Community Engagement trips build community through introducing first year students to the greater Vermont and Addison County communities through better understanding the issues that affect our community. Community Engagement trips spend time working with community partners to meet identified needs, discussing larger social issues and participating in hands-on activities.

These trips work hard to address community-identified needs while at the same time providing an engaging volunteer experience for our students, both leaders and participants. However, our trips sometimes contain a sampling of different service opportunities that reflect the current needs of our partner agencies. In 2014, trip leaders can choose from 4 trip categories; Education and Youth Program, Poverty Alleviation, Immigration and Diverse Communities in VT, and Food Security and Access.

**Trips offered in 2013**

*Subjected to change in 2014*

**Education and Youth Programs:**

*Education for Sustainability:* Participants will examine the role of education in developing strong communities. Visit farm to school programs, and tour and work in school gardens, while exploring the local landscape. You will meet with educators, families and students to learn how being mindful of sustainability education will lead to stronger communities economically, environmentally and socially.

*Exploring Education in Rural Communities:* Participants will be immersed in a local elementary school to explore both the school’s values and physical space. You’ll participate in the daily life of the school in session, and engage in service activities within the school. You’ll have the opportunity to reflect on creating enhanced learning spaces in Vermont and on your own educational experiences.

*Working Together to Affect Change:* On this trip you will be introduced to DREAM (Directing through Recreation, Education, Adventure, and Mentoring), a group-based mentoring program that works with children from local affordable housing communities. You’ll be introduced to DREAM’s philosophy and model, and learn how DREAM works to empower local youth to recognize their options and achieve their dreams. You’ll spend time working with youth in the Middlebury DREAM program as well as overnighting at Camp DREAM in Fletcher, Vermont.

*Creating Inclusive Communities for Persons with Disabilities:* Participants will visit communities that work to form mutually supportive environments for persons with and without disabilities. You’ll help promote community building and raise awareness by working, cooking and creating with all members of these inspiring communities.

**Food Security and Access:**

*Hunger and Food Access in Addison County:* Participants will support programs that work to alleviate hunger and provide local, nutritious food to members of the Addison County community. You will do hands-on volunteer work ranging from harvesting vegetables at a local food program to cooking a community meal.

**Immigration and Vermont’s Diverse Communities**

*Immigration and Vermont’s Diverse Communities:* Participants will visit a number of Vermont’s migrant communities and meet with local groups working to assist with settlement of the Burmese, Somali-Bantu, and Latin American populations. You’ll meet with activists, state law enforcement, and US Immigrations and Customs officers to discover the political, social, and legal challenges facing migrant communities in Vermont today.

**Poverty Alleviation**

*Housing Access in Vermont:* Participate in volunteer activities to support affordable housing and homelessness alleviation in Addison County. Participants engage in various activities including a Habitat for Humanity build and projects at a local homeless shelter.
Vermont Explorations trips are designed to introduce participants to various aspects of Vermont’s cultural landscape. VE trips fall into three broad categories: art and entertainment, mind and body, and science and sustainability. Meet local experts in the fields of focus, visit fascinating sites beyond the Middlebury campus. These trips will stay at various locations including the famous Bread Loaf campus, or in other unique settings. There are three categories of Vermont Explorations trips: Art and Entertainment, Science and Sustainability, Mind and Body.

Art and Entertainment:

The Music Scene in Vermont: If you are a musician or serious music enthusiast, this may be the trip for you! The trip will start with a jam session at 51 Main, Middlebury College’s own restaurant and music venue, and then venture into Burlington and other Vermont towns. You’ll meet with people from around the state working with emerging artists and groups. Informal jam sessions are likely, so bring your instrument, including your well-tuned voice.

Vocal Music: Anyone interested in sharing some harmonies should sign up for this trip. Join your peer leaders and new classmates in experimenting with vocal music. You’ll learn some traditional folk songs, practice modern pop songs and visit with faculty, staff and community members interested in practicing one of the oldest instruments in the world, the human voice.

Vermont is for Writers: Middlebury College and Vermont have a long tradition of developing and inspiring writers. This trip will introduce you to local authors, faculty and community members who are important figures in the Vermont writing scene. Along the way, you’ll visit the historic Robert Frost cabin. Time will be provided for you to draft and share pieces in adventure writing, nature writing, and personal narrative.

