"I would absolutely recommend United Way Youth Venture! This is a chance to vocalize, visualize, and solve a problem all at once.

If any student wants to see a change or make a change in their community, it is in their power to do so.

It is possible; it is a dream that can become a reality."

Venturer, United Way Youth Venture
GROWING SUSTAINABLY FOR THE FUTURE:
FY16-18

Mobilize and Engage Youth
Initiate positive change around issues that impact the lives of youth, including those who are traditionally underserved and disengaged.

Empower Participating Youth
Build social competence, leadership skills in youth, and subsequently impact their community through purposeful training and recognition opportunities.

Build Collaborative Community Relationships
Grow and deepen relationships with partnering schools, parents, and adult volunteers in order to embed rigorous UWYV curriculum into classroom instruction. Expand program capacity to reach additional youth, and create a shared interest in investing in the potential of participating youth as future leaders.

Increase Program Sustainability
Achieve fiscal sustainability through a fundraising strategy that includes community and regional sponsors, targeted grant opportunities, and shared funding with partners, particularly for direct support in implementing curriculum.
Welcome From United Way Youth Venture Staff

Youth are a vibrant, yet often underutilized, source of power for creating and leading positive community change—but that is not necessarily the case in North Central Massachusetts. Young people involved in United Way Youth Venture (UWYV) through one of 15 partnering schools develop leadership skills, build confidence, provide countless services to their communities and most importantly, are given the chance to make lasting positive change in others as well as themselves.

During the UWYV process, youth learn how to identify and confront problems, and find creative solutions. A consistent presence in the region over the past 14 years has changed the perception of how adults view youth in the communities served by UWYV. Youth are invited to the table to share perspective, help make decisions, and lead change. They are a driving and inspirational force of creative, problem-solving energy, who are empowered with the skills and encouragement needed to improve their communities.

United Way Youth Venture 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 UWYV 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.

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.

Our annual report not only celebrates the accomplishments of the past year, but also creates opportunities for stakeholders and supporters to understand our future direction. Demand for expansion of UWYV to new communities is ever present and requires additional resources from the communities directly benefiting from youth-led Ventures. Our intense focus on cultivating strong partnerships with schools in the region and consistently delivering quality programming that is complementary to Common Core curriculum standards, has prepared us for a strong future.

We are poised to help school districts in the North Central Massachusetts region bring classroom learning to life with critical development of 21st Century college and job-ready skills. Your continued support enables UWYV to expand opportunities for groundbreaking, youth-led change in our region.

Thank you for your support,

United Way Youth Venture Staff

OUR PROGRAM STAFF

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Youth Engagement

- **36 Venture Teams launched** in FY16 with **63 previously launched Teams sustained**
- **315 Venture Teams** launched since program inception in 2002
- **61 additional Teams** of students already working to launch a Venture in FY17
- **10,408 young people exposed to the UWYV opportunity**
- **6,469 students actively engaged** through **138 skill-building workshops** and helping Venture Teams
- **885 students** leading Venture Team efforts with **349 newly engaged youth this year**
- **15 partnering middle and high schools**, and MWCC
- **5 school partners** collaborating on a deeper level through **UWYV curriculum integration**
- More than **217 adults engaged** as Venture Team “Allies” (mentors), volunteers, and panelists

Financial Support

- UWYV experience delivered to young people at a cost of **$2,458 per team** and **$37.62 per student** directly engaged in UWYV, a **40% reduction from FY15**
- Venturers **raised nearly $10,000** in matching funding to support their Ventures, providing **$4,900** in seed funding to 11 Venture Teams
- **Total of $16,406** in seed funding awarded in FY16 to launch Venture efforts
- The **new UWYV Community Expo raised $7,000** through sponsorships, donations and ticket sales in support of continuing program operation

Student Performance

- Venturer **MCAS scores** from reporting high schools were **13.27 points higher** than the overall school average
- **99%** of Venturers report that they **plan to graduate high school**
- **92%** of Venturers report that it is **important for them to get a college degree**

Actively engaged Venturers who responded to the Spring Survey reported:

- **80%** of students plan to continue doing things that will **improve their community** in the future
- **92%** of Venturers believe that they learned how to **make positive change** in the community
- **79%** of students believe that UWYV has helped them learn **how to problem solve**
- **85%** of Venturers reported that their Venture has **positively impacted their community**

Scholarship Awards

Rafaela Lopes (MWCC) was selected as the first ever recipient of the “Bob Chauvin Leadership Award.” This named scholarship honors Mr. Chauvin’s commitment to UWYV and leadership in bringing youth development to the forefront of his organization, Tyco SimplexGrinnell’s charitable mission.

Two additional UWYV scholarships were awarded to **Maggie Mbengue** and **Morgan Tait**, both of Leominster High School & CTEi.
Our Approach...

