

Healthy People, Strong Communities

St. Albans City School GRANT APPLICATION

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Title	St. Albans City Community Walking & Running Path
Brief Project Description	St. Albans City School has 30 acres of land that can be better utilized by the school and shared with the community. We want to install a ½ mile walking and running path amidst our athletic fields, gardens, orchard, and forest for students and adults to use. Ultimately we want our students and St. Albans community members to exercise, enjoy nature, and access and learn about our environmental stewardship initiatives while lowering their risk for obesity and illnesses related to sedentary living.

Total Project Cost		\$30,000
Grant Request		\$20,000
Match		\$10,000
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Other project partners:

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Contact Person: Abby Mattera, State Outreach Manager Vermont Safe Routes to School Resource Center 802 598-8651 Email - Abby@SafeRoutesVT.org Website - www.SafeRoutesVT.org	Contact Person: Suzanne Tremblay Lifestyle Medicine & Cancer Services Northwestern Medical Center 33 Fairfield Street St. Albans, Vermont 05478 802 524-1280 Email - stremblay@nmcinc.org

APPLICATION NARRATIVE

1. Project Description (20 points):

Project Overview: St. Albans City School has over 700 students who come from surrounding St. Albans City in Northwestern Vermont. Although all students have P.E. twice a week and most have daily recess, all students (as well as staff and St. Albans community members) could benefit from more exercise. For the past two years we have been working towards the goal of providing our community and students with a beautiful and safe venue for regular walking and running. With the installation of a walking/running path on our property our teachers will be able to take students out for a walk or run during the school day where they can be safely monitored and where students can pass by the school orchard, gardens, forests, and athletic fields. We have 30 acres of land available on which to place this unusual ½ mile crushed gravel path. Ultimately, we want to have as many children and adults as possible using the path for exercise, thereby reducing their risk of obesity and diseases related to inactivity. In addition, the path will provide access to multiple outdoor science-linked stewardship projects, including a Christmas tree farm, wooded nature trail, community garden, maple sugar house, wetland, and our student fruit and vegetable gardens.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- Fitter children = increased run times on the Pacer Fitness Test administered in PE.
- Reduced incidence of obesity among our student population - as determined by county Body Mass Index (BMI) statistics.
- Consistent use of the path by St. Albans Community members (and the Recreation Department). Many parents already visit the school property to attend to their children while they play on the fields and playground or at the recreation department pool next door. Those parents will benefit from a walk while their children are playing. Nearby residents can also use the path for daily exercise.
- Increased community participation in school events and activities due to improved perception of the school and all that it is doing for the community.
- We expect there to be increased awareness of St. Albans City School's multiple environmental stewardship initiatives (including vegetable gardens through a Farm to School grant, an urban forest, community garden, apple orchard, as well as future projects such as a Christmas tree farm, wooded nature trail, maple sugar house, and wetlands classroom).
- This project will help us maintain our recognition as a National Green Ribbon School. We initially gained this recognition in the Spring of 2013 for our dramatic reductions in energy use, improved nutrition and health initiatives, and our environment-focused community service efforts. Our new stewardship programs expand upon those initiatives to improve the lives of our students and our neighbors in the community.

Description of Partnerships:

We have four partners in this project: Walk and Bike St. Albans, St. Albans City Recreation Department, Vermont Safe Routes to School and Northwestern Medical Center.

Walk and Bike St. Albans is group of concerned residents that has been working for years to heighten awareness of walking and biking needs throughout our community. They have pledged to publicize and promote community use of the walking path for fitness and health.

The St. Albans City Recreation Department has a pool facility adjacent to the school's property. Community members that access the facility share use of our playground, athletic fields, and parking areas. We encourage them do so and anticipate regular use of the walking and running path as well. Once the path is completed, we will work with the Recreation Department to heighten community awareness of the path and its availability for public use.

In 2013 we partnered with Vermont Safe Routes to School to promote walking and biking to and around our school. This organization has been instrumental in helping us draw up plans with the City of St. Albans that will make walking and biking exercise more appealing and travel to school safer for kids. They are eager to help us promote use of this community venue for increased physical activity.

In 2013 we also partnered with the Lifestyle Medicine and Cancer Services department of the Northwestern Medical Center (NMC) to promote health and exercise at our school. NMC

wants to see our students and staff be physically active and the walking path would certainly help to make that goal achievable. They too would help us promote use of the walking path in our community.

