

First Roots Press Release/Announcement
July 8, 2020



(JERICHO, VT- July 2020) Despite other program closures, Hinesburg program to Open *FIRST ROOTS* Infant/Toddler Center in Jericho.

A highly anticipated full-time, year-round infant and toddler care program, ***First Roots***, will be opening in the Underhill ID (UID) building (10 River Road, Jericho) in the fall of 2020. In the past year, the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District (MMUUSD) has helped nurture the UID building to become a hub of early education in the Underhill-Jericho community. An important piece is to incorporate much needed care for the birth-to-three population into this wonderful educational campus.

The project was assisted by a grant from the “*Make Way For Kids*” funding administered by Let's Grow Kids, a statewide movement to ensure affordable access to high-quality child care for all Vermont families by 2025. The funding will allow ***First Roots*** to create up to 24 spaces for children in a catchment area that traditionally had few available early childhood spaces.

“We are thrilled to collaborate with MMUUSD to bring our ***First Roots*** program to the Underhill-Jericho area. We share a vision for high-quality, ecologically sustainable, and place-based educational programming” said Andrea Sambrook, Owner of the new Program. “Although it's a challenging time to open a program, we have an exceptional team and will have strong health protocols in place.” Sambrook’s other early education programs provided care for essential workers and re-opened in full June 1, and she feels very well prepared about the First Roots opening. “We have been in close contact with The VT Department of Health throughout this time and have developed a slow, steady opening plan that provided us with confidence about the screening and maintaining wellness during the COVID19 closure and recovery period”.

John Alberghini, MMUUSD School Superintendent, and his team have been working on this vision for several years. “At this time especially, we are very excited to announce

this partnership and to use our community spaces to help our youngest learners and their families”, Alberghini noted. “It will be a welcome complement to existing high quality local early learning programs in MMUUSD and a great benefit to families in the area.” he continued.

First Roots will operate under the direction of Dani Edwards, a highly experienced infant/toddler teacher and program administrator. “I’m overjoyed to be a part of this project,” says Dani, a resident of Underhill, “having grown up here and attended the schools in this district I am so proud to now be able to play a part in local education. This is a fabulous place to learn and grow and I couldn’t be happier that we can now offer this opportunity to the youngest citizens of our community.”

The program is targeted to open on September 1. Passionate and skilled educators will round out this team of dedicated early childhood professionals who are eager to foster growth and development in the youngest learners, nurture their own growing edge and create a caring and supportive community of families in Underhill and Jericho. Teachers who are interested in this unique opportunity should contact Dani directly at dani@firstrootsvt.com to find out more.

Families wishing to take a virtual tour should visit www.firstrootsvt.com and navigate to the ‘contact us’ page to schedule a tour or call Dani on 802-482-2525.

Annette’s Preschool is a 5 STAR Program located in Hinesburg Vermont. They are a nature based program and proud to be one of the few EcoCertified early care programs in Vermont.

MMUUSD families wanting to know more about other programs at the Underhill Early Care and Learning center programs should contact Kyle Hibbard at kyle.hibbard@mmuusd.org.