For residents on the Hill in Cuttingsville, Spring Lake Ranch’s Rutland Program is often the next step toward living a more independent life.

The Ranch launched its spring fundraising campaign in May with the goal of raising $80,000 for renovations to the communal spaces at our two Rutland locations, which offer a continuum of care for residents and clients who have dedicated themselves to wellness and recovery.

Royce Street Transitional House is an option for clients seeking greater independence while still being supported by Ranch staff and its programs. The updates to the Royce Street House will include a much-needed kitchen expansion and renovation, which will provide more functional cooking and meal preparation space.

This is especially important because residents at the Royce Street House are tasked with preparing dinner for other residents and staff in the house one night each week, including grocery shopping and cooking. These are skills that individuals need to know when they live independently. Our goal is to teach clients these skills in a supportive environment, but the current kitchen space is limiting. The renovations will include knocking out a wall to expand the kitchen, installing new appliances including a double oven, and installing new cabinets, flooring, and appliances.

The project also includes ways to foster community at the Townhouse, where residents live in seven independent apartments. Clients living in apartments throughout Rutland City are encouraged to participate in activities at the Townhouse, including cooking classes and boat building workshops.

The Townhouse has a beautiful porch and our hope is to purchase outdoor furniture so that clients can come together and enjoy Vermont’s warm summer days and watch the leaves change in fall. We are also planning to spruce up the garden located at the Townhouse, which provides fresh vegetables for clients.

The renovations for all three projects are expected to cost $80,000, but the Ranch is currently seeking in-kind donations and grants to help lower the total cost. Thanks to generous friends of the Ranch, we have raised more than $23,000 for this project.

If you would like to make a donation or learn more about this project, please contact Elicia Mailhiot at eliciam@springlakeranch.org or 802.492.3322 or visit springlakeranch.org.
“I would say that there exist a thousand unbreakable links between each of us and everything else, and that our dignity and our chances are one. The farthest star and the mud at our feet are a family; and there is no decency or sense in honoring one thing, or a few things, and then closing the list….we are at risk together, or we are on our way to a sustainable world together. We are each other’s destiny.” - Upstream, Mary Oliver

In her most recent book, *Upstream*, Mary Oliver writes about our inextricable link to the natural world and of human interconnectedness. Her words point to a perspective which, if we believe it, leads us to living in ways contrary to what our society would have us do. Rather than understand ourselves as individuals with personal lives to pursue, this perspective inspires us to understand ourselves as part of an interdependent whole, and how we treat each and our natural world matters, because we are all in this together.

We’re fortunate at Spring Lake Ranch to experience daily a community that doesn’t close the list and that values each person. Despite setbacks and conditions no one asked for in their lives, we see that each person has something to contribute to our common life and that recovery takes place in the context of relationships. Psychiatric and addiction conditions aren’t ‘out there’ as something to be stigmatized and separate. We are all in this together.

The options for mental health care, and especially substance abuse treatment, have grown significantly in recent years. Given the prevalence of drug addiction, suicide, and the statistic that in any given year one in four adults will experience a diagnosable mental health condition* we need all of these services for families who are desperate to find help for their loved one. ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) teams, outpatient programs, wilderness therapy, individual psychotherapy and psychiatry, and step-down programs from substance abuse treatment and hospitals all have something to offer and have a place in the continuum of care. When people find the Ranch, however, they find something different.

The therapeutic community model – Spring Lake Ranch in particular – offers a unique and holistic approach to care not found readily elsewhere. The differences are many. One is that we understand that healing and recovery takes time and involves set-backs. Our average length of stay of six months, and preferably a year or more, with supportive extended care in independent apartment living, recognizes the complexity and difficult work involved in changing the trajectory of a life burdened by psychiatric illness and substance use. It takes time, acceptance, support, and practice to heal, find hope, and believe something new is possible.

Our philosophy and approach to care over the course of 86 years continues to be based upon the values of work, acceptance, developing new skills, and believing that recovery is possible. We recognize that we have more in common than we have differences and that we are each other’s destiny. If only our world took a page from the book of therapeutic community life, we would well be on our way to a more accepting, kind, and sustainable world together.