Studio Tour: This trip will visit and admire the work of local artists. You’ll have the opportunity to visit personal studios, local museums and participate in workshops in drawing and painting. You can even try your hand at ceramics by spending time in the Middlebury Ceramics studio!

Photography: Those passionate about photography look no further! Meet with Vermont photographers who specialize in commercial, architectural, fine art and photojournalism photography. Gain firsthand experience capturing the beautiful scenes of Vermont. Along the way you’ll learn about portraits, long exposure/night photography, landscape, photojournalism and outdoor photography. No previous photography experience necessary, however we highly suggest getting familiar with your camera before you come to campus. This trip does require you to bring a camera, students should have a basic point-and-shoot camera at minimum.

48 Hour Play Write Festival: Collaborate with your peers to write, direct and develop a small performance. You’ll be working with community members, eat with local actors and actresses and ultimately putting on a performance for the local community, all within 48 hours.

Baking in Vermont: Take a closer look at food production in Vermont by exploring multiple bakeries and shops within our community. On this trip you will have the opportunity to meet artisan bakers and try your hand at baking with local ingredients. You’ll have fun traveling the Vermont landscape and learning the art of baking.

Vermont Media Tour: Vermont has a long history of producing radio, newspapers and magazines for its citizens. You will meet with journalist, radio hosts, and authors throughout Vermont. You’ll have the opportunity to explore how the media shapes our communities, and report your own stories using your own creative process.

Mind and Body

Aikido: Join members of the Middlebury Aikido Club to learn the Japanese martial art of Aikido. Practice with students, college staff and local community members. The Middlebury Aikido Club practices with the town of Middlebury’s Blue Heron Dojo. You’ll take a tour of this facility and practice both inside the Dojo and outside at the Bread Loaf campus. No previous Aikido training is necessary.

Capoeira: Join members of Middlebury College’s Capoeira Club to learn this Brazilian martial art guided by the rhythm of drums and other traditional African instruments. It involves acrobatics, and a unique style of fighting and dance combined into a single art form. No previous experience in Capoeira required, just an ability to have fun!

The Metta Earth Institute: Participants will stay at the Metta Earth Institute in Lincoln, VT. Here you will explore contemplative practices, mindfulness awareness, yoga and meditation on the site of an interdependent and cooperative living community. In addition to contemplative practice, days will be filled with working in the gardens, helping with animal chores, cooking community meals and sleeping on tenting platforms.

Yoga: Experience the yoga scene in VT. You will stretch your minds and bodies by meeting and practicing with local yoga instructors, including current Middlebury students! This trip will involve small day hikes to practice on top of some of Vermont’s pristine mountains. You’ll be exposed to new kinds of yoga, and practice some meditation and reflection.

Rhythm and Dance: Participants will investigate the different rhythm and dance communities in Vermont. From contra dancing to African music and dance, students will explore how dancing and music can help develop strong communities. Spend time dancing with peers and meeting community members throughout Addison County who share a similar passion.

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Vermont Explorations

Trips offered in 2013
Subjected to change in 2014

Science and Sustainability: Vermont Farm Tours: We’ve partnered with Vermont Farm Tours (owned by a Midd Alum) to design this trip in which participants will pedal across Addison County, stopping at farms along the way. You’ll visit with local farmers, tour their facilities, and camp on their farms. Van support will help keep your panniers light and ensure you’ll have everything you need to tour Addison County. Bikes will be provided for those without their own.

Alternative Energies: Developing and using alternative energies is not only a focus of the Middlebury College community, but also a crucial cultural aspect of Vermont in general. On this trip you’ll visit with faculty and staff to learn about how Middlebury College aids in developing and employing alternative energies. You’ll meet with local companies developing new wind and solar technologies and take tours of local wind and solar farms.

Sustainable Architecture: This trip will take a closer look at how Vermonters are using renewable resources to design and create functional and aesthetic homes. Participants may visit straw bale homes, yurts, and get their hands dirty on some local builds. Finally, you’ll be introduced to Middlebury’s Solar Decathlon house, Self-Reliance.

Local Ecology: From new growth forests to white-nose bat syndrome, participants will learn about Vermont’s landscapes through the lens of ecology. Meet with faculty, staff and local community members to learn about ecological issues facing the Vermont environment.

The Science of Local Politics: On this trip you’ll learn about Vermont’s unique political scene, rooted in town hall meetings. Meet some of Middlebury’s local representatives and town select board. Beyond that, you’ll visit Vermont’s capitol, Montpelier, and meet with state representatives. As you meet with these community leader’s you’ll have the chance to dive into a discussion of some of the social, economic and political issues facing our community right here in Vermont.

