The story of the Lost Mural Project in Burlington is a story of survival. Painted by Lithuanian immigrant and sign painter Ben Zion Black in 1910 for a small synagogue in Burlington’s “Little Jerusalem” area of the Old North End, the mural was hidden behind a false wall in 1986 when the building’s use changed. In 2010 when the property was sold again, Aaron Goldberg, archivist for Ohavi Zedek, saw an opportunity to rescue the mural and make it visible for all. Thus began a multi-year fundraising effort and a one-mile journey to secure and lift the mural from its original location and move it to its new location in the lobby of the Ohavi Zedek Synagogue.

The mural itself is one of the largest remaining examples of Lithuanian Folk Art in the world (most such art was destroyed by the Nazis), yet the organizers behind the project see its relocation and restoration as an opportunity to tell a much bigger story: the story of American immigrants seeking a better place. It is an opportunity to understand why our communities are the way they are and to understand our sense of belonging. It is also an opportunity to understand what it means to be a welcoming community.

As Friends of the Mural board advisor Sarah Muyskens says, “The mural depicts people coming into the tent of the tabernacle. That’s really what we would like to do. Gather people under the tent to have the conversation about what it means to be a survivor, an immigrant, a Vermonter.”

A $5,000 grant from the Paul A. Bruhn Fund will support cleaning the mural, a necessary step prior to complete restoration.
Change. Vermont is experiencing a time of profound change that it hasn’t seen since the back-to-the-land movement or the construction of the interstate highway system. Vermonters have been tested, and have shown a deep commitment to each other and to the special buildings at the center of our communities. By working together to preserve a sense of place that is welcoming for all, we are building community and charting a course for the future.

For the Preservation Trust of Vermont, that work took on a special sense of urgency this year. As Vermonters (new and old) longed for greater connection during a time of social distancing, we helped communities like Albany, East Calais, and Elmore revive general stores where citizens can encounter their neighbors and have access to basic goods. We provided funding and technical assistance to towns like Readsboro, Enosburg, and Adamant to restore town halls and community centers where friends meet and friendships are made. We supported the adaptive reuse of historic buildings to meet a new need, whether it’s a historic barn in Hardwick that will now serve as a regional cheese destination or a church in Peacham that will house a childcare center.

A shared commitment to this work has been made evident by the hundreds of Vermonters who have collectively donated more than $1 million to the Paul A. Bruhn Fund. Named for PTV’s beloved founding president, the fund will be used to support the kinds of projects that Paul championed throughout this career: revitalizing village centers, preserving gathering places that build community, and ensuring that Vermont’s historic architectural and cultural assets can be shared with future generations. One of the first projects supported by the fund is the Lost Mural at Ohavi Zedek Synagogue in Burlington. The story of this cultural treasure speaks to the immigrant experience, and indeed, to all of us who have found a home here. It reminds us that the story of Vermont, and the character of our state, is rich, complex, and resilient.

This moment in our history is unique; the dynamism, creativity, and care it has revealed is not. Vermont’s character is not static or locked in the past. Rather, with the hard and meaningful work we are capable of doing together, it points toward a vibrant and more equitable future. All of us at the Preservation Trust of Vermont thank you for your unwavering support in preserving that future. We look forward to the journey ahead.

Ben Doyle
President
HOW WE HELP

Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants

The Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grant program is a federal grant program created by Senator Patrick Leahy aimed at supporting rural revitalization of historic properties of national, state, and local significance in order to restore, protect, and foster economic development in rural villages and downtown areas. From July 2020 through June 2021, PTV awarded a total of $625,000 to nine rural projects.

“To have this building serve the community is an amazing model and an efficient model. We are using the space to create a strong and healthier community. We are recycling resources, preserving space, and growing instead of dismantling.”

Michelle Hough, Vice President, Bridgewater Area Community Foundation

When the Bridgewater Village School closed in 2015, the community framed it as an opportunity to address the lack of a licensed childcare center in town. Residents rallied together and formed the Bridgewater Area Community Foundation with the objective to convert the school into a new community center. In addition to a licensed childcare center, business and community spaces will be available as well as life-enriching programs to strengthen social ties and reduce social isolation.