*Source: Johns Hopkins University
Residents and staff were all aboard a fleet of canoes for our annual canoe trip, held June 22 this year. Under abundant sunshine, we adventured to the Chittenden Reservoir for the day, instead of river canoeing down the Battenkill River in Southern Vermont. There was a picnic lunch, swimming, and even a bald eagle sighting!

Rutland BBQs

The Rutland Program began hosting a barbeque for staff and clients once a month for the summer. Everyone gathers at the Townhouse for hot dogs, burgers, and other warm-weather food. Happy Cow Cones, a state-of-the-art ice cream truck, has been making an appearance and serving up delicious soft-serve ice cream.

From the Kitchen - Lemon Mousse

INGREDIENTS
1 ½ cups heavy whipping cream
8 oz. light cream cheese, softened
½ cup sugar
¼ cup lemon juice

INSTRUCTIONS
In a large bowl, beat whipping cream (using a mixer) until it forms stiff peaks. Transfer into another bowl and set aside.

Place cream cheese and sugar into a large bowl and blend with mixer until well blended.

Gradually pour in lemon juice while mixing until mixture is light and fluffy.

Gently fold in reserved whipped cream until well combined.

Pour into individual bowls and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. If you make them the day before, be sure to cover containers or the mousse will dry out on top.

Makes 5 ½-cup servings.
I am working on a series of “Butterfly Paintings,” so butterflies and transformation have been on my mind. Scientists say that a flap of a butterfly’s wings can unleash a series of atmospheric events that could, weeks later, cause a tornado in Texas. The flap of the butterfly wing that led me to Spring Lake Ranch was actually a Google search containing the words: depression, therapy, farm, mountains, and community. Spring Lake Ranch appeared at the top of the search list. Shortly thereafter, I came to the Ranch. This was the beginning of a metamorphosis – a slow and often painstaking journey, but one where I went from a life in Manhattan getting ECT treatments in a hospital to owning my own art gallery/gift shop and event space in Wallingford, VT. One where I went from being severely depressed and isolated to being able to create community through creativity and art. One where I went from the desperation and anxiety of not knowing what to do with my life to becoming a business owner and a working artist who also supports other artists. My time with the Ranch got me here.

Before coming to Spring Lake Ranch, I was having a difficult time. I had gone into a severe depression that medication couldn’t lift, so I began trying experimental treatments. I knew I was going into unchartered territory when my Psychiatrist said, “If you’re going the alternative route, you really should think of Ketamine, you know, the “K-hole.” I didn’t know about the “K-hole,” but I did soon as I was hooked up to an IV and tripping for an hour at a time in a doctor’s office in downtown Manhattan. The hopes were it would help my brain chemistry since Ketamine has a substantial track-record for working with treatment-resistant depression. My depression kept on resisting.

My next experiment was Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS), which I called “brain knocking,” since it felt like a Woodpecker was drilling inside my head as the machine sent magnetic impulses into each hemisphere of my brain.

My last option, ECT, was one that I didn’t want to do, but I didn’t know what else to do to keep myself alive. I ended up having three treatments a week for six weeks as an outpatient at a hospital on the Upper East Side. ECT was a mixed blessing. It got me through the worst of the worst, but I sometimes have a spotty memory now – which, I guess, is a mixed blessing, too.

During my ECT treatments, I started to think about what I could do next. I’m an artist and have always been engaged in creative, entrepreneurial endeavors – when I felt good. My ability to be productive comes and goes with my mood and state of mental health, so at that time, I didn’t have any projects on my horizon. I knew not having anything substantial planned was a sure recipe for isolation and doom. That’s when I found Spring Lake Ranch. The more I read about the Ranch, the more relief I felt, to think there was a place I could go and get better – and not be alone. After visiting the Ranch, I experienced a sense of hope. After I finished ECT, I packed up and went to Cuttingsville and became a resident at the Ranch.

As I look back at my time at the Ranch, one thing that strikes me is the kindness and encouragement I received from staff and other residents. Even if positive comments bounced off me like Teflon, they kept coming. Even though residents are struggling, the community atmosphere and Work Program fosters teamwork and being there for others. For example, during Friday morning meeting, there is an opportunity to thank other people and say things that helped you during the week. It felt really good to be recognized and thanked, but it felt even better to give thanks. For me, it was a way of contributing. These are not little things when you are having a hard time, and this is just one example.