Curriculum Integration

• The UWYV program aligns with over 55% of English Language Arts Common Core Standards.

• Eight of 15 partner sites have begun to implement the UWYV program during the school day through workshop periods and in-class programming due to the program’s ties to the Common Core.

• The UWYV program can be aligned to portions of the Common Core Standards for grades 5 to 12.

• UWYV piloted in-classroom programming at four partner sites to assist faculty in delivering workshops in conjunction with classroom units.

• Teachers who support the UWYV program are able to complete their year-end teacher evaluations through evidence-based documentation.

Community Impact

• LEAD (Let's Empower Advocate and Do) from Leominster High School & CTEi (LHS), with the sponsorship of Senator Jen Flanagan, introduced Bill S.2329 to make mental health promotion available in schools across the state. LEAD hopes their curriculum will be taught at all Massachusetts high schools. The bill is currently being reviewed.

• The MWCC Venture Team, Mountain Lions Carpooling, hosted the first annual Student Transportation Summit with over 40 MWCC students and staff in attendance.

• GO Make a Difference (LHS) participated in a week-long service trip to Haiti, bringing much-needed supplies and supporting efforts at a rural nutrition center, health clinic, and school. They are currently collecting supplies to send in February 2017.

• Colorful Change, from Monty Tech (Fitchburg), raised over $2,000 during their first color walk/run. Proceeds support local foster youth in the North Central Massachusetts region.

• A Shoe for You from Ayer Shirley Regional Middle School, collected more than 500 pairs of shoes and with the help of a local non-profit they will be distributed to families in need in Nicaragua.

“UWYV means a lot to me, it has helped me become more confident in myself and be a better person all around. I have also become better at problem solving.”

– Christian Snyder Venturer, Sky View Middle School, Leominster

ALS Venture Team
Fitchburg High School

The ALS Venture Team from Fitchburg High School (FHS) is unique both for their source of inspiration and also their membership. Inspired by their mentor, who lost her husband to the ALS disease, the three student leaders represent FHS, MWCC, and WPI. These determined leaders started their venture at FHS in order to raise money for the Glenn Roberts Memorial Scholarship which awards funding to a FHS student athlete.

The walk was originally started in 2014, but through the help of UWYV seed funding, the group was able to double their donation to the Massachusetts ALS Chapter & the Glenn Roberts Memorial Scholarship through the recruitment of more students to walk in the event than past years. They also invited a speaker from the Massachusetts ALS Chapter to speak about ALS prevalence and impact, while outfitting student walkers in “FHS vs. ALS” gear.

Through their event, the students were able to raise awareness to more than 100 peers and FHS staff members about this devastating disease that affects thousands of people.
Active Teams by Cause

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

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.

Community Involvement – These Ventures tackle issues specific to a given community, such as supporting area veterans, partnering with local police to educate youth, raising awareness about LGBTQ equality, and visiting elderly Alzheimer’s patients.

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

Health – Our 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.

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

In 2015, three modest students from Sky View Middle School set out to make a difference in the lives of foster children in their community. They started their Venture, Lift Up Foster Hearts, to assemble care packages containing family games, hygiene materials and other items to distribute to local foster children.

Through the process, these youth saw exponential growth not just in their Venture, but also within themselves as they impressed those around them with surprising new strength and conviction. Usually humble and shy, they stepped out of their comfort zone to create a partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF). They connected with a DCF supervisor, a partner who helped them to coordinate delivery of 22 Lift Up Foster Hearts care bags for distribution to foster children in need.

This got the attention of the local media, putting the Venturers into a spotlight they at one time would have preferred to avoid. Yet, understanding the importance of their meeting, they courageously and passionately spoke about their mission.

These once quiet and reserved students became confident, vocal Venturers, who continue to work diligently so that the foster youth of this community know that there are students who are looking out for their wellbeing.
Combined Map of Service for United Way of NCM, MWCC and UWYV

- Applewild School, Fitchburg - 1 VTL
- Ayer Shirley Regional High School, Ayer - 9 VTL
- Ayer Shirley Regional Middle School, Ayer - 84 VTL
- Fitchburg High School, Fitchburg - 19 VTL
- Frances Drake Elementary School, Leominster - 2 VTL
- Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School, Devens - 29 VTL
- Leominster High School & CTEi, Leominster - 31 VTL
- Montachusett Regional Technical Vocational High School, Fitchburg - 6 VTL
- Mount Wachusett Community College, Gardner - 7 VTL
- Murdock High School, Winchendon - 8 VTL
- Murdock Middle School, Winchendon - 6 VTL
- North Middlesex Regional High School, Townsend - 11 VTL
- Samoset Middle School, Leominster - 17 VTL
- Sky View Middle School, Leominster - 52 VTL
- Sizer, a North Central Charter Essential School, Fitchburg - 5 VTL

* VTL - Venture Teams Launched to Date
### Challenges Facing Our Community

North Central Massachusetts has seen a surge in the numbers of homeless citizens in need with over 950 individuals and families depending on the support of local shelters in the past year. Across the North Central Massachusetts region, 12% of citizens are currently living under the poverty line. Over 2,700 youth are currently in the foster care system within North Central Massachusetts. There are over 450 elders in assisted living in North Central Massachusetts.

