Good afternoon and thanks for joining as I'm Judy Simpson. Tens of thousands Vermonters are involved in an organization. It may be and not for profit organization or before profit one. It might involve working with kids or serving a community. But passion alone cannot sustain an organization. Sustainability requires civic skills. So this afternoon we're going to learn about a project that is providing skills to individuals and in turn helping organizations achieve their missions. My guests are both part of the UVM building capacity project. Lindsay Jones is the project assistant and Ellen Rowe is the extension community and leadership development specialist. Welcome to both of you. Lindsay maybe you can start by telling us a little bit about the purpose of extensions building capacity project.

Lindsay.: Sure. The purpose of the building capacity project through UVM extension is to build leadership skills for the Vermont nonprofits sector as well as the many small associations or its committees commissions who do a lot of the work that sustain the quality of life for Vermonters we do this by providing an integrated program of education and technical assistance offered to individuals and groups throughout the state and hopefully throughout the region. And this program is sort of a virtual tool box filled with leadership skills and capacity skills all organized around 10 learning modules available online on our website through webinars and through CCTV as well as other local access channels. The intent is to provide entry level skills either alone or combined together to make them a longer in-depth program. This Brochure explains about all the modules that we're talking about as well as has some quotes for webinar participants really enjoying their experience and learning from the webinars.

Judy.: Vermont is a real tradition of community involvement. There are more than 2700 nonprofit organizations that provide food shelter Health Care throughout the state and Lindsay indicated the building capacity is going to focus around 10 learning modules. Ellen when what was your reason for choosing the 10 modules? Maybe you can tell me what they are?

Ellen.: We did a literature search and ran across the 2007 article in leadership and organizational development journal. It identifies 10 capacities that are needed by public and nonprofit organizations for their leaders. We came up with the stem of jewels and over a two year. We're going to develop all of them. We had to start somewhere so in conversation with our partners we decided to begin with board development and developing volunteers then staff development and evaluation. To give you a little bit of background of how we got here in 2006 in the Vermont Alliance of nonprofit organizations or VAN PO closed its doors to operation and it was a leader in educational opportunities to nonprofits across the state. The Vermont community foundation stepped up and funded a network pilot project and created common good Vermont. Common good Vermont Partners with CCTV which is the center for media and democracy. They have been our partners from the very beginning and it's with their technology and ability to record cut and design quality television
programming that we've been able to create modules that will go out through their system as well as through the cable systems statewide.

Judy.: Terrific. Why is that the think so important to have the partnership with a media outlet?

Ellen.: We need to get the word out and you can publicize your website all over any Brochure you want in the number of people that are going to see the is relatively small where the cable access station allows is to it's a venue for putting out an educational piece as well as linking people to the larger services which then they can find on the web site.

Judy.: Lindsay what educational opportunities have you created to support the building capacity project?

Lindsay.: Our biggest piece is definitely are webinars. Those are seminars essentially available on the Internet so it's distance learning. In the past year we've completed six webinars two of board development two webinars on staff development and evaluation and developing volunteers. Of those six webinars we've had 93 total participants. 66 of those purchase abeyance responded to our evaluation for webinars which is a 70% response rate. Which is huge. From those responses are two students reported that the overall assessment of the webinar was very good to excellent 80 to 100% of the time. Those webinars are held every first Tuesday of the month from 11:00 AM to 1215 Eastern Standard Time. There are three there's no preregistration required. We don't need to call the phone you can hear right from your speakers on a computer. We haven't had webinars July or August we took the summer off but we will be resuming September 6 in that webinar will be on ethical leadership. The title is ethical leadership exploring the basic concepts. That will be presented by Karen Schneider who's also a community and development specialist with UVM extension..

Judy.: With these webinars people purchase a painting do you know where they're from or can you keep track of them?

Lindsay.: That's great because we have implemented a system called mail chimp. It's available on the Internet it's a free service or you can pay for extra incentives. What we've done his 78 of those 93 purchase opponents have agreed to be contacted by the building capacity team for future updates on information that is on our web site if it's new. When the next webinars going to be when we might have some new tools available on our web site so mail chimp has been great on keeping that list together and also and also letting us keep track of participates in more than one webinar. That's been very helpful.

Judy.: And you've had people from all over the country?

Lindsay.: We have I think the furthest we've had is in Michigan so that's been great and definitely a lot of people in Vermont and New Hampshire and the New England area but reaching Michigan that was great.

Judy.: That's terrific which is one other reasons you mentioned to me earlier the webinar is a little bit later on in the morning so that you can reach other people of other time zones.

Lindsay.: Right if you're in California you don't have to get up at 5:00 AM to watch and webinar so.

Judy.: Allen decides the webinars what other materials you have available on your web site for the 24/7 Learner?