Another big, little thing was getting up every day before nine o’clock during the week and working. No matter how bad I felt, I felt good when I reminded myself that I was being productive and not staying in bed all day. Working together on teams makes it easier to form bonds and gives you common ground.

The Ranch does a great job with encouraging you to be social and not isolate. I had to push myself to engage, but I enjoyed playing games among a myriad of new pastimes. After my third week at the Ranch, I remember thinking, “It does help hanging out with other people, talking and playing games … I can bear the depression now. It actually can lift for a while…”

Creative expression is also nurtured. There is a wonderful art room that inspired me to start painting again. I ordered special glass paints and dried flowers and was given the green light to paint my heart out. I was also encouraged to teach classes on my painting technique to others in the community. That was so valuable for me and helped with re-building a sense of self and purpose.

After nine months, I left the Ranch with some new skills and new friends, and transitioned to the Rutland program. I rented an apartment on the top floor of a historic mansion downtown. My team helped me plan my transition – I would be volunteering several afternoons a week at Pierce’s, a general store in Shrewsbury, as well as coming to the
Ranch to work on crew in the mornings so I would still have ties to the Ranch community. The Rutland Program also had outings and events and I joined a local singing group. I even had “Salons” at my apartment, which is a fancy term for Open Mics. The support from the Ranch community was overwhelmingly positive. My place was packed with residents and staff and we all got to experience each other’s amazing talents.

Yet, even with my transition plan and activities, it turned out to be really hard. I wanted to be independent, but I missed the structure of the Ranch. The days seemed very long and hard to fill. I even went back to the Ranch a couple of times for a few days of respite. I felt like I was back to not knowing what to do with my life and that scared me.

I decided to really dedicate myself to creating my mixed-media paintings. Creating these explosions of color and texture bring me joy. The desire to share my work led me to create a Facebook page for my art, which grew to have more than 16,000 followers. To my surprise and delight, people loved my art. I even started selling my pieces online. Eventually, I was selling about three paintings a week. I gave live painting tutorials on my page and developed relationships with many of my customers. This also created an online community for me. It was an amazing development, but I still really needed more in-person, human connection.

That’s when I started dreaming about having a studio/gallery where I could show my artwork and interact with people. That quickly led to another life-changing butterfly wing flap – Google searching for real-estate for sale in Rutland County. I found a property in Wallingford that was perfect – it included an old, red barn that had been an antique store for thirty years. That’s what sold me. And by now, I felt more a part of the community thanks to working at Pierce’s, singing with the Shrewsbury Singers, and my relationship with the Ranch. I wanted to stay here; I didn’t even consider going back to Manhattan.

My dream of showing my own work came to fruition during Vermont’s Open Studio Weekend four months later. I filled the barn with my paintings and gave tours and demonstrations and made sales. It was pretty thrilling. The fulfillment of this dream led to another inspiration – opening a store with an array of other independent artists’ work, as well as my own. This led to the creation of The Sparkle Barn – a fun and color-filled gallery and gift shop featuring handmade art and crafts. To help make this happen, a longtime friend of mine moved here from Brooklyn to help me set-up and run the store. Our grand opening was July 1, 2017. We had more than 200 people come through the store every day that weekend! I couldn’t believe it.

Soon, we ventured into hosting art classes, small concerts, and movie nights in the event space above the gallery and gift shop. The community support was fantastic. One longtime local resident who was at one of our concerts declared he had to run home and get his iPad: “I’ve been here in Wallingford for thirty years and finally something is happening. I have to record this!”

I couldn’t have gotten here if it wasn’t for Spring Lake Ranch. I’m pretty lucky. A lot of things had to go right for me to find myself where I am. Not everything is easy or maybe even where I’d wish it was, but I’m very grateful. The fluttering of many butterfly wings in recent years have brought me to where I am - sitting in my studio making art and sharing it with the world.
What's New with Crews

It has been a fun summer for Spring Lake Ranch Work Crews!

Farm Crew has been busy taking care of animals – especially of the newborn variety. Since our last newsletter, the Ranch has become home to eight calves (with more on the way), a lamb, eight piglets, and more than 100 turkeys and chicks. Farm Crew gave our sheep their summer coats, spending a couple days shearing in the Upper Barn. Summer at the Ranch also means haying. Crews hayed, bailed, loaded, and stacked 2,500 bales of hay for the first cut, working in between a record-breaking heat wave. Looking out the windows of the Main House, one’s never quite sure of what animal they may see wandering up the road as pasture rotation has been in full swing!

