



- Conflict is always a result of poor interpersonal skills
- Conflict can be avoided
- Conflict always has a solution
- Conflict can be a learning opportunity
- Conflict is always a choice

J. Warren and Lois McClure Foundation

When Cecil went to prison, his prospects seemed bleak until he was given the opportunity to pursue one of his childhood dreams.

“As a kid, I always envisioned going to college, but I never thought that I would have the chance to attend until I was introduced to CCV while incarcerated,” says Cecil. In 2018, the Community Foundation and six of its donor advisors joined the McClure Foundation’s lead to fund the Community College of Vermont’s (CCV) ReSET VT program.

Inmates at Northern State Correctional Facility in Newport can take free college courses, and the early outcomes have been impressive. Every student in the first cohort completed the initial courses offered, and continued their studies with declared majors.

Cecil was recently released from prison, and he credits the CCV classes with helping him to repair relationships, especially with his oldest daughter who also is a college student. “It has given us a connection that I thought would take so much longer to accomplish,” says Cecil. “We sit down and talk for hours about just school and the same classes that we have taken. My mother is so proud that I have used my time while incarcerated to change my life and do the right thing.”

Despite logistical and technological challenges, including limited access to the internet and computers to type papers, plus the requirement that all coursework be vetted by the Department of Corrections, ReSET instructor Heather Weinstein (pictured) says students have thrived.

“For the first time in my 20-plus years of teaching, every single student did the required reading and submitted every single assignment,” says Heather. “This experience has transformed the way the inmates—now students—think about the world and, most importantly, it’s changed the way they think about themselves.”

ReSET VT is one of over a dozen programs and system-level efforts funded by the McClure Foundation in 2018 that make college and career-training pathways more accessible, more visible, and more affordable for youth and adults in every county in Vermont.

Photo courtesy of Jade Premont

The McClure Foundation is promoting access to postsecondary and career education.