



April 1, 2014

*VSA Vermont uses the magic of the arts to engage the capabilities and enhance the confidence of children and adults with disabilities.*

## Volunteers: *Love in Motion*

April is National Volunteer Month. Here at VSA Vermont (VSA VT), we count on volunteers in so many ways to help us further our mission. Volunteers truly are love in motion. First, we want to commend the volunteers who serve on our Board of Directors – Andy Perkins, President; Geoff Hand, Vice-President; Celia Asbell, Treasurer; John Lika, Secretary; Priscilla Latkin; Diana Kenyon; Hilary Maslow; Steve Mason; Tracey Schoonmaker; Sarah Kulig, Helen Hipp, and Patricia Fontaine—Emeritus. Second, we want to applaud our current interns: Samantha Snyder of Champlain College and Colleen Fahy of Burlington College. And finally, we send a big thanks to those who support VSA VT by providing specialized assistance: Phoebe Townsend, Elise Polli, Tracey Calista, and Ginger Irish. You can read more about some of these volunteers below.

[Andy Perkins](#) | [Tracey Schoonmaker](#) | [Heidi Pfau](#) | [Samantha Snyder](#) | [Colleen Fahy](#) | [News You Can Use](#)



### Andy Perkins

*From a whisper to a shout...*

Andy Perkins, VSA VT's Board President since 2011, believes in the "magic" of the arts. While his talents and skill set are in business, he finds that the "non-rational, transformative nature of the arts" is what makes VSA VT's inclusive arts programs so incredible. As Andy says, "VSA VT plays a huge role in strengthening inclusive communities—bringing people with and without disabilities together and giving everyone a voice."



When VSA VT decided to pilot the BOOM VT drum festival in 2013, Andy wondered how to get involved. He is not an artist, as he points out, but he quickly discovered that a drum was one of the few musical instruments that he understood intuitively. The rhythm is primordial and simply carries one away. After doing some research on the internet, Andy found a great YouTube video on making a drum. He made a model



one, and then everyone in his family—his wife and two adult children—made their own drums. In Hinesburg, where Andy lives and works as a marketing research consultant, drumming has become a family affair.

While BOOM VT represents what he calls a “*shout*” for VSA VT, many of our other behind-the-scenes programs represent a “*whisper*.” For Andy, “*from a whisper to a shout*” is a perfect metaphor for the organization that he leads and is so passionate about. When the Board of Directors developed a [Strategic Plan for 2014-2016](#)—something Andy considers an important, but often boring job—he was moved and motivated by the belief statements that the Board generated to help guide the organization’s decision-making and vision.

If Andy has his way, we’ll be doing less whispering and a lot more shouting at VSA VT.

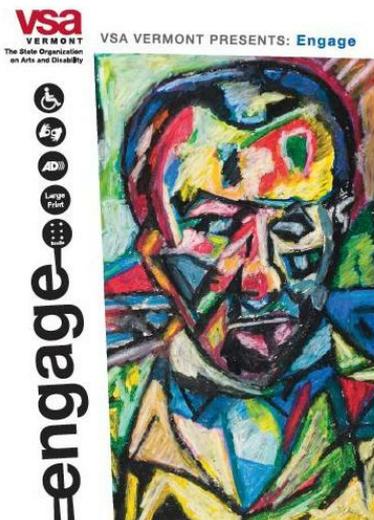
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## Tracey Schoonmaker

### *Friends carry me over...*

Fifteen years ago, Tracey Schoonmaker saw some captivating student artwork displayed in downtown Burlington storefronts. She fell in love with a crayon drawing of a winterscape, featuring two wolves—one brown and white, one black and white—facing each other and howling toward the sky. The work was for sale by VSA VT with half of the money going to the artist and half supporting inclusive arts education programs. Tracey wanted that piece of art badly and tracked down VSA VT at its office on College Street. Today, the drawing hangs in the bedroom of her North Ferrisburgh home and affirms Tracey’s love affair with the work of self-taught artists.

Soon Tracey saw VSA VT’s name cropping up all over the place. She picked up an agency brochure and was amazed at all the programs the organization offered. When Pomerleau Real Estate generously donates \$100 yearly to an organization designated by an employee, Tracey selected VSA VT as her beneficiary. Then in 2011, she attended a PechaKucha Night at UVM’s Fleming Museum and heard Geoff Hand, a VSA VT Board Member, give a 20 slide presentation about the [Engage](#) exhibition featuring Vermont artists with disabilities. Tracey was hooked.



As if by fate, Tracey found herself with time to volunteer in December of 2012, and contacted VSA VT. She joined the Board of Directors in early 2013 and has been an enthusiastic and vocal supporter ever since, contributing her ideas, energy, and editing and desktop publishing skills. Tracey has also put her vocal talents to good use, joining the Noyana Singers—trained hospice volunteers and singers who offer songs of comfort at the bedsides of those who are nearing the end of life. One of Tracey’s favorite Noyana songs is *Love Call Me Home* about the need for friends in our lives. Between her hospice work and her VSA VT commitments, Tracey has found that friends, indeed, help carry us all, enriching our lives and providing meaning and support.



