

Summer of Solutions Pioneer Valley 2011



SUMMER OF
SOLUTIONS
PIONEER VALLEY

Summer of Solutions Pioneer Valley (PVSoS) is a program in youth leadership and sustainable community development that equips participants to address social economic and environmental issues in their communities and creates tangible outcomes for the local community.

In an age of austerity youth are learning they have to create their own solutions and build sustainable, just livelihoods. Lead by youth for youth, Summer of Solutions takes into account both local needs and assets in its development of long-term projects.

Summer of Solutions Pioneer Valley has completed its first summer taking on these questions in the town of Turners Falls in Massachusetts. Drawing participants from around the area, ages 18 to 25, the program looked at the unique challenges of post-industrial rural towns and started to craft a vision for the future.

Working in close coordination with local organizations and individuals the programs pursued four main projects in 2011:

- **Free community education:** Partnering with the Brick House Community Resource Center in Turners, SoS PV and other community members organized and ran a Summer Workshop Series that was open and free of charge, to community members of all ages. Participants helped develop the program structure and helped to facilitate courses, including comparative religions, book making, wild edibles, stone wall masonry, gardening for children and many more.–
- **Sustainable agriculture:** A cornerstone of PVSoS this summer was collaboration with a small local organic farm in Greenfield, Harvest Moon Farm, to grow our own produce and assist in planting, maintenance, harvest and marketing. SoS PV also made a Snack Garden at the Brick House and engaged local youth in its maintenance.
- **Energy efficiency:** Participants received professional training in air sealing and weatherization from Co-op Power, a Greenfield-based energy efficiency and renewable energy cooperative and weatherized two local buildings. Additionally SoS PV researched energy efficiency for renters in Franklin County, and began distribute of their factsheet on this sorely over-looked subject.
- **Bicycle access:** Participants developed skills to maintain their own bicycles, and fix bicycles that have been abandoned. A half dozen bikes have been repaired for community use and the creation of a local bike share program is in beginning stages.



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