

# Rutland Health District Community Projects

February 3, 2023

**Backbone Organization:** Social Tinkering

**Website:** <https://www.socialtinkering.org/>

## **Rutland's Data Driven Problem Statement:**

The voices of oppressed and underserved community members are not centered in the ongoing work of improving health equity in Rutland County. This exclusion assumes services and opportunities needed 'for' rather than 'with' these community members. This is alienating and disempowering, leading to mistrust between underserved community members, service providers, and the community as a whole. Mistrust feeds into lack of engagement which continually exacerbates issues of health inequities and community disconnection.

## **Rutland's Community Goal/Vision:**

The voices and lived experiences of BIPOC, LGBTQ+ folks, people living with disabilities, and other underserved and oppressed community members are centered and valued.

We curate safe space for people to speak from that lived experience to inform projects, programs, and policies in Rutland County. This centering is critical to making community networks more just, equitable, and inclusive for all.

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## Community Projects

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## **Vermont CARES**

Educating the community on relevant topics related to SUD and HIV. Providing Syringe Service and a harm reduction program including: Narcan, HIV & HCV testing, case management, housing support, SUD Treatment referrals, and more. Providing safe and inclusive space for folks to feel seen and valued.

## **VT AthletaFit**

Offering free gym memberships and personal training to those likely to experience disparities in access to gyms or training. Partnering with Come Alive Outside to help people prepare to enter the outdoor recreation space and increase inclusion, access, and health equity in the outdoors.

## **Rutland County Pride**

Enhancing and sustaining the well-being of the LGBTQ+ and allied communities by providing programs and services that cultivate community; advocate for LGBTQ+ interests; educate and empower, and provide social support.

## **Rutland Area Branch NAACP**

Developing and hosting a half-day professional conference and educational summit with a networking dinner. The conference will consist of two panels, one short presentation, and a final plenary meeting where mental health participants will discuss how to stay best connected. The dinner will serve as the first social gathering of the network, where all participants would have the opportunity to build connections through food and music. Members of the general public will be invited to attend this conference. This summit and dinner aim to build connections between mental health professionals of color and allow participants a chance to locate clinicians and other mental-health-related professionals of color.

## **Come Alive Outside**

Supporting a new partnership with VT AthletaFit to increase inclusion, access, and equity outdoors for underserved populations who face the highest health inequities. Offering free gym memberships, an outdoor gear lending and donation library, and hyper-local outdoor programming for target populations in Poultney.

## **Euphoric Hair Experience**

Opening a permanent hair braiding salon for BIPOC youth and adults in the Rutland community. Sponsoring and organizing BIPOC youth and adult hair clinics to make available services that are otherwise unavailable in the community. This service assists with youth and adult mental health, with participants reporting increased positive thoughts due to increased confidence in physical appearance.

## **ARC Rutland Area**

Serving citizens with developmental and intellectual disabilities (DD/ID) by providing them equitable access to opportunities for community inclusion and personal growth they may not otherwise have. Programs and social activities provide physical exercise, reduced isolation /loneliness, development of social and life skills, making friends, gaining a sense of belonging, and fun; all of which don't come easily to this population. ARC aims to ensure that members are and will continue to be valued community members, teachers, and leaders.

## **Allen Street Campus**

Conversion of the school stage area into a skateboard room with a 4-foot high mini ramp as a way to provide equitable access to lifelong affordable sports in a safe and supportive environment. Students will be involved in working with a design team to create a comfortable and accessible 3rd space for skateboarding, skate instruction, and art. The experiential learning class will take the lead on this project collaborating with local volunteers to construct the ramp and learn life skills. The space will be graced with street art murals that reflect our diversity, creativity, and resilience.