Ellen.: The size webinars we also do a monthly blog and would respond to folks who may have comments on that blog and all of those are tide to modules. Then we do a synchronous learning units. Those allow people to go in and they will be able to download a PowerPoint said that has a
recording on it that we can listen to in this case my voice for the three that are there and I will explain and walk people through the process and there are handouts that they can pull off an imprint and follow along and actually do something. There's an interactive component to them watching a PowerPoint and doing something and thinking about it then moving on to the next slide. There are three of them up there and they're all on developing volunteers right now but we expect to watch some more before we start up again in September with the webinars.

Judy.: It sounds like that interactive component is really important.

Ellen.: It is because the webinar basically is rather passive we accept questions people can type in the check box and will respond to individual questions but I think they need to work with the material and that's why the interactive piece fell into those asynchronous units is important.

Judy.: Do you find people who do that who are involved are more likely to become a volunteer or become part of a group?

Ellen.: The three units when we have had one of them is degenerational differences I think a lot of people who recruit volunteers do not take that into effect. They think the only thing out there is boomers. Well we have a lot of folks older then those boomers who are very valuable volunteers. Then we have some younger people who may have a few hours a week and really want to contribute and make a difference and share their skills and they're very highly skilled individuals and we need to know how to treat them. Would recruit them differently and we feed them and nurture them definitely.

Judy.: Interesting. Your partnership with CCTV was mentioned how are you working together and what you producing to contribute to building a capacity project?

Ellen.: We've been fortunate enough to work with Jess Wilson who works for CCTV. She's been helpful with helping us conduct interviews with leaders from nonprofit organizations and people who are well versed in these modules. We've come up with a set of questions and we interview them based on their experience or their knowledge. Jess tapes those and then helps us put them together in what we're calling a primary learning module. Those are a series of tapes of focus on one module for example developing volunteers. It's a combination of expertise from Ellen expertise from our interviews and then some different power points shots to help the viewer understand hopefully take away with them to either their organization or help further their professional development.

Judy.: It's interesting that all of this is being studied because I would imagine things in communities are much different today than they were 10 years ago 15 years ago and you really have to keep adapting what you're doing to reach people that you need to reach for help and also to find out who you want to help.

Ellen.: Right and we don't have the time to go out and drive 2 hours to sit in a 4 hour meeting and its costly and time so I think the distance learning peace really works. We decided to focus exclusively on that.

Judy.: Ellen what results will you be able to show from this project?

Ellen.: We've developed an intake assessment. We took the learning objectives for each of the 10 modules and created questions. That intake assessment is available through our web site and we're hoping that individuals who get hoped on some of these modules might want to learn more and do more so we're offering a mentoring service. If someone comes on and takes the survey and finds out they have some real strengths and a couple of these modules and a couple of the other ones they'd like to develop a little more we're happy to leave them in the right direction toward an asynchronous unit or a webinar or something that can help strengthen that particular piece of their leadership.
Judy.: Who do you think you'll be interested in webinars? Is their target audience that you're looking for or are you looking for a broad based anybody who's interested in any kind of volunteering or serving in their community to check this out?

Ellen.: We're looking for leaders and those involved and nonprofits. We're looking for people who work with those local town commissions and committees. We've all been to committee meetings that could use a little stronger and better leadership to make that needing more productive so we're sitting here with some skills that we'd like to share with folks. That's primarily the target.

Judy.: I would say in the past people would learn the skills by volunteering by becoming part of the system and mentoring from people ahead of them but if a lot of these organizations close their doors or there isn't that link then where do you buy that?

Ellen.: Right. We've been in this business a while but the programs that we offered before we're basically we're having a meeting you all come and that's just not the way a lot of folks learn these days.

Judy.: Right because a lot of people can't make it physically to a meeting but if you can sit in front of your computer or your television and watch something at your leisure.

Ellen.: Or want to do it at 2:00 AM a month I can sleep I can do any time.

Judy.: So the 24/7 component is huge. As you mentioned in the beginning of the program there are tens of thousands of Vermonters involved in an organization. How can people be interested in building capacity projects learn more or get in touch with you?

Lindsay.: They can e-mail capacity at UVM.edu that will go right to me and we're good about getting right back two you and communicate to where you need to go to learn more and we do welcome you to visit our web site and that is WWW. UVM.edu/extension/community/buildingcapacity.

Judy.: It's important to mention the folks who do this that there is somebody there.

Lindsay.: There is yes.

Ellen.: There are multiple mentors. Mary Peabody is a mentor and Karen Schneider will mentor so the three of us are spread out around state and we're available to help.

Judy.: That's fantastic thank you so much for joining me today.

Lindsay.: Thank you for having us.

Ellen.: Thank you.

Judy.: That's our program for today I'm Judy Simpson we will see you again next time on across the fence.

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