## Heidi Pfau

### *Tell me a story...*

Heidi Pfau, VSA VT’s Volunteer Coordinator and Adult Program Manager, describes herself as *“an artist and social worker with a passion for exploring creativity, building community, and sharing joy.”*

As a photographer, Heidi was selected as a featured artist for [Engage](#), VSA VT’s touring juried exhibition showcasing works of art by Vermont artists with various disabilities. Heidi says this about her art work: *“When I began to experience significant changes in my vision 15 years ago, I mistakenly believed there were things I would no longer be able to do, including photography. Digital cameras and a shift in my perspective prompted me to play with photography again, and I discovered what I really could see. I take lots and lots of pictures and I’ve learned to ‘see’ the ones I like or that speak to me with an intuitive sense. Beauty for me is beyond the literal. I love the creative process and what it ignites in my spirit. I have added audio descriptions and poems to each of the photos with the intent of deconstructing what it means to see.”*



Heidi, who lives in Underhill with her partner, loves nature, poetry, storytelling, and laughter. In fact, Heidi teaches a *Stories of Laughter* class in our arts education programs for adults. As you can imagine, Heidi is also deeply involved in planning our BOOM VT drum festival and in recruiting volunteers for VSA VT and for [BOOM VT](#). If you want to volunteer, send Heidi your volunteer story and a good laugh—or just an email to [heidi@vsavt.org](mailto:heidi@vsavt.org).

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# Samantha Snyder

## *Making art and design accessible...*

Known to us as *Sam*, Samantha Snyder is a senior at Champlain College who has been completing her spring internship in graphic design at VSA VT. Originally from Rhode Island, Sam plans to settle in the Burlington area when she graduates this April. Ever since she was a young child, Sam loved making art. Studying graphic design was a way for Sam to continue her love affair with art. From her perspective, graphic design requires a lot of creativity; typefaces, in and of themselves, are fascinating art forms! Along with art, Sam enjoys listening to music, exploring the outdoors, and hula hooping.



We are lucky to have Sam working on a number of key design projects, including creating accessible documents for BOOM VT and a new general brochure for VSA VT's arts education programs, cultural access services, and professional development workshops.

Learning about accessible design through [VSA VT resources](#) has been invaluable. Sam has this to say about her experience at VSA VT: *"This internship is helping me visualize a career in graphic design, giving me the experience I need to move forward and find a job."* Sam is looking for an apartment and a job in graphic design. If you've got advice or ideas, just email Sam at [samsnyder777@gmail.com](mailto:samsnyder777@gmail.com).



# Colleen Fahy

## *Pursuing art as therapy...*

Colleen Fahy, a senior in Creative Arts Therapy at Burlington College, is interning at VSA VT in three capacities: assistant teacher to Mickey Pekar who teaches our highly popular *Adventures in Singing* class in the arts education program for adults, steering committee team member for our BOOM VT Drum Festival, and social media expert, helping us to improve our visibility on Facebook and Twitter. You can help Colleen out, by liking VSA VT on [FaceBook](#). Colleen also developed an excellent presentation about BOOM VT that we hope to use in the community.

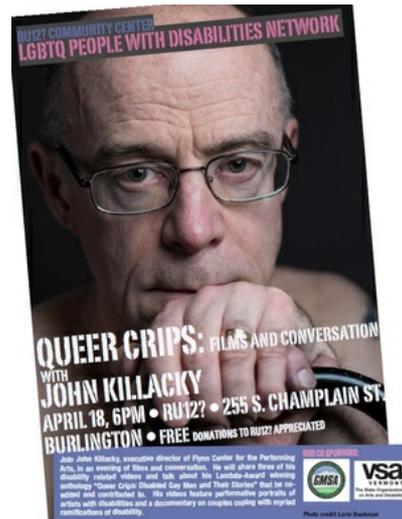
In 2006, Colleen graduated from the Ramstein American High School in Germany where she was

voted *most talented*. We have to concur! Colleen will be graduating this summer with her bachelor's degree and hopes to pursue a master's in Art Therapy.

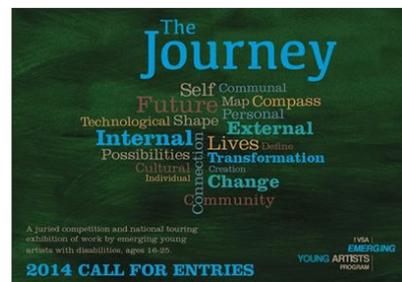
Colleen enjoys theatre, traveling, art, movies, sushi, reading, music, and kittens...not in any particular order. If you know of a good art therapy program to recommend to Colleen, you can reach her at [colleen.t.fahy@gmail.com](mailto:colleen.t.fahy@gmail.com).

## News you can use

VSA VT is a co-sponsor of **Queer Crips: Films and Conversation with John Killacky** on April 18<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM at RU12 Community Center, 255 S. Champlain Street in Burlington. Sponsored by the LGBTQ People with Disabilities Network, John Killacky, Executive Director of the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts, will share three of his disability related videos and talk about his Lambda Award-winning anthology about disabled men and their stories.



VSA and Volkswagen Group of America proudly announce the **2014 Emerging Young Artists Program Call for Entries**. Emerging young visual artists with disabilities, ages 16-25, are invited to reflect on the theme *The Journey*. Fifteen artists will be selected to travel to Washington, D.C. for workshops and a reception on Capitol Hill. Selected work will tour nationally. Awards include a \$20,000 grand prize, \$10,000 for first place, \$6,000 for second place, and 12 awards of excellence at \$2,000 each. The deadline for entries is June 30, 2014. For information and to apply, visit: [www.kennedy-center.org/emergingyoungartists](http://www.kennedy-center.org/emergingyoungartists).



VSA VT teaching-artist and Engage exhibitor, **Gwendolyn Evans**, will be the first **Artist-in-Residence at Artists' Mediums**, 300 Cornerstone Drive in Williston, VT. She will be creating art over the course of several afternoons—April 16, 18, and 19 & May 16, 19, and 20. Gwendolyn, who is an artist and muse, happens to be blind. She enjoys sharing her artistic insight into the creative process and engaging in conversation about how she creates art without having sight. Stop by and visit with her.



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