Anticipated Benefits:

Having a path will help us to expand our school walking/running program. We want our teachers using the path regularly between academic sessions year around. Research suggests that students learn more and have better self-esteem if they have exercise breaks and are physically fit. Another benefit will be safety. Teachers will be able to see and direct all the students while they exercise; currently children cannot be observed around building corners as classroom groups walk around our facility. We expect the path will also appeal to adults (teachers, parents, and community members) looking for a way to exercise that does not require costly membership fees or equipment - and allows families to exercise together. Many adults in our school and wider community are struggling with excess weight. Having an attractive path right outside the school will help optimize exercise availability for those that work at the school or who live nearby.

How project fits with Mission and other projects:

The mission of the St. Albans City School is to nurture all children's natural love of learning so they develop the confidence, skills, and knowledge to succeed at all levels of their education and become responsible members of the community.

The pathway fits with our mission by providing a venue for physical activity which has been shown to stimulate the brain, ready children for learning and enhance self-esteem. The pathway will also highlight - and provide access to - the many student-driven environmental stewardship projects that the pathway will pass by: the school and community gardens, our composting shed, the apple/pear orchard, maple sugaring grove and sugar house, christmas tree farm, rain catchment gardens, solar farm, and wetlands. All aspects of these learning projects provide our students with a tremendous opportunity to develop skills and knowledge that can be used elsewhere in life.

Below are ways in which the proposed pathway will strengthen other school projects:

Project 1. World Fit Walk: Each Spring our students and teachers engage in a 40 day walking contest to accumulate miles. This event gets school children and adults moving and highlights our school's interest in the value of exercise. We would like to add another 40 day walking contest to our schedule in the early Fall. Unfortunately, because we currently have no walking path, the students have to walk multiple laps around the perimeter of our building. The sidewalks around the building are incomplete and the safety of children is hard to monitor as they pass out of view around each building corner. When we install an attractive path around our athletic fields and farm projects (allowing us to keep our feet dry) we believe that more teachers and students will feel enthusiastic about exercising by walking and running year round, and in participating in the walking contest.

Project 2. Whole body health through a combination of good nutrition and exercise: We are already doing well with our nutrition initiatives but would like to improve our exercise offerings. Both are necessary for optimal body composition and physical fitness. We have already eliminated all vending machines and have added filtered water fountains throughout the school building. We supply a healthy fruit or vegetable snack to all students each school day. We also provide free breakfasts and lunches that are low in refined sugar and fat and high in nutritional content. On the other hand, our students should be getting more than an hour of vigorous exercise each day and many are not. A walking/running path around our grounds would provide an attractive venue and forgiving surface for the expenditure of calories. Our walking contests have shown that students love being outside and moving, and that they would appreciate and use a walking/running path.

Project 3. Empowering kids to eat healthy locally grown food: To help children learn that they can grow and eat healthy food we have established a successful Farm to School program on school property. Students plant and maintain gardens, apple orchards, and blueberry bushes right outside their classrooms. They are enjoying the vegetables and fruits derived from their efforts, and learning healthy recipes with which to use the produce. The walking/running path will showcase the students' gardens by encouraging students, staff, and community members to walk by them on a regular basis, and will also enhance overall health awareness.

Project 4. Cultivating environmental stewardship through community service: All St. Albans City School students participate in environmental stewardship projects that increase scientific and mathematical skills and awareness of environmental issues such as climate change and habitat destruction, while also serving the school community. We are in the process of turning our grounds into a living science laboratory, with multiple examples of working landscapes (i.e., gardens and tree farms), habitats (wetlands, butterfly gardens, and forests), and trails. Examples of projects include the planting of an urban forest, installation of solar panels, development of a guided nature trail, development of a christmas tree farm, and the planting of multiple rain filtering gardens. All of these projects are student-driven. The pathway will provide safe multi-season access to these locations and allow students and staff to move equipment with ease.

Results Expected within the Funding Period:

Construction

- Step 1. May 2013: Pathway staked out around athletic fields and key environmental stewardship projects.
- Step 2. June 2013: 8-12" of top soil removed in a 5' wide band from the path surface and trucked away
- Step 3. June/July: A layer of road cloth added to path bed. An 8" layer of coarse rock and gravel laid down in the pathway.
- Step 4. June/July: A 4" layer of fine crushed rock laid down over the course material.
- Step 5. June/July: Pathway smoothed and compacted.

Promotion

As soon as the pathway is completed (by August 2014) there will be an article in the local newspaper celebrating its installation, and detailing its purpose and availability to the community. We already submit a weekly article to the paper and this story would be a natural fit for that effort. Signs welcoming use of the path will be placed where students, parents and community members will see them. The recreation department will promote free community use of the pathway.