The History and Ecology of Lake Champlain: Lake Champlain has been called the country’s “other Great Lake” and stretches from Whitehall, New York in the south nearly to the Canadian border in the North. It’s waters ultimately join the St. Lawrence River, through which they reach the Atlantic Ocean. The Lake played a critical role in the early history of our nation. Today, recreationalists, commuters, scientists and entrepreneurs all use its waters. Participants on this trip will explore the Lake through visits to the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, the ECHO center (where the ecology and biodiversity of the lake are the focus), and other important sites. They’ll get out on the lake in a canoe or kayak to experience firsthand what makes this Vermont’s very own “great” lake.

Food Systems in Vermont: From animal and vegetable farms to artisan cheese makers and bakers, local food production is an indelible part of Vermont’s physical and cultural landscapes. During this trip you’ll visit local farms, restaurants and food processing companies. You’ll spend your nights camping on local farms. Finally, the trip will spend some time on the College’s own student-run organic farm to learn about the Middlebury College food system.

Wilderness Explorations

Trips offered in 2013
Subjected to change in 2014

Backpacking: Backpacking trips will explore the Long Trail in Vermont or the vast Adirondack Park in New York. We offer three categories of backpacking trips tailored to a range of ability levels:

Worth Trips: Worth Trips average approximately 3–6 miles/day* and are suitable for anyone in reasonable physical condition and interested in giving backpacking a try.

Stark Trips: Stark Trips average approximately 6–10 miles/day* and are best suited to those with some backpacking experience, or new backpackers looking for a bit more challenge.

Abe Trips: Abe Trips average 7–12 miles/day* and are best suited for those in good physical condition and with prior backpacking experience. *These mileage estimates are approximate daily averages and some hikes may be longer or shorter than the listed distances.

Canoeing: Our canoe trips will have you paddling the lakes and rivers in the Adirondacks and Vermont while limiting the weight of your pack!

Day Hiking:
- if you’re not interested in a full-fledged backpacking expedition but are keen for a bit of white water kayaking. The trip leaders are all trained by ACA-certified instructor trainers.
- Intermediate swimming ability is strongly encouraged.

Rock Climbing: The 6 million acre Adirondack Park is positively brimming with beautiful cliffs, where you’ll have fun learning the basics of top-roping climbing. No prior climbing experience is necessary, just a curiosity to see what it’s all about and a desire to learn while working closely with others. Intermediate swimming ability is also strongly encouraged.

White Water Kayaking: This trip is designed to introduce participants to the fundamentals of white water kayaking. The trip leaders are all trained by ACA-certified instructor trainers. Spend your days on the water, and your nights camping debriefing the day’s learning. Intermediate swimming ability is also strongly encouraged.

Sailing: If you’ve ever wanted to learn how to sail, here is your chance. You’ll spend your days learning the basics of sailing with experienced members of Middlebury’s Sailing Team. You’ll participate in a fun-filled race at the end of the weekend to practice your skills. Intermediate swimming ability is also strongly encouraged.

Trail Maintenance: We’re partnering with the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps to offer our trail maintenance trips. Trail maintenance trips hike to backcountry campsites and put in full, rewarding days of trail work, so enthusiasm and physical fitness are important. This is a great way to get out in the woods, learn useful skills, and actively contribute to the maintenance of our local trail networks.

Abe Trips average approximately 7–12 miles/day* and are best suited for those in good physical condition and interested in giving backpacking a try.

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Abe Trips: The 6 million acre Adirondack Park is positively brimming with beautiful cliffs, where you’ll have fun learning the basics of top-roping climbing. No prior climbing experience is necessary, just a curiosity to see what it’s all about and a desire to learn while working closely with others. Intermediate swimming ability is also strongly encouraged.

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Day Hiking:
- If you’re not interested in a full-fledged backpacking expedition but are keen for an amazing day hikes, this is the trip for you. You’ll enjoy full days out in the mountains but camp at one of Vermont’s state parks, with running water and actual bathrooms: A great way to explore Vermont while limiting the weight of your pack!
- Adventure Sampler: Can’t make up your mind among the other trips? This trip will involve a day of hiking, a day of rock climbing, and a day of canoeing. Your evenings will be spent at a campground with easy access to all of these activities.

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