Gardens Crew is out in the garden as you’re reading this, planting, weeding, and harvesting. Our gardens are full of fresh vegetables and fruit, including delicious raspberries, peas, Lancelot Leeks, spinach, radishes, garlic, tomatoes, and much more. Gardens Crew continues to spend time in the Crew Kitchen during the warmer months, making snacks, granola, and cakes. Several residents and House Advisors have been spending Saturdays at the Rutland Farmers Market, where the Ranch sells maple syrup, yarn, weaving projects, granola, and other products at the Market.

Shop Crew has been working to finish construction of the Lake House. They have also been spending time in the Shop creating a new prototype for dining room chairs, experimenting with different leg designs and stain colors and having the community try out the finished product. They will be making several to replace the current chairs in our dining room. Shop Crew has also been using a wood burning technique to make signs, including new directional signs for the Lake Road. In their downtime, they made beautiful cutting boards that were given to Trustees and Members as an appreciation for their years of service at our spring meeting and sold at the Farmers Market and Family Weekend.

Woods Crew finished sugaring season with 432 gallons of maple syrup made! They spent the early part of the summer cleaning the Sugar House and flushing the sap lines. They have been spending their days mowing and weed whacking the various lawns on the property and taking care of landscaping, including planting vibrant flowers just before family weekend.
**Hike & Haikus**

House Advisor Deanna led a "hike and haikus" outing with residents. The group wrote haikus while sitting at the Lake House. Deanna provided sample lake/forest haikus that the group read to each other to get the feel for the rules and "sound" of haiku. The group wrote for a while and then read their poems to each other.

Voices are carried  
white covers blue sky  
crows call in protest.

I walk down the path  
though I long to be sleeping  
steps press me awake.

Childhood memories  
dad and me at Laurel Lake  
constant yearning to go back.

The reflection of  
a dragonfly hovering  
dancing to transform.

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**In Memory**

The Ranch would like to remember those in our greater community who have passed away since our last communication.

Paula Blum  
Elaine Rosenfeld*  
Phoebe Foster  
Barbara Hoffman

* represent individuals who were members of Enni’s Legacy Circle.

**About Enni’s Legacy Circle**

Enni’s Legacy Circle honors individuals who are part of the Spring Lake Ranch community and support it by making a planned gift through a bequest, life-income gift, or gift of retirement plans. Enni’s Legacy Circle is named after Enni Ahonen who worked as the Ranch’s cook for more than 30 years. When she passed away in 1992, she surprised the Ranch by leaving a gift.
Spring Lake Ranch Therapeutic Community supports and empowers people with mental health and substance abuse issues by providing opportunities to grow and thrive. Through shared experience, meaningful work and active participation in an accepting, diverse community, we help each person develop the confidence and skills to recover.

Telephone 802-492-3322 • E-mail info@springlakeranch.org • Online www.springlakeranch.org

Spring Lake Ranch welcomed Elizabeth Elba, Deanna Burkett, Mandy Osman, and Julia Myher as House Advisors.

The Ranch said farewell to long-time Work Program Director Becki Bates in May, who is pursuing education to become an electrician. Becki was a true ambassador of the Ranch and she is greatly missed.

Business Manager Liz Karle and her husband, Adam, are expecting their second child in December.

Assistant Business Manager Ingrid Wisell and her husband, Jason, welcomed their first child, Isabel in May.

Spring Lake Ranch said goodbye to House Advisors Molly Scanga, Cam Calato, Athena Kaufmann, and Forrest Law.

Laura Caravella has joined the Rutland Program as a Case Manager at Royce Street Transitional House. Laura’s background is in education.

Kristen Stone joined the Ranch as a Clinician in July. Kristen comes from Marble Valley Correctional Facility, where she served as a therapist.

Gina Fucci joined Spring Lake Ranch as a Clinician in April after serving as a Licensed School Counselor in Rutland City Public School, Allen Street Campus for nearly 9 years.

Monica Lawson, a Ph.D. candidate at Duquesne University is in the middle of her five month stay at Spring Lake Ranch, researching the experiences of individuals within the therapeutic community setting.