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Top right, Gertrude Mertens reads The Polar Express to four of her great-grandchildren, including Logan (right-hand corner), who became a trustee of the Ottauquechee Health Foundation.

Lower left, Kathleen Moore in her Grit Chair.

30 Years and Counting

Improving the Health and Well-Being of People in Need

On October 8, 1996, the bylaws of the nascent Ottauquechee Health Foundation were approved, beginning a three-decade-long journey with an ambitious mission: "To improve the health and well-being of people in need who live in the towns we serve." The mission statement went on to say this would happen through financial assistance, community partnerships, education opportunities, and support of wellness initiatives.

Since then the numbers of people served, grants given, and programs supported has grown tremendously—millions of dollars helping thousands of people—as the 2025 numbers on giving statistics on the next page attest. But the Ottauquechee Health Foundation is much more than numbers, impressive as they may be. It is people, and the stories their lives tell.

OHF's history actually has its genesis in the 1950's, when Gertrude Mertens, her family, and fellow philanthropists from Woodstock recognized the need to bring high quality medical and other health care services to town. In 1958, this group of visionaries established the Ottauquechee Health Center in the venerable Simmons House, built in 1818 and with an actual jail cell in the basement. Dr. Hugh Hermann became the center's first physician.



Eventually the Health Center built a new modern medical building behind Simmons House and in 1996 affiliated with Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. This allowed the Ottauquechee Health Foundation to be born, with seed money from a generous donation from the estate of Gertrude Mertens. Indeed, Gertrude's legacy of leadership continues today through the many community members and volunteer trustees who have carried this work forward.

Each grant made by the Ottauquechee Health Foundation tells a compelling story of need. Fitting someone for a new pair of eyeglasses or hearing aids. Hiring a homecare professional, enabling a person or couple to live safely at home following an illness or accident. A long-overdue visit to the dentist. A filtration system for a family's contaminated water supply. Each story is important; each grant makes a difference.



Such was the case for Kathleen Moore, a Hartland resident with a rare, degenerative disease called Frederick's Ataxia, a neuromuscular disorder. In May 2025, OHF received a grant request from Kathleen, who has used a wheelchair for the past seven years and was asking for help to purchase a specialized chair that would allow safer travel on off-road terrain like Mount Tom or even the family's dirt road. The Grants Committee of OHF's board of trustees approved this request.

Then in January, this letter arrived from Kathleen, accompanied by a photo.

"Thank you for helping me buy this Grit Chair last summer. Because of it, I have been more active than ever and I can go on hiking trails that I did not think I would ever be able to see. I am currently in training because I am taking this chair on the Camino Santiago in Spain this summer."

The journey set in motion decades ago by Gertrude Mertens and her friends and family now extends far beyond the nine towns we serve—even to mountains across an ocean.

Good Neighbor Grants (GNGs), Homecare Grants & Community Grants

| | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Approved | \$269,082 | \$226,530 | \$278,600 |
| # of Grants | 254 | 243 | 219 |
| # People/Orgs Served | 147 | 144 | 153 |
| Average Grant \$ | \$865 | \$928 | \$1,272 |

Breakdown of 2025 Granting by Program

| | # of Grants | Amount |
|------------------|-------------|------------------|
| GNGs | 190 | \$200,850 |
| Homecare Grants | 22 | \$63,000 |
| Community Grants | 7 | \$14,750 |
| Totals | 219 | \$278,600 |

Preliminary numbers for 2025. The 2024 IRS 990 is available for review.

2025 Good Neighbor and Homecare Grants by the Numbers

| | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Total People Served | Median Age | Median Household Income | New Applicants | % Under 200% of Poverty Level |
| 153 | 72 | \$24,360 | 30% | 87% |

Financial Statement - Investments

| | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | FY 2025 |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total Investments | \$ 4,063,851 | \$ 4,347,425 | \$ 4,754,176 |

As of 12/31/2025

Supporting the Byrne Foundation's Matching Pledge

In 2025, the Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation, a longtime supporter of OHF, announced it was sunsetting its operations and made a final gift in the form of a "matching pledge" of \$200,000. Achieving the Byrne Match will enable OHF to continue to meet both basic individual needs and expand our reach through new community-based programs, including securing permanent funding for our existing Community Care Coordinator, an experienced professional who provides confidential support to families navigating the complex healthcare system. Most importantly, the Byrne Match will provide OHF a runway to secure new annual support from family foundations and other committed donors. Your support now helps ensure local access to care for our neighbors, now and in the years ahead.

Our Supporters

We extend our deepest gratitude to all the donors and supporters who contributed to OHF in 2025.

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 Imants Vitols

In Honor of
 Dr. Lynn Peterson
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The Ottauquechee Health Foundation strives to improve the health and well-being of people in need who live in the towns we serve.

We do this through financial assistance, community partnerships, education opportunities, and support of wellness initiatives.

Our Service Towns: Barnard, Bridgewater, Hartland, Killington, Plymouth, Pomfret, Quechee, Reading, and Woodstock.



Ottawaquechee Health Foundation
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Woodstock, VT 05091

Find us on Facebook and Instagram

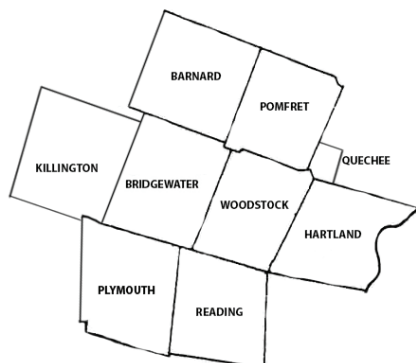
OHF Annual Report FY25

COME CELEBRATE OHF'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 17, 2026

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