### What Our Youth-Led Venture Teams Are Doing to Help

- **Don’t Waste, Donate** ran two drives to donate collected clothing to a local homeless shelter.
- **All Stars** plan to run monthly movie nights and dances at their school as a means to purchase gas and grocery gift cards for the homeless. By supporting these homeless families, the hope is that one day those they help will have home of their own.
- **Satellite Garden** grows over 1,000 pounds of vegetables each year to help get fresh food to the local soup kitchens for the homeless.
- **Kylee’s Kare Kits for Kidz** members continue their dedicated efforts in providing take-home meals to more than 300 students every weekend.
- **Hand in Hand** is holding regular drives to collect gently used backpacks to distribute to foster children, in addition to raising funds to stock the backpacks with school supplies and games.
- **Colorful Change** hosted a color walk/run to raise awareness and funds for children in foster care and they received over $2,000 in donations for their cause.
- **TIME** (Transform, Inspire, Motivate, Engage) created a pen pal program between local assisted living residents and students at Fall Brook Elementary. Their hope is by connecting these different generations it will build a stronger community.
- **The Holiday Spreaders** have hosted monthly holiday parties for Alzheimer’s patients for over 30 consecutive months. They are currently fundraising for a service trip to a village in the Netherlands that is just for Alzheimer’s patients.
## Challenges Facing Our Community

North Central Massachusetts towns have some of the highest rates of suicide in the state with the rate of 10.3 suicides per 100,000 people, a rate 47% higher than the Massachusetts average.

Our veteran population faces many issues when returning to civilian life including an 8.6% homelessness rate and a suicide rate 61% higher than civilians.

Our society is faced with many environmental challenges including lack of waste management, pollution, and rising demand and cost for energy.

## What Our Youth-Led Venture Teams Are Doing to Help

### I Am Aware
- Hosts mental health awareness events to put an end to the stigma of mental illness in schools and prevent bullying of those who suffer from mental illnesses.

### Friends of Rachel’s Challenge
- Promotes an anti-bullying culture at LHS to help prevent kids from wanting to harm themselves. They host an annual awareness week that includes school assemblies and sale of awareness items.

### CLASS (Classroom Learning Activities for Samoset Students)
- Hosts an annual “Take a Veteran to Lunch” day and collects cards from fellow students to send to troops serving overseas.

### The Freedom Venture
- Spearheads a Veterans Day Patriot’s Pen Essay Contest in coordination with the local VFW to provide support to our troops overseas.

### The Make it Clean, Keep it Green team
- Encourages their schoolmates to develop good recycling habits and improve the environment by running a weekly school recycling program.

### Help Our Mother Earth (HOME)
- Is working to raise awareness about sustainable agriculture and the benefits it has for the environment. They plan to build a school garden to provide fresh herbs and vegetables to their school’s cafeteria.

...significant community issues head-on. To learn more and follow our teams visit our website at [http://mwcc.edu/uwyv/](http://mwcc.edu/uwyv/)
Our Plan for Youth-Led Changemaking

2016–2017
Expanding Our Footprint

• Expand program delivery within current schools with emphasis on partnership development in Fitchburg and Gardner school districts.

• Deliver refined curriculum both on-demand and paired with in-school classroom instruction, aligned to Common Core Standards, with direct support from licensed Massachusetts teachers.

• Integrate more cohesively with school partners by establishing program staff offices in schools where available.

• Increase number of outreach program staff to match growth needs at new sites and in support of increased participants within current partner sites.

• Ensure long-term program sustainability, exploring merits of independent nonprofit status for UWYV program and other potential key partners.

2017–2018
Establishing a Legacy

• Expand program delivery within current schools and with emphasis on partnership development in Athol, Lunenburg, and Mahar school districts, as well as partners at the college level.

• Hire “umbrella” Champions within districts consisting of multiple school partners to streamline communication and maximize program impact.

• Partner with the Massachusetts Department of Education for access to state-level support and further opportunity for program expansion.

• Introduce fee-for-service revenue streams and establish reserve funds.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

What does UWYV mean to you?

• “It has helped me become more confident in myself and be a better person all around. I have also become better at problem solving.”

• “I can change the world and I can do anything that I put my mind on. And realizing that I can change someone’s life makes me really happy and proud that I changed the world by doing one simple little thing, believing in myself. And I hope I can do more than just doing little things, but big things as big as my heart.”

