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Young Newcomers Connect through Farming Adventures**

BURLINGTON, VT. – The Sara Holbrook Community Center announces a special collaboration this summer with Shelburne Farms. Refugee and immigrant children attending the Center’s *New Arrivals* program will explore all aspects of farm life at Shelburne Farms from July 18th to July 22th. This added enrichment activity to the *New Arrivals* program is made possible by a three-year grant awarded by the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust.

For 16 years, the Sara Holbrook Community Center has offered *New Arrivals*, an educational program for immigrant and refugee children with limited English proficiency. The program’s goal is to prevent the summer slip by providing English language instruction to children when public schools are closed. This summer, 60 children are enrolled in *New Arrivals*, representing 14 countries and 16 different languages. Nearly 50 percent of the children speak Maay-Maay, the language of the Somali Bantu.

Incorporating Shelburne Farms into the curriculum creates a dynamic classroom for the children, preschool through second grade; children will witness their classroom lessons first-hand. Furthermore, farming is international, establishing a common ground for dialogue and learning for the newcomers.

“Shelburne Farms is honored to be part of the New Arrivals project. Part of our mission is to help every one connect to where their food and fiber originate,” states Linda Wellings, Director of School Programs at Shelburne Farms. “These children will be learning first hand where their milk--both cow and goat--, wool fibers, and eggs begin. We feel that children connecting with farm animals, their care and products, has international appeal and helps break down language and other barriers.”

The Sara Holbrook Community Center was established nearly 70 years ago by Sara Holbrook, a clinical psychologist at the University of Vermont. Since its inception, the Center has been providing support and programs for low-income children and their families. Annually, 5,000 individuals, including refugees and immigrants, take part in the Center’s programs: preschool, after-school care, teen activities, English classes for adults and children, summer camps, and basic needs assistance. The Center is located at 66 North Avenue in the Old North End of Burlington.

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