For Michelle Hough, board member and mother of three, the community center will provide after-school activities for her older kids and childcare for her younger one. She says that beyond education and wellness activities, the new center will also be the emergency center for the town, a place for town meetings, and a potential location for things like future vaccine clinics. As such, it will strengthen the community in a number of ways the community hasn’t even thought of yet.

PTV awarded this project an $80,000 grant from the Northern Borders Regional Commission in 2020. A $100,000 Bruhn Historic Revitalization grant will support additional renovations to the former school building.
The smell of coffee and cinnamon rolls. Full shelves. Teachers. Friends. How have you been? How did you fare the winter? That’s how Kristen Urie, board member of the Albany Community Trust, describes opening day at the Albany General Store this past June. After seven years without a general store in this small northern Vermont community, a tremendous amount of work, and a year of isolation due to the pandemic, opening day reinforced why this project is so important: people need a place to connect.

The store in this historic village was destroyed not once but twice by fire, the last in 2013. Reopening was going to take a lot of work and a lot of money, so the community decided not to wait for the right business person to show up, but instead to do it on their own. They formed the Albany Community Trust and, with the help of the Preservation Trust and others, raised over $900,000 to make it happen. Approximately half of that was raised from locals or people with connections to the community who value the store as critical to the area’s commerce and social fabric. Though not historic itself, the new store brings renewed life to the historic village center.

PTV acted as the fiscal sponsor for the first year of the project, awarded a $50,000 Preservation grant in partnership with the Freeman Foundation, and awarded $149,000 through the Northern Borders Regional Commission.

“It’s such a simple thing but it’s so profound, especially after the wild year after all that has been so restricted. The opportunity to be human again is really striking and nourishing and not to be taken for granted.”

Kristen Urie, board member of the Albany Community Trust

How We Help

Fiscal Sponsorships

PTV provides critical support for emerging projects’ early fundraising efforts. For those projects that have applied for but not yet received nonprofit status, PTV acts as a fiscal sponsor and bridges a gap, helping to build local capacity and maintain project momentum, thereby ensuring that the project has the best chance for success. Between June 2020 and July 2021, PTV acted as a fiscal sponsor for seven community projects.
Kathryn Lovinsky’s non-verbal 80-year-old grandmother, a resident of the Greensboro Nursing home, loved to paint. Thanks to the Grass Roots Arts and Community Effort (GRACE) in Hardwick, she was able to do this through one of their programs that took art on the road to those who might otherwise be difficult to reach. It was Kathryn’s experience with this program that compelled her to leave her hometown of Hardwick to get a degree in art therapy. This was many years ago, and Kathryn is now back in Hardwick as the executive director of GRACE.

Housed in a renovated late 19th-century firehouse in downtown Hardwick, GRACE is focused on empowering individuals through transformative art experiences, which lead to creative growth and self-discovery. PTV helped them in 2000 when they moved to this location with a Preservation grant for facade and bell tower restoration. Since then, GRACE has grown and now offers more than 200 artmaking workshops annually in places where people live and work: nursing homes, mental health centers, senior affordable housing residences, and partnering community and art centers. The firehouse provides space for on-site community workshops, a gallery, and offices.

Recently, Kathryn had concerns about a damaged foundation and moisture in the cellar. A Robert Sincerbeaux Fund grant for a conditions assessment helped identify the degree of damage and a scope of work; a second Preservation grant (20 years after the first) will support the necessary foundation repairs. Good programs in good places make for worthy investments.

“Traditional GRACE workshops have never been about a product. If you come to the firehouse to attend a workshop, it is almost like a party. Some bring a guitar and sing songs and everyone knows each other. It is as much about creating a community as it is about creating art.”

