



NEW HAMPSHIRE
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

THE NEIL AND LOUISE TILLOTSON FUND 2019 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

A summer job that earns money in the short term — and builds skills for the long term. A project that lends a hand to struggling families by improving their access to fresh and healthy food. Better early-childhood care and services to support families today — and help kids grow into thriving adults tomorrow.

These are efforts that are under way now in the North Country, developed and led by the people of the region, that are meeting immediate needs — and building more sustainable and thriving communities for the future.

The Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation supports those and many other efforts for the region. Since 2006, the Tillotson Fund has invested more than \$50 million in northern New Hampshire and bordering communities in the United States and Canada.

The fund made 58 grants in 2019: to save communities money — and help protect the environment — by making town and school buildings more energy efficient; to get people training for good jobs; to help families thrive by expanding access to fresh, healthy food — and so much more. This report details just a few of them. This was also the inaugural year of the Empower Coös Youth Grantmaking Program, which is helping to develop the region's future leaders by giving them a hand in grantmaking to improve their communities (pictured above).

Meeting immediate needs while developing the local economy and building long-term sustainability are critical to maintaining the resilient and strong communities that are one of the region's well-earned points of pride.

We are seeing some transitions in our communities, as pockets of the region are redefined by exciting new growth and energy. And yet the benefits of those transformations are not equally felt.

As we consider how to best steward the resource that Louise and Neil Tillotson dedicated to their beloved North Country, we strive to understand the needs of all the region's residents, and to remain aware of the critical balance between addressing the needs of today while helping to build, develop and innovate for the region's success tomorrow.

And we extend our heartfelt gratitude and well-wishes to Kirsten Scobie, whose thoughtful and intelligent work over more than a decade has shaped the Tillotson Funds into a nationwide model for rural philanthropy. Her dedicated stewardship of the resources and vision of Louise and Neil Tillotson has helped to strengthen communities across the region, and we wish her well in the next chapter of her life's work.

Ben Gayman
Chair, Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund Advisory Committee

Photo: Members of the Tillotson Fund's Empower Coös Youth Grantmaking Committee (from left to right): Faith Gingras, East Norton, VT; Jonah Cote, Canaan, VT; Tristan Robertson, Milan, NH; Jessie Church, Bethlehem, NH; and Colbe Goudreau, Gorham, NH.

The Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation was established in 2006 with a bold vision:
To serve as a catalyst for the region to move toward sustainable community and economic development in Coös County and surrounding communities in the United States and Canada.

To learn more about the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund or to apply for a grant or scholarship, visit www.nhcf.org/tillotson.

HIGHLIGHTS

A small sampling of work made possible by the Neil and Louise Tillotson Fund in 2019.



2019 BY THE NUMBERS

58 GRANTS TO NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS TOTALING \$3.38 MILLION

7 SCHOLARSHIPS TO NH AND VT STUDENTS TOTALING \$33,500

Courtesy Photo



Courtesy Photo

BUILDING OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE

The Tillotson Fund supports a partnership between the Jobs for America's Graduates program in Berlin and the Appalachian Mountain Club that **gives students meaningful, paid summer employment, skill-building work in environmental stewardship and exposure to careers in conservation and land management.** This year's program brought students from Mount Jasper to Great Glen Trails, the White Mountain National Forest, and the summit of Mount Washington. "It's wonderful," said 16-year-old Julianna Willey of Berlin. "All the work is really fun. I'm learning a lot all the time." During the school year, JAG students learn employability skills, receive career guidance and are supported in their academic efforts.



Courtesy Photo

REPAIR, RESELL AND REUSE

A grant is supporting the Ressourcerie des Frontières in Coaticook, Québec, in its mission to **keep some 800 tons of material out of landfills each year by making sure things get reused.** Workers collect unwanted items — everything from furniture to appliances to sporting goods — from 20 municipalities, and then sort, clean, repair and resell items for reuse.

YOUNG PEOPLE TAKE THE LEAD

The Tilly Players are a group of middle and high school students who do their own casting and directing, make props and design costumes and put on shows at the Tillotson Center in Colebrook. A grant awarded by the Empower Coös Youth Grantmaking Program of the Tillotson Fund **helped bring theater pros to town for workshops; funded travel to learn how other productions are run; and established a scholarship fund for kids who face financial obstacles but want to be involved in theater.** The grantmaking committee (pictured on cover) also awarded grants to the Boys and Girls Club of the North Country for development of an after-school environmental education program; and to After School Kids in Whitefield for after-school programming.



