United Way Youth Venture (UWYV) is a three-way partnership between Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC), the United Way of North Central Massachusetts, and Ashoka’s Youth Venture, which serves as the international model for Youth Venture programming. Young people involved in UWYV combine their passions and skills to address a problem they see in their community through an entirely youth-led and youth-created social venture.

Youth, from elementary through college, are supported in this opportunity through intensive skill-building workshops, hands-on learning, consistent mentorship, and seed funding granted to them after a presentation with community leaders. All of these supports help young people to launch their idea from dream to reality.

Valuable life lessons are delivered through close collaboration with our partnering school districts, resulting in development of leadership skills, confidence, and a sense of empowerment. Their experience as a changemaker prepares them to be engaged members of society, and to succeed in college and future careers.

“A large majority of our school’s Venturers are students who are somewhat ‘disenfranchised’ as they are either not socially apt, academically successful, or they tend to have disciplinary problems. Oftentimes, these students are disengaged both in and out of the classroom. However, when they get involved in UWYV they display a noticeable change in attitude, engagement, and behavior. In fact, it is truly mindblowing sometimes to see a whole other side of some of these kids.”

Sharyn Tomasso, Sky View Middle School English Teacher & Champion, Leominster
In 2002, the leaders of the United Way of North Central Massachusetts (UWNCM) shared a common vision when they identified that the North Central Massachusetts community was not meaningfully acting to help cultivate the next generation of leaders, volunteers, and philanthropists.

The United Way was unknown and irrelevant to many young people and too much investment in youth was in the form of remedial and intervention services. UWNCM wanted to also invest in youth proactively and offer the opportunity to contribute to the betterment of their communities. Believing in the capacity of young people to create change, UWNCM partnered with Ashoka’s Youth Venture, and later with MWCC in 2005—growing into what is now the largest initiative of UWNCM.

In just 17 years, the North Central Massachusetts region has reaped the benefits of the common vision. It is our hope that through the UWYV experience, young people will carry the skills that they’ve learned, as well as the charge to take action, into the later aspects of life; and that older generations see youth as collaborative problem solvers with a voice in collectively addressing community issues.
Putting Others First
Caring about Community
Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School, Fitchburg

Troy Brassard and Caleb VanHillo, two seniors from Monty Tech realized how much first responders sacrifice during the holidays. Fire and police personnel are often away from their families on holidays and these two Venturers wanted to show their appreciation by delivering hams and pies for all to enjoy on Christmas Day. The two launched their Venture, Meals for Shields, in mid-December. The short amount of time before Christmas posed a challenge which was met by the Team with success. Through fundraising efforts and donations, Troy and Caleb bought 65 hams and partnered with Monty Tech’s Culinary Arts program to bake 75 pies. They delivered both to the police and fire stations in each of the 18 towns in their school’s district, along with West Boylston and Worcester! The Team donated the remainder of their funds to the Box 4 Special Services Food Truck that provides bathroom facilities, food, and drinks to first responders during overnight fires.
Our Active Teams by Cause

Which causes are students in our region most passionate about?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Teams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Rights</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community Involvement – Venturers address issues specific to any local or global community, such as supporting area veterans, raising awareness about global issues, and visiting elderly Alzheimer’s patients.

School Improvement – Many school-related Ventures involve making much-needed school resources available including school supplies, expanded extracurricular programming, and mentoring programs.

Animal Rights – Many young people are drawn to issues that impact beloved family pets such as homelessness and adoption, animal abuse, shelter resources, extinction, and more.

Health – Venturers are keenly aware of mental and physical health issues affecting family and friends such as autism, cancer, disabilities, nutrition, self-harm, and suicide prevention.

Poverty – Venturers tackle problems ranging from hunger and homelessness to providing Christmas gifts or birthday parties to members of the community in need.

Environment – Environmentally-conscious Venturers target their efforts to sustainable farming, hydroponics, composting, and school-wide recycling initiatives.

Learn more about individual Venture Teams at [http://tinyurl.com/uwyvteams](http://tinyurl.com/uwyvteams).
“UWYV is really bringing together diverse groups: shy members of the basketball team who want to help a friend; the entire Advanced Placement US History class; a disabled student; freshmen who want to inspire a love of theatre; the Friends Club who want to extend their reach to the elementary schools—kids from every corner of Oakmont are stepping up to solve different problems.