Kathryn Lovinsky, Executive Director of GRACE
As a retired principal from the Metowee Community School, Nancy Mark wasn’t involved in her town’s library at all: it was dark when she left for school, and dark when she came home. After retirement she was invited to be on the Friends of the Library steering committee, soon found herself a representative on the Vermont Library Association Board, and then leading the board of trustees for the Castleton Free Library. “We have to preserve and we have to innovate. We need to honor this as a public place and we need to serve the public.” For Nancy and all the other board members and librarians, this means being diligent in addressing the needs of the historic 1928 library building, working to make the building accessible to all sectors of the community, and ensuring that everyone in town feels that it is their place.

PTV has supported this project with an RSF grant for a conditions assessment, an Essential Character and Service grant in 2020 for front door repairs and exterior painting, and a 1772 Foundation grant in 2021 to restore the building’s crumbling chimneys. A $100,000 accessibility modification grant from the Vermont Community Development Program plus a generous donation from the Friends of the Library means an elevator addition is in their future.

Nancy says they look forward to doing more outreach and developing more programs. “We are going to attend a volunteer Fire Department meeting, for instance, and ask: What would you like to see in the library? What ideas do you have? What would you like to see in the collection?”

HOW WE HELP

Essential Character and Service Grants

With the generous support of the Johnson Family Foundation, the Essential Character and Service grant program funds projects that combine the use of historic buildings with the provision of services that meet essential human needs in the areas of food security, childcare, health, and community engagement. From July 2020 through June 2021, PTV awarded $47,500 to eight preservation projects.
For Christine Graham, it took a lot of nerve to ask Merchants Bank to donate their historic building in North Bennington to a nonprofit organization for community use. But in 2013, as a board member of the Fund for North Bennington, she did, and they said yes.

A month before, the bank had sent letters to its account holders saying they were closing the Bennington and North Bennington branches to build a new building on the strip between both locations. That would leave the 1863 building, located in the Village core, empty or occupied by a business that might not have the best interests of its community in mind. Instead, the Fund for North Bennington and the Preservation Trust of Vermont co-owned the building while the community figured out the best way to use it. Today, nine offices provide steady income to support upkeep and pay taxes, and an open community space in the former lobby provides a venue for a myriad of different activities: rotating art shows, yoga classes, concerts, birthday parties, education programs, retreats, and more.

By prior arrangement, the Fund for North Bennington eventually bought out the Preservation Trust. The Fund has since renovated all three floors, updated HVAC, installed solar panels and wi-fi and more. A 1772 Foundation grant of $10,000 will support restoring the exterior trim of the building, a final and important piece of the project.

“The Left Bank is one cog in the wheel of all the things that make North Bennington a functional, mutually supportive community.”

Christine Graham, Fund for North Bennington

HOW WE HELP

1772 Foundation

The 1772 Foundation, based in Providence, RI, plays a leading role in promoting historic preservation nationwide. Funds from this source provide critical “bricks and mortar” resources to nonprofits throughout Vermont. From July 2020 through June 2021, the 1772 Foundation worked with the Preservation Trust of Vermont to administer grants totaling $100,000 to 12 historic preservation projects for building exteriors.
A decade ago, the late president of the Preservation Trust, Paul Bruhn, offered Rick Winston and Janet MacLeod a bit of advice about bringing the late 19th-century former one-room schoolhouse back to life for community use: “It looks like a lot, but take the long view. Do what you can do, one year at a time.”

This creative group has done just that. A 2008 Preservation grant in partnership with the Freeman Foundation supported plumbing and exterior drainage. A 2013 Kickstarter Campaign funded a composting toilet. A 2015 Vermont Division for Historic Preservation grant helped them put on a new standing seam roof. A 2016 Vermont Arts Council Cultural Facilities grant helped them insulate and rewire the building. A generous person donated storm windows. A 1772 Foundation grant in 2021 helped fund exterior painting.

Now this little building on “the other side of the tracks” of Calais has become a creative gathering place where everyone feels welcome and comfortable. Swedish folk music concerts. Board meetings for the Adamant Co-op. New Year’s Eve movie showings. Political forums during election years. Ninetieth birthday parties.

