

THE ROWLAND foundation

PRESENTS ITS **TWELFTH ANNUAL** STATEWIDE CONFERENCE

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

ROSS GAY

Poet, essayist, and educator Ross Gay is a professor at Indiana University Bloomington and author of *The Book of Delights* and *Inciting Joy*. He is a founding board member of Bloomington Community Orchard, a non-profit, free-fruit-for-all food justice and joy project.

“If we pay close attention, the mycelial threads connecting us, the lustrous web-joy, I mean—is flickering there in wait all the time.”

GROWING COMMUNITY

MAKING SPACE FOR JOY & CREATIVITY IN SCHOOL

OCTOBER 26, 2023 — THE DAVIS CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

The Rowland Foundation invests in Vermont teachers to positively change the culture and climate of schools.

TO REGISTER, VISIT www.therowlandfoundation.org

CONFERENCE

SCHEDULE & WORKSHOPS

8:00	Registration, Coffee & Breakfast	10:30	Break
9:00	Welcoming Remarks Michael Martin, Rowland Foundation Executive Director	10:45	Morning Workshops
	Land Acknowledgement Becky Ebel, 2022 Rowland Fellow	12:00	Lunch
	Keynote Introduction Kerrin McCadden, Vermont Poet & Teacher	12:45	School & District Team Time
9:30	Keynote Address Dr. Ross Gay	1:20	Student Presentation BHS Racial Justice Academy Leaders & Teacher Autumn Bangoura
		1:45	Afternoon Workshops
		3:15	Closing Poetry Reading by Rajnii Eddins

SPECIAL WORKSHOP!

Making Space for Joy and Creativity in School

Ross Gay, *Keynote Speaker*

In this special workshop Dr. Ross Gay will expand on his keynote remarks to offer creative practices to incite joy in the classroom. It will be collaborative, experimental, playful, generous, and, hopefully, generative.

SPECIAL WORKSHOP!

Writing Down the Walls: Exploring Courageous Vulnerability through Creative Self-Expression

Rajnii Eddins, *Father, Poet, Educator, and Facilitator*

In a world fraught with injustice and challenges, how can we as educators encourage students to express themselves in courageous and vulnerable ways that are meaningful and empowering? The purpose of this workshop is to demonstrate how to cultivate a warm, welcoming space, conducive to authentic vulnerable self-expression that can provide students with an outlet and source of creative empowerment. Through writing prompts, exploration of imagination, and wordplay, we will delve into themes of identity, narrative, history, and social justice. Participants will leave with new creative tools to bring into the classroom that are certain to inspire heartfelt, thought-provoking content from students and teachers alike.

Becoming Practitioners of Place: Essential Understandings of the Indigenous Peoples of Vermont

Judy Dow, *Grandmother, Mother, Artist, Educator of French-Canadian and Winooskik Abenaki descent, & Executive Director of Gedakina*; **Aimee Arandia Østensen**, *Filipina-American Educator, Professional Learning Facilitator at Shelburne Farms & Adjunct Instructor at Antioch University New England*

Do you strive to responsibly teach about Indigenous peoples, cultures, and perspectives? Join us to explore the land and shed light on our own mental models as we engage in 2 of the 8 essential understandings of the Indigenous peoples of Vermont. We will use arts-based and interactive practices to spark wonder and delight while we interrogate and deepen our relationships to land. These practices can be adapted for use with learners of all ages. Our accompanying Essential Understandings publication is rooted in multi-generational ecological knowledge and was created in partnership with Vermont teachers as a resource that goes beyond the standards in social studies, ethnic studies, and social equity.

CRAFT-ing Community: A framework for elevating hope and joy through hands-on, place-based learning

Kat Robbins, *Woodstock Union Middle/High School Place-Based Educator & 2021 Rowland Fellow*; **Janis Boulbol**, *Woodstock Union Middle/High School Agricultural Innovation Teacher & 2021 Rowland Fellow*

The average high school student visits 8 disparate classes within the course of day, largely sitting, listening, and working on devices. What's more, it has been reported that 3 out of 4 students are frightened by the future. At Woodstock Union High School, we have implemented a pathway of courses and experiences, called CRAFT (Community and Climate Resilience through Agriculture, Forestry, and Technology), meant to be an antidote to the industrial model of school. In this workshop, we will use the process of growing and eating microgreens together to explore the tenets, systems, and values of CRAFT that have allowed us to cultivate a community of students and teachers who feel invested in their learning and their future. Participants will leave with a model for how to create an integrated approach of systems-thinking, sustainability, service-learning, and stewardship while having fun and breaking bread together.

