among all ages of campers. There were many healthy "pizza face" creations, smoothies, ice cream, ice pops, muffins and more! We had our ever-popular Chopped Competition for the LAC group. The panel judged them on Best Breakfast, Best Non-Cook Foods, Best Dessert, and Best Presentation. There were several days of planning before the big event. It was a fun time had by all!

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) had its second summer. The campers loved making volcanoes and seeing what happens when certain compounds are mixed together! Campers made journals, older campers built balloon-powered cars, played with oobleck, and explored how vinegar reacts with different household items! They built fabulous creations with marshmallows and toothpicks, styrofoam, and Q-tips.

The kitchen has two strong women veteran chefs, Stephanie Lafreniere, the Head Chef from Bolton, and Angela Boisvert of Jericho. In addition, we are fortunate to have Jack Rock this year to lend his expertise to the kitchen. They worked as a team, bringing our Offer vs. Serve food program through supply chain issues and thoughtfully preparing fun and healthy meals for our campers and staff. We had fresh smoothies, house-made muffins, chicken caesar, pizza, fresh fruit/veggies, homemade chicken soup, and a salad bar. It's great to see all the campers choosing healthy options. It was so heartwarming to see campers sitting together. They sat with friends, made new friends, and enjoyed freshly prepared meals!

Our staff of counselors, counselors in training, and directors are an essential part of the camp! We had an outstanding group this summer. Many are students from MMU, Essex High School, and CHMS. Some were new, and others were returning counselors and CITs. In addition, OCCC had several college students working with us this summer. The culinary team, as well as our hands-on staff, complete full days of orientation and training. We are fortunate to have Howard Center Clinicians and First Call continue providing some of our training. This year, we feel fortunate to have the expertise of the Peace

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and Justice Center provide us with information and insight as a part of staff training. We are so excited to have dedicated and talented teens and staff!

Our last day of camp culminated with a talent show by the campers, field day events, and an obstacle course. And, of course, we had ice cream!

Many thanks for support from the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District, Camels Hump Middle School, and the Transportation Department at MMUUSD. Their help made this camp successful for our community's children and teens!

We cannot express our gratitude for the support from local towns, churches, lodges, grantors, and most importantly, our friends and community members who donate because they all recognize the excellent camp's benefits for now and the future.

Our Community Cares Camp continues to be a staple in the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District. We would not have any of the success we do without the support from so many community entities, funders, and volunteers. The camp has such a positive vibe because of the love and energy everyone puts in day in and day out. The experiences campers have will undoubtedly last them a lifetime, and we are already looking forward to summer 2024!

Respectfully submitted,

Susanne Parent  
Executive Director

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