Rick describes another remarkable thing that has happened since that first conversation with Paul: the snowballing of caretaking. On the day the local roofers installed the new roof, one of them noticed that there were large tree limbs over the new roof. Another member of the group was a forester and volunteered to take the tree down. It happens a lot. “People do it because they care about the place as a signifier of the spirit of the community.” Rick added, “The better it is taken care of, the more it will be used.” And the more it is used, the stronger the spirit of the community.
Robert Sincerbeaux Fund Grants

Named for our first benefactor, the Robert Sincerbeaux Fund Grants provide a little seed money and a lot of encouragement to help projects get off the ground. The RSF grants are used for conditions assessments or any other technical assistance, such as organizational development, project planning, fundraising consultation, feasibility assessment, and other project development activities. From July 2020 through June 2021, PTV supported 84 projects with RSF Grants.

One might think that a year-long global pandemic would be the death knell for an 1894 medieval Gothic church located in a mountain town of 811 people. Not so for the Church of Our Saviour at Mission Farm in Killington. The intersection of Zoom technology and this historic place meant 65 people from all over the world gathered to discuss Robin Wall Kimmerer’s Braiding Sweetgrass. The leaders of the church found there was a real hunger during the isolation of the pandemic for people to think about their relationship with the earth.

In some ways this was a continuation of work already begun in previous years. At a PTV Sacred Spaces retreat at the Grand Isle Lake House, they conversed, connected, and collaborated with others doing similar work around the state and realized they needed to think about the plan for the buildings and the property in a holistic way. A grant from the Vermont Community Fund has helped them develop a strategic plan, and this summer they are participating in the Abenaki Land Link Project to grow and harvest food for the Abenaki people. They are also participating in the Vermont Farm to Plate program and distributing food for the Everyone Eats program. Concurrently, following conditions assessment funding through the Robert Sincerbeaux Fund, they’ve made a huge effort to care for their historic buildings, including reroofing, rewiring, and replastering the church. “What I learned in Covid is that this space and even these buildings travel,” says Lisa Ransom, executive director of Mission Farm. “These beautiful, historic buildings are anchors for people from all over the world to connect with this land and our relationship as human beings with all creation. We feel honored to be good stewards of these sacred spaces in Vermont.”
For the Meachams of North Hartland — third-generation family dairy farmers — making necessary repairs to the Lemax Farm barns was overwhelming and unaffordable. For Kelly Meacham, who works in the local farm-to-school program, demolition was not an option for these iconic buildings that became famous after national publication of a 1936 WPA photo taken as part of a program to combat rural poverty. After a field visit in 2012, the Preservation Trust helped fund a Barn Assessment grant to do a complete assessment of the farm buildings. That report helped the Meachams understand the scope of the project, and it became something of a road map to getting it done.

With critical assistance from Matt Dunne, former VT State Rep and State Senator, Dave Morin, Steve Giroux, Nichole Boyton, and the Upper Valley Land Trust, an immersive community campaign began: bake sales, events at the farm, a silent auction, naming of the next spring calves, sponsorship from banks and local businesses, such as North Hartland Tools, a community kickstarter campaign, a great video, and applying for (and receiving) state grant funding. In all, the community raised $140,000 to restore and paint the barn. Not only does this work help the Meachams continue the farm operations, it means that elementary school children will continue to take field trips to learn about farming. Matt Dunne describes Hartland as “the biggest small town in Vermont,” still largely run by volunteer efforts. What has happened to this barn over the past nine years is testament to that.
Preservation Trust Programs & Projects

Preservation Field Services

Through our team of Field Service Representatives, PTV provides guidance to individuals and organizations involved in historic preservation projects. In addition to direct technical assistance, we offer small grants for consultants to bring specialized skills to a project, including fundraising consultation, engineering and conditions assessments, accessibility planning, collection care, and business planning services. From July 2020 through June 2021, we provided assistance to 190 projects in 130 communities.