Jeffrey Aubuchon, Oakmont Regional High School Teacher & Champion, Ashburnham

Team Transformation
Growth and Confidence
Ayer Shirley Regional High School

The Fab 5 Team is a shining example of amazing transformation. This Team experienced tremendous growth which began early in their Youth Venture Team development process. They were quiet, shy, and nervous when we first met them and they struggled during the mock panel with presentation skills, confidence, and focus. However, following a couple weeks of practice, they allowed their passion for helping the elder community to take over and at their Community Panel, blew the UWYV staff and the panelists away. And this was only the beginning. During the research phase of their planning process, the Fab 5—with a goal of visiting Apple Valley Assisted Living Home and supplying games, coloring books and other activity items for residents—at first could not muster the courage to make a single telephone call to Apple Valley to see what supplies they might need. Fast forward to after the Team launched and the Fab 5 managed to create one of the most successful student-led fundraisers in UWYV history. They created a calendar raffle sale, which including calling more than 35 businesses to get donations of gift cards and items to be raffled off each day of the month. Once these donations were collected and calendars readied for sale, they then knocked on over 500 doors and spent more than 100 hours as a Team selling the calendars. They sold 250 calendars, earning a staggering $2,500. Fab 5 will be receiving a national presidential service award for their community service work from the White House.
Our Results FY19

22 elementary, middle & high schools partnering with UWYV

9,482 youth actively engaged in workshops, team development or volunteering

467 Venture Teams launched since 2002

64 new Venture Teams launched during FY19 in 22 schools with an additional 34 Teams working to become a launched Venture

650 students leading Venture Team efforts with 466 newly engaged this year

91% of Venturers believe that their ability and competence grow with their effort

more than 13,543 area youth reached

94% of Venturers believe UWYV is an important opportunity for students in their school

92% of Venturers say they learned to problem-solve from being a part of UWYV

creating a better tomorrow

FY2019 ANNUAL REPORT
97% of Venturers say that it is important to listen to other people’s ideas when making a decision.

94% of Venturers believe young people can influence decision and policies.

95% of Venturers believe it is important to learn about other cultures and beliefs that are not the same as their own.

Scholarship Awards

Caleb VanHillo (far left), a Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School graduate, was selected as the fourth recipient of the UWYV Bob Chauvin Leadership Award. This named scholarship honors Mr. Chauvin’s long commitment to UWYV and his leadership in bringing youth development to the forefront of Johnson Control’s charitable mission.

Two additional UWYV scholarships were awarded to: Fitchburg High School alumnus, Landon Tucker (middle) of Union College, NY, and Kyle Doyle (right) of Leominster High School.
Health Advocacy
Creating Awareness
Sky View Middle School, Leominster

Understanding and recognizing that mental health issues can be something that many of their peers experience, the Love Yourself, Find Yourself Team, from Sky View Middle School, was inspired to bring awareness to mental illness among young people. According to their research, in an average school classroom of 25 students, five may be struggling with the same issues many adults deal with: depression, anxiety, and substance abuse.

The Team wants to incorporate a mental health curriculum into the school and has written to the superintendent and the school committee chair to ask that mental health education be included into the reinstated middle school health class. In addition, they have booked a speaker from SHINE (non-profit leader in the effort to recognize mental illness in children and young adults as a mainstream health issue) to present to the eighth grade student body in September 2019. When it comes to health advocacy, this team is unwavering in their efforts to raise awareness, educate, and encourage the acceptance of mental illness at Sky View Middle School and beyond.
The Youth Venture Team, aPush4Peace, provides aid to foreign countries through Peace Corps projects. It was their studies of the Marshall Plan, a U.S. program providing aid and spreading prosperity to Western Europe following the devastation of World War II, that inspired this entire AP U.S. History Class to form this venture. Similar to the Marshall Plan, the Peace Corps is a modern-day government-run program with the same world-wide mission. Through their research, the Team learned that the Peace Corps has had an incredible positive influence on global relations. They held successful fundraisers and donated over $1,800 to help Peace Corps volunteers to: build classrooms in Zambia; a patient ward in Guinea; a water catchment basin in Tanzania; a solar-powered water system in The Gambia; and a library in Mozambique. The Team will choose projects to donate to yearly making this a sustainable Venture. This Team of motivated Changemakers have truly immersed themselves into making positive change in communities abroad.