Photo by Meghan McCarthy McPhaul

STEWARDED THE TRAIL

The Northern Forest Canoe Trail is using grant funding to **improve user access, increase portage trails and build campsites along northern New Hampshire and Vermont waterways.** The 740-mile paddling trail traces historic travel routes across New York, Vermont, Québec, New Hampshire and Maine. It is the longest inland water trail in the nation.



Courtesy Photo

CONNECTING COÖS EDUCATORS

More children in Coös are starting kindergarten ready to learn — and having more seamless transitions from preschool — thanks to ongoing work coordinated by the Coös Coalition for Young Children and Families and supported by the Tillotson Fund. In every school district in Coös, early childhood educators now meet regularly in facilitated teams with district kindergarten teachers and elementary school administrators to discuss complementary curriculum design, consistent social-emotional learning practices, and ways to ensure that more children are reached who would benefit from high-quality early childhood care. The work is an outgrowth of the twice-annual Coös Connections Summit for educators.



Photo by Cheryl Senter



Photo by Cheryl Senter

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY

The Coös Youth Study — a ten-year panel study by the Carsey School at the University of New Hampshire that followed more than 800 young people from Coös County — sought to understand the lives, choices, aspirations and challenges facing the region's youth. Among the findings: that **young people in Coös, like the adults in their lives, have a strong connection and commitment to their community that supports them as they make the transition to adulthood.** The study was funded by the Tillotson Fund as a key part of the fund's strategic commitment to analysis to inform local leaders and a grantmaking strategy that aims to strengthen the local economy, steward natural resources, enhance cultural assets and retain the strengths of North Country communities. The study prompted the Empower Coös Youth campaign, which led to the Empower Coös Youth Grantmaking Program. Results are being used to inform grantmaking and practice by the Tillotson Fund — and to support decision-making and planning in schools and communities across the region.



Courtesy Photo

FEEDING COÖS FAMILIES

A three-year grant has made it possible for the New Hampshire Food Bank to create a new food security coordinator position in Coös County to increase access to affordable, fresh and locally produced foods for struggling families. Coös has the highest level of food insecurity in the state, with 11.4 percent of the population "unsure of where or when they will get their next meal," according to the New Hampshire Food Bank. The rate of food insecurity among children in Coös is almost 18 percent. Between 2011 and 2016 — even as the economy recovered from recession — the Food Bank saw a 61 percent increase in demand for food statewide. Many working families, children and seniors rely on food programs provided by the Food Bank, and the food security coordinator will help to align services with the 27 organizations the Food Bank supplies across the region.



Courtesy Photo

INVESTING IN HIGH-DEMAND FIELDS

"Millwrights" are industrial mechanics who install and maintain production and plant machinery everywhere from airports and water treatment facilities to nuclear power plants and paper mills. They keep crucial components of the modern world moving. And there's a shortage of them. White Mountains Community College has re-established a one-year Industrial Mechanics Certificate program to train millwrights. **A grant from the Tillotson Fund is helping to purchase needed equipment and recruit students.** The first students graduate from the program in May of 2020.