Would you recommend participating in UWYV to others?

• “Yes, because it allows you to express yourself in a way school doesn’t. In school you just sit down and learn, and in UWYV, you get to talk and learn about real issues in your community.”

• “Yes, because it is an excellent opportunity for students to turn their ideas for positive change into reality, regardless of background, age, or financial status of the person.”

“If I see a problem in the community, something I want to change, or something that I believe the community will benefit from, I know with UWYV it is possible”

– Aidan Provost
Venturer, Murdock High School, Winchendon
2016–2017: Anticipated Outcomes

Embracing Our Community
- Mobilize and engage youth exposing at least 8,500 students to UWYV programming
- Successful launch of a minimum of 26 new Venture Teams (and up to 57), with 75% of existing UWYV Teams sustained
- 5,500 students actively engaged with at least 700 Venture Team members from up to 21 partners

Cultivating the Next Generation
- Fall Kick-Off workshops provided to at least 275 youth, 30 adults, and 90% of active partners
- Host second annual Community Expo event to provide Venture Teams the opportunity to gain exposure and network within the broader community, with at least 200 attendees
- Up to $10K in scholarship award funding provided to graduating seniors or UWYV alumni

Deepening Community Engagement
- Offer at least two Champion and Ally trainings
- Provide a minimum of 50 hours of intensive technical assistance to youth per program partner
- More than 125 adults engaged as volunteers
- Attend at least two events or initiatives for each UWYV partnering district
- Launch of at least two Teams from the MWCC student population through in-class programming

Enhancing Fiscal Sustainability
- Develop and implement supplemental budget training to demonstrate creative self-funding techniques to participants at a minimum of three sites
- At least two self supporting Venture Teams launched without the need for seed funding
- Secure event sponsorships for UWYV events Fall Kick-Off and Community Expo
- Hire part-time development staff to create and implement a direct plan to generate and strategize funding.
Scaling Financially for Growth

COMMUNITY IMPACT
Blue Crew 2
Ayer Shirley Middle School

When looking for examples of leadership and dedication within the UWYV program, one need to look no further than the members of the Blue Crew 2. This Venture Team, based out of the Ayer Shirley district, has worked for the past two years to raise awareness within their community about autism and the impact this disease can have upon families if they do not receive the necessary support.

Since re-launching the original Blue Crew Venture in the winter of 2015, the students of Blue Crew 2 have rallied hundreds of fellow students to support an end to autism through various blue-themed events (blue is the color representing autism). These have included fundraisers such as a raffle for Blue Man Group tickets and a blue-themed dance, as well as an annual celebration of Autism Awareness Day within their school.

In the past year alone, these Venturers have raised over $1,000 towards the fight against this disease, to which they have donated most of their profits to HMEAs Autism Resource Center. This nonprofit works with children and families who are directly affected and helps connect them to the resources and information needed to live a healthy and happy life. The Team will be bringing their Venture to the high school to continue their fight against autism.

The UWYV program has the potential to reach thousands more students in North Central Massachusetts as it expands into new schools and additional school districts. One area of focus for the coming year is resource development to allow continued growth and sustainability. Maintaining integrity of the existing program is of key importance during this expansion, and so expansion will be done in a thoughtful and deliberate manner. Below are several options for ways to help UWYV continue to grow this transformative program to reach more area youth!

Alternative Funding Models
- Fundraising campaigns (online, community donors, etc.)
- External grants outside current partnerships*
- Sponsorships (event, overall program, Team or school/district level)
- Direct partner funding support

* Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts capacity-building grant awarded for the purpose of hiring part time development officer in FY17.

Revenue Streams
- United Way Youth Venture Store (www.uwyvstore.com)
- Piggybackr royalties (10% of funds raised by students)
- Fee-for-service (training, facilitation of corporate/organizational retreats, etc.)

Financial Sustainability
- Increase efficiencies
- Volunteer management model (train-the-trainer)
- Multi-year grants (candidate for i3 U.S. Department of Education grant)
Get Involved

UWYV is independently funded and relies on the support of organizations and community members. Your support is critical to enabling continued efforts to cultivate social innovation and youth leadership development in North Central Massachusetts.

Here’s how you can help:

YOUR TIME

Volunteer support is critical to the success of our program and individual Venture Teams! Please consider sharing the gift of your time and expertise.

• Volunteer to serve as a panelist
• Mentor a Venture Team as an “Ally” or “Technical Ally,” non-controlling adult advisors
• Help with a Venture-sponsored community event or project

DONATIONS & SPONSORSHIPS

• 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

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<th>COMMUNITY BENEFACCTOR</th>
<th>VENTURE LEADER</th>
<th>COMMUNITY LEADER</th>
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