“UWYV has taught me to be kind and accept everyone. It has taught me to listen and be a good teammate. Youth Venture has taught me so much and it will definitely help other kids, too.”

Student Venturer, Sky View Middle School, Leominster
Changemaking Educator

Over the ten academic months of the 2018-2019 school year, faculty, staff, and students from Fitchburg Public Schools, Leominster Public Schools and Mount Wachusett Community College partnered with Ashoka’s Changemaker Communities for five intensive professional development days and subsequent support meetings.

As part of a larger ecosystem with local business people and youth, this body of Changemakers worked to identify the barriers to change, and bring their skills, knowledge, and backgrounds to the table to co-create ways to prepare students for the rapidly changing world in which they will live.

In addition to supporting the teachers, guidance counselors, professors, and other professionals in the cohort this year, we convened a North Central Mass Change Leadership Team, which consists of senior and inspirational leaders of our partnering organizations – Fitchburg and Leominster Public Schools and MWCC.

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100% of participating educators feel that Changemaking has had a positive impact on their students’ academic performance

“Changemaking helps everyone see the power in giving children choice and responsibility. With Changemaking in our schools, our learners will have autonomy in creating and learning with differentiated and motivating paths.”

Jenna Roberts, South Street Elementary School Teacher & Changemaker, Fitchburg

Visit https://www.changemakercommunities.org/ to learn more about Changemaking.

Visit https://tinyurl.com/y2nsx22w to view the Changemakers Magazine.
United Way Youth Venture was chosen as one of 17 Commonwealth Corps Host Site Partners for this past 2018-2019 program year. Administered by the Massachusetts Service Alliance, the Commonwealth Corps is a state-funded service internship program, which engages Massachusetts residents of all ages and backgrounds in service to strengthen communities, address unmet community needs, and increase volunteerism.

UWyV hosted a Commonwealth Corps member to design, implement, and deliver Changemaking initiatives in the North Central Massachusetts region. The selected Service Member, Rachel Vargeletis, served in a leadership position to continue to support the Changemaking philosophy.

Throughout her time serving at MWCC, Vargeletis, who is from Ashburnham, supported United Way Youth Venture of North Central Massachusetts and the Changemaker Initiative in 13 partnering schools and organizations in North Central Massachusetts, created and wrote a monthly electronic publication, prepared a video by capturing students’ feelings about their Changemaker teachers, and coordinated several Changemaker events including a large scale Changemaker Celebration.

On June 27, Rachel was honored with her fellow Commonwealth Corps Service Members at the State House in Boston. Rachel’s more than 1,500 hours of service at MWCC ended on June 28.
“United Way Youth Venture means more to me than my Harry Potter collection (which I extremely value) because I made new friends and I helped make a difference.”

Student Venturer, Northwest Elementary School, Leominster

Innovative Partnerships
Life Skills Program
Samoset Middle School, Leominster

One of the qualities that makes UWYV so special is that it is designed to be inclusive. Youth Venture partnered with the Life Skills Program at Samoset Middle School for the first time. This program provides special education to students with moderate to severe disabilities in grades 6-8. Many of the students within this program have multiple disabilities (communication disorders, learning disabilities, intellectual impairment, developmental disabilities, etc.). The instruction and services they receive are designed to help them become independent and successful. Six students in this classroom united to form the Youth Venture Team, All Star Angels. Their mission is to raise awareness of drug addiction and prevention by having a speaker address this important topic at Samoset. Each student identified having family or friends who have problems with drug abuse. Through the development of their action plan, they learned the valuable skills of defining their cause through personal inspiration and research, developing a budget that supports their fundraising idea, working together as a team and presenting in front of a community panel. These life skills will further help these students as they continue to work to become more independent.
Our Service Area