Preservation Retreats

One of the core programs PTV offers communities is our Preservation retreats at the Grand Isle Lake House. These retreats are an immersive adult learning experience designed to support anyone undertaking or considering a community development or historic preservation project. From July 2020 through June 2021, PTV hosted four online retreats that served 72 individuals from 52 communities and engaged both statewide and national partners. We participated in four additional online workshops and seminars that reached over 300 people in four states.

Community Supported Enterprises

CSEs come in a variety of forms, including restaurants, general stores, cafes, and pubs, and reflect the needs of an individual community. Through a combination of fundraising and grants, communities are able to purchase real estate and equipment with little to no debt and lease the space at an affordable rate to the right operator for the job. From July 2019 through June 2020, we have worked in two communities and consulted with seven additional communities about the CSE model.

Historic Preservation Easements

The Preservation Trust of Vermont’s Historic Preservation Easement program began more than 20 years ago to preserve in perpetuity Vermont buildings with outstanding historic significance. Many of our easements are a condition of grant funding and are held in partnership with the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. We currently steward 75 easements that cover 114 buildings, two structures, and three archaeological sites.

Advocacy

The Preservation Trust of Vermont works with a variety of partners to pass legislation and galvanize local advocacy to strengthen Vermont’s downtowns and village centers, and encourages legislative support for the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. In 2021, PTV successfully advocated for the passage of $3 million in preservation tax credits and $1.5 million to support the Better Places program.
Sprawl

In order to maintain Vermont’s development pattern of concentrated village centers surrounded by rural landscape, PTV works with communities to oppose sprawl and encourage the proper scale and location of big-box development. From July 2020 through June 2021, we worked in the communities of Bennington and Berlin.

PTV Properties

The Preservation Trust of Vermont’s efforts to help communities at times require that we take the bold step of property ownership. We currently own and steward three historic properties in Vermont: the Grand Isle Lake House in Grand Isle, Pierce’s Store in Shrewsbury, and the Vermont Marble Museum in Proctor.

Publications

The Preservation Trust of Vermont published the 2021–2022 Vermont Restoration Directory, a resource of preservation information and more than 50 preservation and restoration professionals.
THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS. We could not do this important work without you.

Donors who contributed from July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021

Pillars of Preservation
Over many decades the Preservation Trust of Vermont has been the appreciative recipient of generous lifetime gifts from our friends and partners. The Pillars of Preservation recognizes those from whom we have received a bequest as well as those who have notified us of the commitment of a future gift from their estate. These planned gifts ensure a lasting impact in Vermont.

Paul A. Bruhn
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If you have made arrangements for a planned gift to PTV or are interested in supporting our work in this way, please contact PTV president Ben Doyle.

Thank you to all our donors, past, present, and future!

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Giving through Art

“We have an opportunity here in Vermont, from people from all walks of life, to come up with solutions so that no one is left behind.”

As a socially conscious artist living in Burlington for more than 35 years, Bonnie Acker has supported many uplifting causes including creative school-food programs and sustainable agriculture. For many years she has generously donated her paintings to PTV’s Silent Auction.

“We have to do our best to keep gathering places vibrant. Libraries and general stores and other community centers are irreplaceable sources of strength. People can visit and share ideas and find hope for the future. PTV’s work is unique, incredibly resourceful, and so uplifting for our entire state. Truly.”

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Family Philanthropy

“My father’s office was crammed full of books of beautiful buildings. They overflowed into the house. Occasionally around the dinner table or playing golf, I would learn about his work. ‘There is this round church in Richmond, an architectural gem. It’s an absolutely gorgeous structure and it is falling into disrepair.’”

Charlie Sincerbeaux’s father, Robert Sincerbeaux, became PTV’s first benefactor, and it was his work with foundations that helped establish the Robert Sincerbeaux Fund, which provides seed grants that have helped hundreds of projects get started on the right preservation path. At home in Woodstock, Charlie currently sits on PTV’s board and is chair of PTV’s Development Committee.