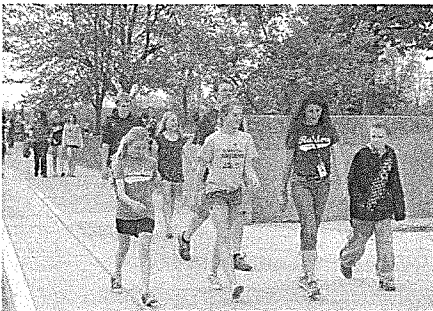
Implementation

Finally, when students return to school in August the path will be immediately incorporated into daily class activities. We will initiate a Fall 40-day walking contest in September and October. Endurance fitness tests and body mass index BMI measures will be obtained at the beginning of the school year and reassessed at the end of the year to monitor desired changes in fitness.

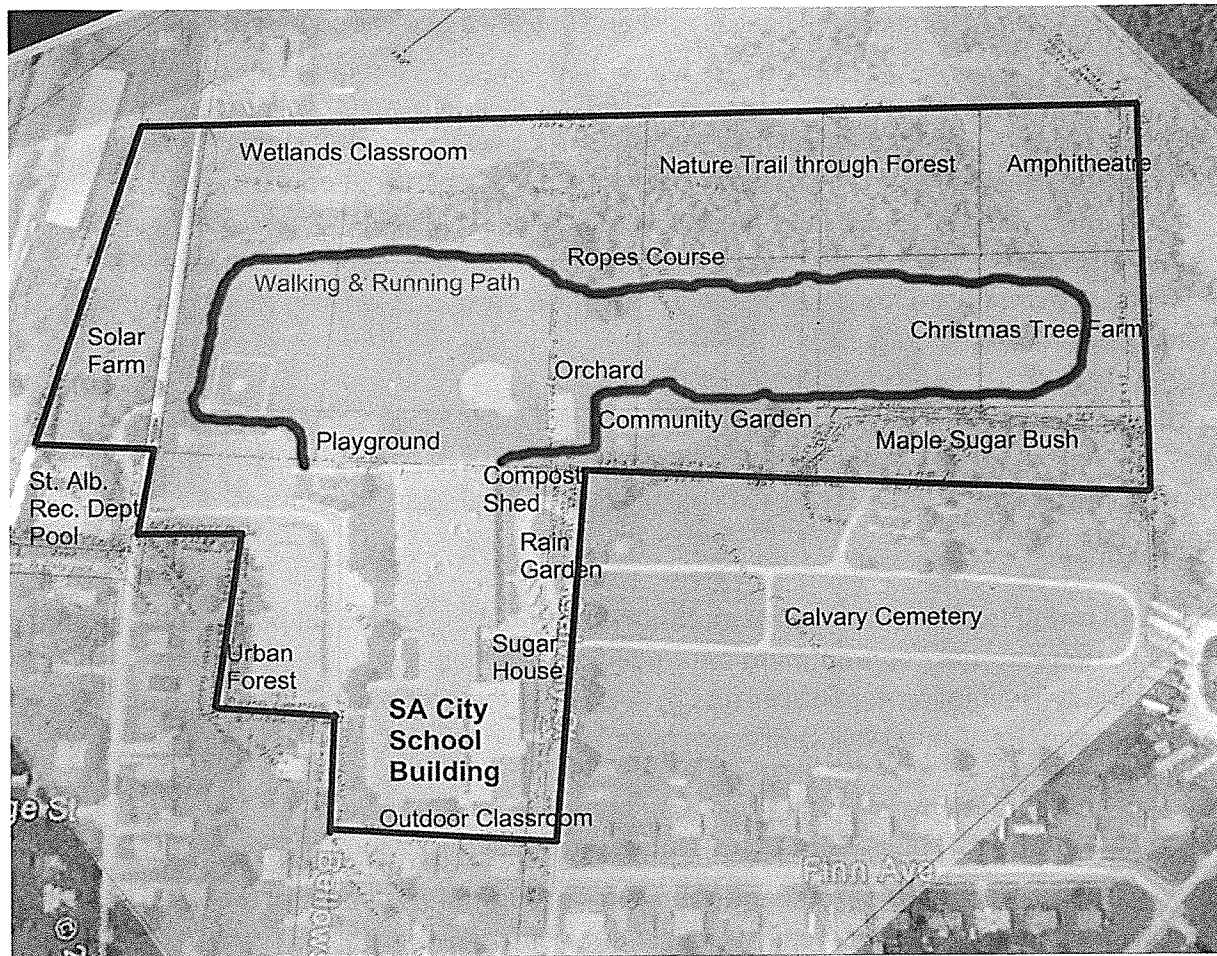
Strategies Employed to Implement the Project:

Thus far our school has taken a series of steps to insure completion of this project.