Combined Map of Service for United Way NCM, MWCC and UWYV

- Ayer Shirley Regional High School, Ayer - 11 VTL
- Crocker Elementary School, Fitchburg - 1 VTL
- Fall Brook Elementary School, Leominster - 2 VTL
- Fitchburg High School, Fitchburg - 25 VTL
- Frances Drake Elementary School, Leominster - 5 VTL
- Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School, Devens - 38 VTL
- Gardner High School, Gardner - 8 VTL
- Girl Scout Troop 61150, Littleton - 2 VTL
- Goodrich Academy, Fitchburg - 2 VTL
- Leominster High School & CTEi, Leominster - 33 VTL
- Longsjø Middle School, Fitchburg - 8 VTL
- McKay Arts Academy, Fitchburg - 27 VTL
- Montachusett Regional Technical Vocational High School, Fitchburg - 13 VTL
- Mount Wachusett Community College, Gardner - 13 VTL
- Murdock High School, Winchendon - 8 VTL

- Murdock Middle School, Winchendon - 11 VTL
- Northwest Elementary School, Leominster - 3 VTL
- Oakmont Regional High School, Ashburnham - 12 VTL
- Samoset Middle School, Leominster - 27 VTL
- Sky View Middle School, Leominster - 93 VTL
- South Street Elementary School, Fitchburg - 2 VTL
- Toy Town Elementary School, Winchendon - 2 VTL

* Does Not Include Inactive Partner Sites
(121 additional Venture Teams)
VTL - Venture Teams Launched to Date
How Can You Help?

Visit with students to provide feedback at one of their weekly meetings or to serve as a panelist to determine if a Team is ready to become a full-fledged Venture.

Thank you to the 117 Panelists in FY19 who listened and supported our Venture Teams community-benefiting ideas! See the list here: https://mwcc.edu/campus-life/brewer-center/uwyv/support/

Share your expertise and mentor a Venture Team as an “Ally” or “Technical Ally”. (An ally is a non-controlling adult who has agreed to help mentor a specific Venture)

Thank you to the 118 Allies and Technical Allies who regularly guided our Venture Teams in FY19.

Serve alongside a Venture Team that supports a cause important to you as they implement their vision in the community, volunteer or intern in the UWYV office or at events.

Thank you to the 83 Community Partners who gave advice, support and opportunities in FY19 to our Venturers.
$16,632 per program partner
$392 average seed funding per Venture
$42.10 per actively engaged youth
$29.47 per individual youth exposed

“I would recommend participating in United Way Youth Venture because it is important to learn teamwork and work with people that you don’t usually work with”.

Student Venturer, McKay Arts Academy, Fitchburg
Volunteering

Donations

UWYV is one of the five main initiatives of the United Way of North Central Massachusetts and relies on the support of organizations and community members. Your donations and sponsorships are critical to enabling continued efforts to cultivate social innovation and youth leadership development in North Central Massachusetts.

Whether you are looking to make a tax-deductible gift, or contribute while communicating your organization’s commitment to youth enrichment, we offer both donation and sponsorship opportunities to suit your needs.

Please consider partnering with UWYV to support the growing programming needs in our community.

If you are interested in becoming involved or would like to learn more, contact us at:

Program Contributions and Funding

United Way of North Central Massachusetts
649 John Fitch Hwy, Fitchburg, MA 01420
Phone: (978)-345-1577
https://www.uwncm.org/

New Partners, Volunteering, and Sponsorships

Mount Wachusett Community College
444 Green Street, Gardner, MA 01440
Phone: (978) 630-9201
Email: uwyv@mwcc.mass.edu;
http://mwcc.edu/uwyv/

Donations

Partnerships

Sponsorships

facebook.com/UWYVNCM

instagram: UWYVNCM
twitter: YouthVetureNCM
2018-2019 Program Staff

Fagan Forhan
Assistant Dean, K-12 Partnerships & Civic Engagement

Lauren Mountain
Director

Michelle Brennan
Assistant Director

Donna Toothaker
Program Manager

Jacob VanHillo
Outreach Liaison

Rachel Vargeletis
Commonwealth Corps Changemaking Innovator

Kristi Maloney
Outreach Specialist

Melissa Beaulac
Katelyn Murphy
Interns

Dr. James Vander Hooven
President
Mount Wachusett Community College