Creative Constraints: Moving Beyond the Five-Paragraph Essay

Kerrin McCadden, Poet & English Teacher at the Essex Center for Technology

Writing is a joy. Writing according to formulas and receiving evaluative grades is antithetical to joy. Now that AI can churn out a perfect five-paragraph essay in seconds, now that expository writing can be done by a machine, it's time to conceptually reinvent the writing assignment. What else is possible? What opportunities can we create for students to exercise their imaginations and lose themselves in the joy of self-expression? Can we combine subject-area learning with self-expression? Considering the idea of enabling constraints, we will experience with our imaginations and consider new modalities for student self-expression.

Dare To Be Me: Turning Traditional School Upside-Down

Anja Pfeffer, Hazen Union High School Dare To Be Me Teacher & 2021 Rowland Fellow;

Solomon Lew, Hazen Union High School Paraprofessional & Dare To Be Me Assistant

How do we design learning environments that instill joy, awe, curiosity, a sense of belonging, and courage while nurturing students' full potential? Dare To Be Me (DTBM) offers an approach to education that attempts to synthesize all of these aspects and aims to create a collaborative school culture of aliveness, healing, and thriving. Workshop participants will engage in a variety of DTBM activities that build community and promote physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing. We will reflect on these activities and discuss how they can be adapted to meet the needs of all students. As a result, participants will walk away with a new perspective on what education can look, feel and sound like when it is centered around the whole heart, body and mind system.



Digital Wellness: Developing a Healthy Relationship with Technology

The Rowland Foundation's 2022 Encore Grant Team—**Anne Bergeron**, Yoga Teacher, Massage Therapist, Writer & 2011 Rowland Fellow; **Carrie Felice**, Peoples Academy High School Counselor & 2013 Rowland Fellow; **Sarah Ibson**, 7th and 8th Grade Social Studies Teacher at Harwood Union Middle School & 2013 Rowland Fellow; **Lissa Knauss**, Montpelier High School Counselor & 2018 Rowland Fellow

Who is in control of your tech use—you or your phone? As educators we have all witnessed how phones and tech have changed our lives, our school communities, and even our students themselves. Tech has simultaneously offered many gifts and created many challenges. In this workshop, we will share our learning about the required paradigm shift in talking with students about their tech use. Using a non-judgemental approach structured around four filters (Healthy, Mindful, Constructive and Kind), we will consider how to build awareness and promote healthier habits around technology. Participants will get a chance to practice interactive activities and will leave with resources to bring back to their schools.

Education Unplugged: Powering Learning with Interpersonal Play

Robin Fawcett, Director & Theatre Arts Teacher at CVU High School

If screen time disrupts sleep, spurs depression, fractures attention, breeds sensory overload, desensitizes the brain's reward system, depletes mental reserves, reduces physical activity, and atrophies social skills...what's the fix? Unplug and play! This workshop will explore the vitalizing power of creative collaboration using the tools of improvisation. Offline, in-person, face-to-face, participants will experience how intentional play reconnects us to a current that more fully charges our batteries, reconstitutes well-being, teaches valuable life lessons, and ignites learning potential. This workshop will provide a scaffold of exercises that can be used in school and beyond to achieve

the above, while dissolving barriers, building community, and reminding us of the truth in poet Diane Ackerman's statement: "Play is our brain's favorite way of learning."

Infusing Joy & Play to Deepen Student Learning

Emily Gilmore, Great Schools Partnership Senior Associate & 2017 Rowland Fellow; **Katie Thompson**, Great Schools Partnership Associate Director of Learning & Strategy

How do educators promote a sense of wonder and playfulness in secondary school students? You don't have to choose between joy and rigor! Grappling, exploring, and playing with complex ideas and problems is foundational to joyful learning experiences

and leads to improved student outcomes. Presenters will share research highlighting the connection between student engagement and deep learning. Participants will take part in learning activities to experience the power of fun and play to deepen student learning and engagement. Participants will leave with activities and instructional strategies that deliberately foster a sense of joy, wonder, and higher order thinking in the classroom.

Learning to Choose & Letting Go: Approaches to creating learner agency and self-determination

Abbie Bowker, Art Teacher, 2017 Rowland Fellow, & 2023 Vermont Teacher of the Year Finalist; **Lisa Bressler**, Vermont Agency of Education Arts Specialist

Engagement is at the heart of learning. Learner agency is at the heart of engagement. By creating learning environments that provide choices to students, educators can support and employ the emotional brain, develop situational and intrinsic motivation, and empower student self-determination. Participants in this workshop will learn why choice builds engagement, what the three main types of choice are, and how to recognize where any particular lesson would fall on the continuum of choice. Teachers will learn how to scaffold choice into the curriculum and receive guidance on ways to include choice in an existing unit of study. School and district administrators will consider how their systems and structures can be modified to support and enhance student learning and faculty professional development through choice.

THE ROWLAND FOUNDATION IS JOYFULLY COMMITTED TO PROVIDING EQUAL ACCESS TO ALL ATTENDEES AT THE ANNUAL ROWLAND CONFERENCE.