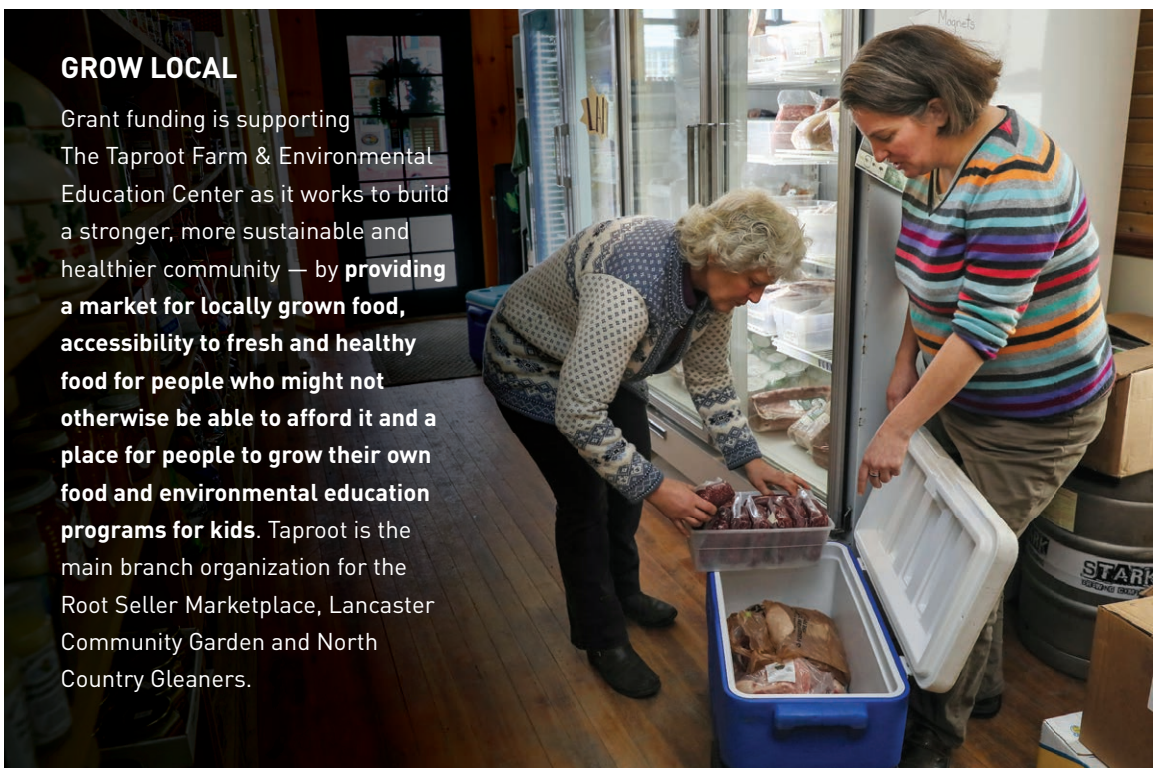


Photo by Cheryl Senter

GROW LOCAL

Grant funding is supporting The Taproot Farm & Environmental Education Center as it works to build a stronger, more sustainable and healthier community — by **providing a market for locally grown food, accessibility to fresh and healthy food for people who might not otherwise be able to afford it and a place for people to grow their own food and environmental education programs for kids.** Taproot is the main branch organization for the Root Seller Marketplace, Lancaster Community Garden and North Country Gleaners.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Building demand for efficiency

Towns and school districts looking to increase energy efficiency now have the benefit of a regional expert who is helping make that happen.

Melissa Elander is the energy circuit rider for the North Country, working as part of a pilot program of Clean Energy NH funded through a grant from the Tillotson Fund. The grant is in support of the Tillotson Fund's economic development strategy of supporting two industries with significant potential for growth: energy efficiency and non-motorized outdoor recreation (from hunting and fishing to hiking, biking and skiing).

The Energy Circuit Rider program is part of a two-pronged approach aimed at building demand for energy efficiency in the region. The idea is that if more towns — and homeowners and businesses — look to implement energy-efficiency measures, the demand will help the local economy by creating sustainable jobs.

Elander is working on projects in school districts and towns across the region. "I consider myself to be working for a town as an unpaid staff member with a focus on energy efficiency," said Elander, who has a background as an energy auditor and weatherization project manager.



Photo by Cheryl Senter

LOUISE TILLOTSON TEACHING FELLOWSHIP

Being curious never stops

For her efforts in helping to develop and lead the Spartan STEAM Innovation Academy at White Mountains Regional High School and encouraging students to become leaders in their own education, Melissa Jellison was awarded the 2019 Louise Tillotson Teaching Fellowship. The \$10,000 stipend recognizes excellence in public education and strives to retain outstanding educators in North Country public schools.

Jellison started by developing a course called "Science Inquiry," which encouraged students to select a problem and research ways to solve it.

"Students were asked to be curious, something they rarely get asked," she said. "The curiosity has been trained out of students to better align curriculum to state testing."

Then she worked with colleagues to develop a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) program. The evolution continued with the creation of the Innovation Academy, a separate school within the walls of White Mountains Regional. Educators and students work together to customize projects and programs while meeting competency requirements.

"Being curious never stops," Jellison said. "There is always room to learn, improve and try new things. I hope I instill kindness, humor and thirst for knowledge. If you have those qualities, there is really no stopping anyone."

