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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEWS from The Shires of Vermont

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SHIRES REGION PROJECTS RECEIVE HERITAGE GRANTS

As testimony to how successful collaborations yield positive results, three Shires region non-profit organizations recently received grants from the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership (CVNHP). \$2,500 went to the Vermont Arts Exchange (VAE), North Bennington, for an Intergenerational Expressive Arts Project Documenting Veteran's Narratives at the Vermont Veterans' Home; \$10,000 was garnered by Burr and Burton Academy (BBA), Manchester, for a Regional Heritage Project; and the town of Manchester received \$2500 for the 2014 Fourth of July Civil War and War of 1812 Commemoration.

Established in 2006, the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership includes 11 counties in New York and Vermont, including Bennington County. This national heritage area is managed by the Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP), which relies on a broad network of regional stakeholder groups (RSG) to provide input on priorities in funding and operations. These RSG are comprised of an assortment of stakeholders representing the various cultural, historical, recreation, tourism and agricultural groups, organizations and businesses in each county. Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership Coordinator, Jim Brangan, "We are so pleased that the organizations and communities in Bennington County have embraced this new heritage area. The Shires play a significant role in the history of Vermont and northwestern New York. The landscape and museums there really convey that history and culture quite well."

The work plans from Vermont Arts Exchange, Burr and Burton Academy and the Town of Manchester each met the criteria for a CVNHP Heritage Grant. These grants are awarded to projects that involve youth and students in the research and interpretation of local heritage and the creation of new artistic expressions of local history and culture through fresh perspectives and new technology. To this end, the VAE will display the work of the Vermont Veteran's Home participants in the Intergenerational Expressive Arts Project in an exhibition at VAE's Sage Street Mill, that also features audio clips resulting from the students partnering with veterans to gather their stories. The film students involved in the Burr and Burton Academy Heritage Project will capture and film their stories of the people and places of the greater Manchester region. Their work will be available at libraries, schools, online, and on GNAT, the local cable station. The Town of Manchester's 2014 Fourth of July Civil War and War of 1812 Commemoration will feature an interpretive presentation that will be captured digitally for preservation and replay throughout the CVNHP region.

When Champlain Valley National Heritage Program Coordinator, Jim Brangan, traveled to a recent meeting of The Shires regional stakeholder group (RSG) to announce the grants, he remarked that, "Working with stakeholder groups enhances networking and collaboration and serves as a conduit for grant applications for regional projects such as the ones just awarded." He also noted that the 2014 grants bring the total awarded to The Shires region to \$25,000 over the past two years.

Non-profits located in The Shires of Vermont region interested in pursuing a grant for 2015 should contact Shires Regional Stakeholder Group Coordinator, Jonah Spivak at info@theshiresofvermont.com or at 802.384.2542. To learn more about Champlain Valley National Heritage Program and grants previously awarded by CVNHP visit www.champlainvalleynhp.org.

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