1. We have discussed the need for the path with teachers and students for the past two years.
2. We obtained estimates for the cost of the pathway in November 2011 and again in October 2013.
3. We secured some funds for the path through various small grants and have submitted requests to numerous other organizations for additional funds. We currently have \$9,000 in cash and \$1,000 of in-kind work towards the estimated \$30,000 cost of the path.
4. We have partnered with World Fit Walk to hold a 40-day walking contest each May/June that promotes physical activity. This yearly event has garnered genuine interest and support for the walking path among staff and students.
5. On June 5th, 2013 we mowed and painted a line around a ½ mile route around our athletic fields that all students and staff walked twice (roughly 800 people took part in the event). This Green Ribbon Day walking event peaked interest in a permanent pathway that would keep feet dry and children safe during the school day. Everyone who participated expressed a wish that we could be walking this loop instead of the one around the school building for exercise.



Map of 3,000 foot (0.56 mile) Path on St. Albans City School Property:



2. Implementing the Goals (30 points):

The walking/running path project will help implement two **Community Health** goals.

1. *Individuals and communities will have abundant opportunities for active, healthy living and a high quality of life.*

The St. Albans City School fields and playground are already a magnet for play and exercise for the surrounding community. The pathway will enhance that function by making it possible to walk and run a measured distance on firm and dry footing. Along with students and staff, the entire community will be welcome to use the path year round (summer programs as well) and to learn about the school's environmental stewardship projects. The path will be handicap accessible. These projects are aimed at improving

the skills, knowledge, health and food security of the community's children.

2. Preventing obesity through physical activity and healthy foods will be part of a healthy lifestyle.

Our goal is to carve out one hour per school day for physical activity for each student. This is the minimum amount recommended to optimize health and reduce the risk of obesity in children and adults. A safe and attractive path will help us make reaching this goal possible. We are already doing all that we can to provide healthy nutrition to our students, but we need to do better with our exercise options. A walking/running path will be a huge help in this regard.

Success of the project will also be determined in relation to the following suggestions.

Relevant suggestions in the DRAFT Community Health Strategies and Actions document are discussed below:

Work with municipalities to develop multi-jurisdictional and regional partnerships related to recreational programming and facilities. The path would be open for use by the St. Albans City Recreation department and people within the community. The Recreation department and St. Albans Walk & Bike organization would help us promote the paths availability and use.

Encourage schools to provide access to their physical activity spaces and facilities for the community outside of normal school hours through joint use agreements and other mechanisms. We already open all of our outdoor facilities to community use outside of normal school hours. The same would be true of the the path.

Support the development of recreational opportunities that meet the needs of a range of different ages, including youth, middle and aging populations. This walking/running path would be appropriate for all ages.

Support municipalities to develop "tobacco-free parks" programs and ordinances.
Support municipalities to develop programs and ordinances that restrict alcohol consumption in public spaces. Our school and grounds are tobacco and alcohol free already and we serve the function of a park for local residents.

Improve communication about the availability of recreational opportunities throughout the region. We will certainly trumpet the purpose and availability of the path for exercise and recreation. Our connection with the local newspaper (where we place a weekly article about our school), the Recreation department and St. Albans Walk and Bike will insure success.

Increase desirability of and maintain existing recreational facilities. St. Albans City

School will be a more desirable recreational destination with the installation of this path.

Identify areas underserved by recreational opportunities (e.g. organized sports and swimming lessons, boat safety, and rowing in Grand Isle County). This walking and running path will be the only such path located near to the St. Albans city center and within the nearby community. With this walking/running path there will be no need for nearby residents to drive to the Collin's Perley recreation center to use a walking path.

Promote "lifetime sports" as part of physical education curriculum. Walking and running are lifetime physical activities that do not require belonging to a team or a formal class. Nor does walking and running require expensive equipment. These are activities that can be done alone or in the company of others in a wide variety of locations.

Create outdoor education and activities that foster stewardship of Town Forests, the lakeshores and other natural areas. Increase access to healthy food in the region. This path will pass by and highlight student-driven land stewardship projects: gardens, orchards, wetlands, forestlands, renewable energy projects, etc. Our goal is to install signs which educate all who access the path about the various projects.