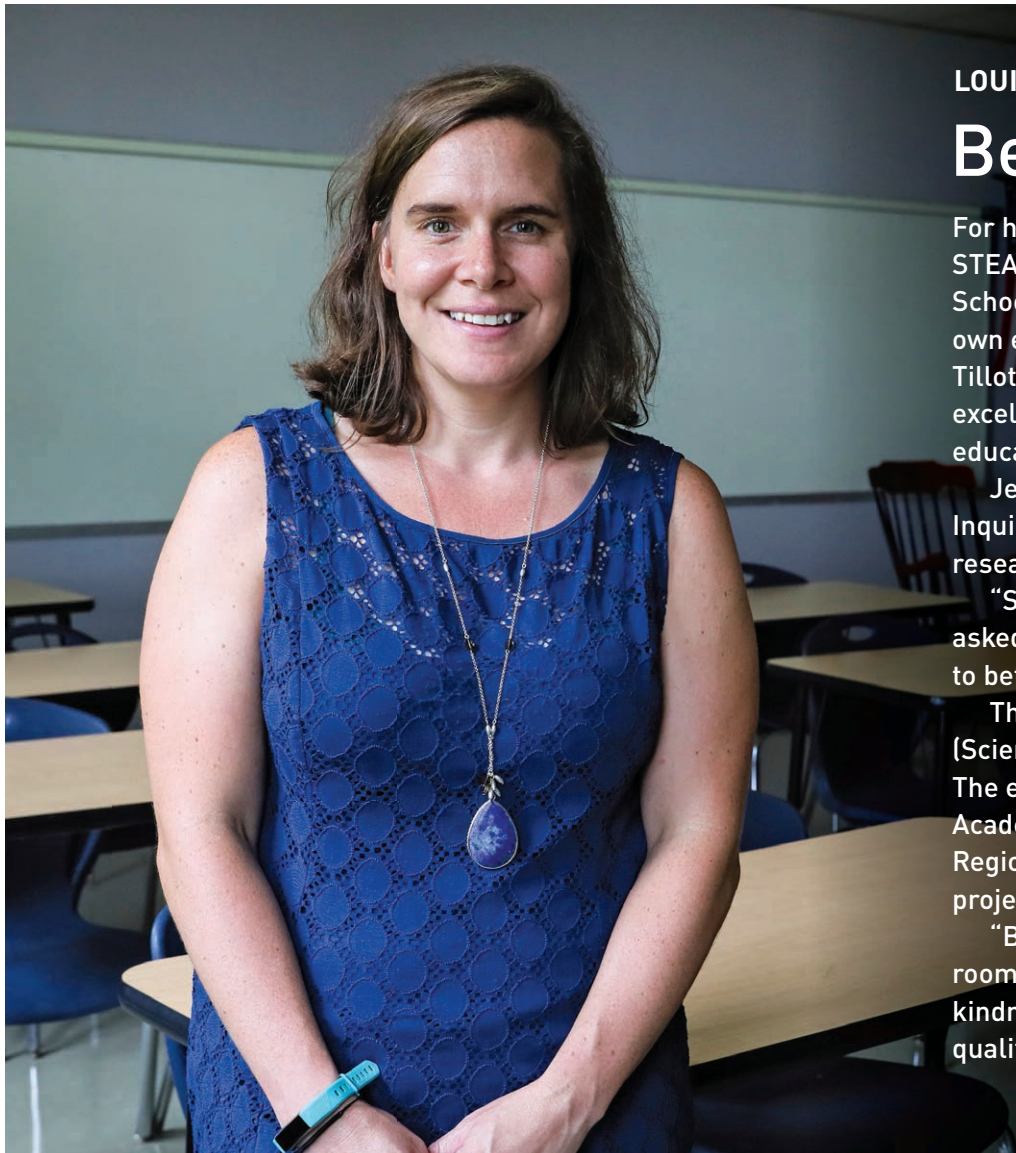


Photo by Cheryl Senter



NEW HAMPSHIRE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

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The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation was created in 1962 by and for the people of New Hampshire, and is dedicated to strengthening communities across the Granite State. The Foundation manages a growing collection of 2,000 philanthropic funds created by generous families, individuals and businesses, and awards more than \$40 million in grants and scholarships every year. For more information, please visit www.nhcf.org or call 800-464-6641.

THE NEIL AND LOUISE TILLOTSON FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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