Accommodations available upon request include: accessible parking, ASL interpretation, assisted listening devices, special seating, assistance navigating campus or our lunch buffet, and dietary and other allergy accommodations. UVM facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Please visit our website, www.therowlandfoundation.org for more information.

Queer Here, Queer There, Queer Joy Belongs Everywhere!

Delanté Keys (*they/he*), *Outright Vermont's Education Manager*; **Jay Covert** (*they/them*), *Outright Vermont's GSA Network Coordinator*; *Outright Vermont Youth Organizers* LGBTQ+ young people are currently experiencing extreme antagonism in their homes, schools, and communities — yes, even here in Vermont! As community leaders, educators, and agents for change, you can leverage your positional authority to disrupt and prevent harm, and develop spaces where LGBTQ+ young people can be valued and experience joy. Workshop participants will deepen their understanding of the effects of stress on queer and trans youth navigating hostile environments everyday through visual and audio engagement; utilize embodied practices to report on how building space for queer joy and power shows up in their spheres of influence; use storytelling to reflect on experiences of “otherness”; and build an action plan to support the autonomy, authenticity, and joyful expression of LGBTQ+ youth in their professional practice.

Serious Belonging: Advisory Systems that Sustain School Community

Elijah Hawkes, *Upper Valley Educator Institute's Director of School Leadership Programs & author of School for the Age of Upheaval: Classrooms that Get Personal, Get Political, and Get to Work (2020) and Woke is Not Enough: School Reform for Leaders with Justice in Mind (2022)*

School reform advocates Pedro Noguera, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Diane Friedland describe Advisory as “a structure to facilitate deep and lasting relationships” and “the heart [of a] wrap-around support system that enables all students to succeed.” Many educators agree, but the question is, how? In this workshop, participants will explore key elements of a strong middle/high school Advisory system that supports serious work and deep relationships, as well as creativity and joy. (Hint: A strong Advisory system has a lot to do with routines and tasks and little to do with “Advisory curriculum”.)

Storytelling with Students: Fostering Kinship and Interdependence with an Ethnic Studies Approach

Amanda Lucia Garces, *Director of Policy, Education & Outreach for the Vermont Human Rights Commission*; **Diego Soria**, *Senior at Montpelier High School*; **Shakeh Hagopian**, *Junior at Champlain Valley Union High School*

Many Vermont educators recognize the urgent need to elevate the voices and experiences of Vermont's Black people, Indigenous (including the Abenaki) people, and other people of color, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ people in school. The central focus of the new Vermont Ethnic Studies Standards Framework is transformative solidarity. Transformative solidarity is the conceptual and ethical foundation of an educational system where students, school staff, families, and local communities celebrate each other's histories, cultures, and ways of knowing, especially of groups that have been historically and contemporarily marginalized or silenced. Transformative solidarity is about fostering kinship and interdependence for collective liberation. Storytelling is one way for schools to make space for the voices and lived experiences of all students. Participants will experience storytelling in this workshop and leave with new strategies for fostering inclusion in their classroom so that students see themselves represented in a curriculum infused with hope, empathy, love, and joy.

Consider Applying for a Rowland Fellowship!

Each year the Rowland Foundation awards up to six Rowland Fellowships to Vermont middle grades and secondary school teachers. Since some teachers apply with a partner to share a fellowship, the number of Rowland Fellows selected from qualified applicants for each cohort varies from year to year.

The Rowland Foundation's mission is to invest in Vermont teachers to positively change the culture & climate of schools. We welcome applications from classroom teachers of all disciplines, school counselors, special educators—all Vermont teachers who work directly with students in the middle or secondary grades are eligible to apply. Educators who work on an administrator contract are not eligible. Instructional coaches, coordinators, program directors, and other educators who may work on a teacher's contract but do not work directly with students on a daily basis are not eligible.

The Rowland Foundation seeks applicants who are innovative, collaborative, willing to lead, and committed to making a difference for students.

The Rowland Foundation seeks candidates who demonstrate:

- a capacity for shared leadership and innovation
- a commitment to supporting meaningful and lasting change in their school
- a willingness to take risks and adapt to emerging challenges
- the ability to work collaboratively and develop key partnerships with others
- a sincere commitment to their school, their chosen discipline and their students
- a deep curiosity and ongoing enthusiasm for professional learning
- the strong desire to improve the culture and climate of their respective schools.

The Rowland Foundation seeks proposals which are:

- focused on systemic change to improve their school's culture and climate
- innovative and schoolwide (i.e., benefit many students)
- sustainable after the Rowland Foundation completes its funding
- exportable to other schools. The Rowland Foundation is keenly interested in affecting change throughout Vermont.
- supported enthusiastically by the principal or head of school.

“This experience has changed my life for the better in every way!”

-Kathy Cadwell, 2016 Fellow,
Harwood Union Middle & High School

**ROWLAND FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION
DEADLINE: DECEMBER 31, 2023**