Work with municipalities to develop and expand community garden programs. The path will pass right by the only active community garden in St. Albans (which happens to be located on St. Albans City School property). The leadership of the community garden already coordinates closely with our school.

Work with municipalities to include policies in municipal plans to increase access to healthy food and beverage choices and decrease availability of unhealthy food and beverage choices. St. Albans City School is already committed to healthy food and beverage choices. Our vegetable and fruit gardens and apple orchard, accessible from the walking/running path, will only make that fact more obvious by enabling all students, staff, and community members that use the path to observe how food grows, and thus gain a better awareness of where their food comes from.

Establish and expand affordable and accessible education programs for basic cooking, food preservation, nutrition skills and healthy practices (e.g. 4-H). Our environmental stewardship, Farm to School, and Family and Consumer Sciences programs involve a considerable amount of cooking and nutrition instruction. Our 21st Century after school program is heavily involved with the UVM extension program in supporting our gardening and cooking efforts. The pathway will provide access to these environmental stewardship projects and thus indirectly support the mission to educate students about food and where it comes from.

3. Impact (30 points):

Description of Population Served:

St. Albans City School is a PreK-8 School of 700 children and 150 staff. Our public school (60% eligible for free and reduced meals) is located in one of the least affluent counties in the State of Vermont with a population experiencing a high incidence of obesity (at least 28% of middle schoolers are overweight or obese). Most children at the City School get 30 to 45 minutes a day of recess or physical education for physical activity. However we consider this amount of exercise minimal and are aiming for the 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous exercise recommended by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM). To reach this goal we will need to expand our current exercise options to insure that children have a greater chance of reaching adulthood healthy.

Describe Lasting Benefit of the Project:

The walking/running path will greatly expand the appeal and function of City School's recreational facilities. Large numbers of children will be able to use the path during school hours and community members will be welcome to use the path at other times. The city's Recreation Department will have another facility to incorporate into its programming. The City Pool is located adjacent to our property. We conduct summer feeding and recreation programs with them. The path will be easy to maintain and should last into the foreseeable future. The minimal maintenance costs will be covered by normal grounds care expenses.

Describe how the project could be replicated to serve as a model:

Many Vermont schools have athletic fields and grounds for outdoor recreation. These schools are also trying to address the obesity epidemic through increased exercise and healthy nutrition. They could follow our example if they were aware of our methodology and success. Our model for achieving improved health through exercise on a path will be shared via a web page posted on our website and news outlets. We will happily advise any other school interested in replicating our model.

Explain how effectiveness will be measured:

- Used regularly by most students and staff in the Fall and Spring Walking Contests
- Observed regular use of the path by community members and the Recreation Department
- Decreased rate of obesity school wide
- Increased fitness as determined by endurance/aerobic fitness tests at year end

4. BUDGET AND TIMELINE (20 points)

Project Budget

Tasks	Costs			Sub Total
	Staff Labor	Consultants	Heavy Equip., also Construct. Material	
1. Excavation & Soil Removal by Truck	\$1,500	\$500	\$6,000	\$8,000
2. Gravel Transport & Deposit	\$1,500	\$0	\$16,000	\$17,500
3. Compacting & Smoothing gravel	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$2,000
4. Topsoil seed and mulch disturbed areas	\$2,000	\$0	\$500	\$2,500
Totals	\$7,000	\$500	\$22,500	\$30,000

Project Funding

Amount of funding requested:	\$20,000
<i>Matching funds sources (indicate if already secured or pending):</i> 1. Fuel-up to Play 60 (Grant) 2. Fit and Healthy School Award (\$1,000) and other awards and grants totalling \$6,000. 3. Staff time on range of health and environmental stewardship initiatives	<i>Matching funds amount:</i> \$2,000 (secured) \$7,000 (secured) \$1,000 (in kind)
Total Matching Funds	\$10,000
Total project budget	\$30,000

Project Schedule

Milestone	Month/Year
Permit for Project	January/February, 2014
Path Measurement and Layout	May, 2014
Topsoil Removal	June, 2014
Crushed Rock & Gravel Installation	July, 2014
Promotion of path availability for community use	August, 2014

Cooperative Agreement Provisions

This project is funded with federal public funds and will therefore require compliance with all applicable federal, state and local rules and regulations. I have reviewed the Cooperative Agreement Provisions (found here: www.nrpcvt.com/healthystrong.html) and agree to comply with these HUD requirements if awarded this grant.



Lead Applicant

11/12/2013
Date