“An observation my father once shared is that Vermont is a small state and because of that it is really easy to get the feeling that what one does matters. I couldn’t agree more, and I feel that things I do for PTV really do make a difference.”
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*With gratitude we recognize all the donors to this multi-year campaign who together contributed more than a million dollars. These gifts are invested to generate funds for grants, awards, and initiatives to support the social, historic, architectural, and economic vitality of Vermont.*

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Reed Cherington
Christ Church of Island Pond
It’s about Relationships

“We are so fortunate to have generations of Vermonters and new Vermonters who appreciate our state and are working together to preserve it. Some say it takes a village. In Vermont we say it takes a community, and PTV has built that sense of community on a statewide basis. Giving to PTV is like supporting family.”

At home in Swanton, Ron and Sandy Kilburn’s professional life centered around Ron’s work as a district court judge and Sandy’s work in the mental health field and with local land trusts. Ron led the Swanton Historical Society to build Swanton’s Transportation Museum — relocating a historic depot, a caboose, and a bridge that otherwise would have been demolished. He and Sandy have attended many retreats at the Grand Isle Lake House and haven’t missed a single statewide Preservation Conference.

“It with folks who have wherewithal, support can be financial contributions, but for me and for Sandy the important thing is the relationships. We cherish the ability to form friendships around preservation that teach us about Vermont.”
Judy Hayward
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Special PTV Projects

These contributors directed their philanthropy toward a specific aspect of our preservation and community-building work.

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Emerging Community Preservation Projects

These contributors directed their gifts to help support the early fundraising needs of emerging community projects.

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Anonymous

Memorial Hall, North Calais
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Judith Van Houten

Champlain Club, Burlington
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Hilary Smith

Elmore Store
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Elisabeth Blackburn
Julie Bomengen
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Debra J. Burnor and Michael A. Smith
Patricia Capra, in memory of Warren Miller and in honor of Kevin Landry
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Alison Stigers
Susan and Bob Titterton
John and Allison Turkowski
Thomas Waldman and Ruben Bejaran
Michel Wepler
Braddon and Jennifer Wilson
Edward and Mary Ann Wilson
Patrick Wood and Rebekah Mandell

* Deceased

We have worked hard to make sure these lists are accurate, yet mistakes happen. If you see an error or omission, please let us know so we can make corrections. Thank you!
**SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL POSITION**
October 2019–September 2020

**ASSETS**
- Cash and money market funds $135,905
- Grants and contributions receivable $167,592
- Other receivables $496
- Program-related investments $2,445,440
- Beneficial interest in charitable remainder trust $125,730
- Investments, at fair market value $7,328,466
- Property and equipment, net of accumulated depreciation $1,395,370
**TOTAL ASSETS** $11,598,999

**LIABILITIES**
- Notes payable and advances from individuals $281,362
- Grants payable $50,000
- Accounts payable and accrued expenses $9,335
- Grants received in advance, refundable $1,225,009
**TOTAL LIABILITIES** $1,565,706

**NET ASSETS**
- Without donor restrictions $6,095,700
- With donor restrictions $3,937,593
**TOTAL NET ASSETS** $10,033,293

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS** $11,598,999

**USES OF FUNDS**

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Connecting the Dots

“I feel really lucky to live in a town where I can walk my kid to school, I can ride my bike to the grocery store, where I can share a lawn mower with my neighbors, and where I can own my own home. This historic compact city is one of the reasons. I would like this to be available to everyone who wants it, knowing that of course we live in a rural state with many wonderful ways to be part of our communities.”

Living in Montpelier, Kate McCarthy has known and supported the work of the Trust for more than a decade. She’s also seen PTV’s impacts in her professional life, through her work statewide on land use, community development, and community investment. “PTV is small and mighty when it comes to knowing what’s happening on the ground, and leveraging its resources and relationships to be effective for the greater good of the whole community. PTV helps others connect the dots.”

Kate loves buildings for their look and feel and what they represent, but for long-term sustainability, the buildings need to have a role that serves people and the community. “PTV gets that and it means a lot to me.”