

Background on:

The Richard E. and Deborah L. Tarrant Foundation

www.tarrantfoundation.org

The Richard E. and Deborah L. Tarrant Foundation makes grants to create opportunity, help meet basic needs, and improve the lives of people in Vermont. The Foundation pursues an aggressive spending strategy, granting double the standard amount for similarly-sized foundations. The Foundation's primary fields of interest are human services and education. Between 2005-2011, the Foundation granted more than \$10 million.

The Foundation divides its grantmaking between an open competitive application process, and larger strategic initiatives. In 2006, the Foundation announced a \$1 million grant to develop the Robert E. and Shirley A. O'Brien Community Center in Winooski. The Center provides community gathering and recreation space, as well as co-located services to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of Winooski residents of all ages.

Building on four years of piloting and research, in 2009 the Foundation announced a \$5M gift – the largest in its history – to establish the Tarrant Institute for Innovative Education at the University of Vermont. “Our goal,” said Deborah Tarrant, “is to help schools bridge to the 21st century with a strategy designed specifically to attract, engage, and inspire tech savvy youth in their classrooms.”

The Institute is directed by Dr. Penny Bishop, an associate professor in UVM's College of Education and Social Services. “The Institute's goal is to not only foster widespread use of technology in Vermont schools,” according to Bishop, “but also to create a cadre of teachers who confidently employ it in service of what we know to be exemplary middle school teaching practices.”

The Foundation is managed by Executive Director, Lauren Curry. Curry is a graduate of Middlebury College, and is the former Vice President of the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole in Jackson, Wyoming. She is joined by Emma Galvin, a 16-year-old junior at Burlington High School, who is engaged in a 2-year Youth Internship at the Foundation.

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