

SLINGSHOT



AUGUST 2023—JULY 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



HELLO COMMUNITY LEADERS, SUPPORTERS, & PARTNERS ACROSS THE NORTHEAST!



THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE ACTION



Two years ago, Slingshot was just an idea. But with an enduring belief in the power of local community organizing and a hope that passionate people would dream with us, we've brought that idea to life.

This past year, the power of collective action led to huge wins for our environment and our health. We helped win retirement dates for four of the region's dirtiest power plants as we move towards a just, accountable, and renewable energy system. We made gains in stopping the expansion of the trash industry in the region. Alongside communities contaminated by forever-chemicals, we won the first new national drinking water protections in more than two decades, a victory that will protect the health of more than 100 million people.

Slingshot now has **seven full-time staff** who organize with community leaders across the Northeast, going toe-to-toe against the dirtiest polluters on the planet.

None of this would have been possible without you.

And yet, we know there is more work to be done. Corporate greed drives polluters to maintain a system that is designed to exclude and ignore residents' voices—**sacrificing our health for their profits.**

With your support, we're fighting for a world where we can live, work, and play in communities that are safe, healthy, and sustainable. We're building a future where every community can tap into their power and make their voices heard.

As we reflect on Slingshot's second year, we're excited to share stories of our powerful community organizing from across the region. Thank you for being a part of this movement.

In solidarity,

MIREILLE BEJJANI
Co-Executive Director
she/they



DANA COLIHAN
Co-Executive Director
she/her

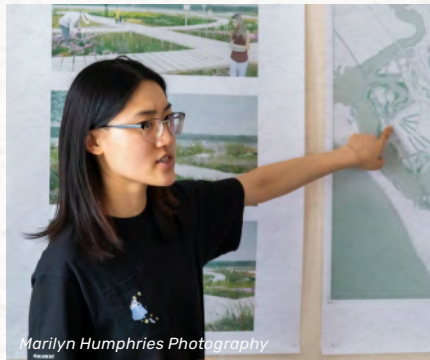


BUILDING A COMMUNITY-CENTERED ORGANIZATION

At Slingshot, we know **environmental justice takes persistence**—years of organizing, honing our strategies, and building a powerful people’s movement.



Marilyn Humphries Photography



Marilyn Humphries Photography

That’s why we are **investing in expanding our team of skilled community organizers**, allowing us to deepen and extend our support for the communities most profoundly impacted across the region.

We follow the lead of frontline communities who know first-hand the harsh realities of polluting power plants, PFAS-contaminated drinking water, and toxic waste infrastructure. By forging deep connections among grassroots groups facing similar threats across the Northeast, we are building **a bold regional movement** that organizes toward a future where renewable energy is just and widespread, zero waste is a universal practice, and safe, PFAS-free drinking water is a fundamental right!

OUR YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

13

victories!

59

communities supported

41

community organizing workshops

185

leadership coaching sessions

41

actions with groups

21

calls to our support hotline

SETTING THE STAGE FOR SOLUTIONS

We're not just rejecting dirty energy, poisoned drinking water, leaking landfills, and dangerous toxins. We're **forging powerful connections among communities**—building united movements for lasting change.



A HISTORIC VICTORY FOR CLEAN WATER

Imagine learning that the water you and your family have been drinking for years is laced with **cancer-causing “forever chemicals” called PFAS**. This is the harsh reality for countless communities across the country.

But leaders like **Ayesha Khan, Lawrence and Penny Higgins, Andrea Amico, Laurene Allen**, and others around the country are refusing to be victims of this toxic injustice. The **National PFAS Contamination Coalition** is organizing for a PFAS-free future.

With leadership from more than **40 communities in 23 states**, the coalition envisions a world where no one is exposed to PFAS, where there is justice for victims of exposure, and where strong laws and safeguards prevent such devastating contamination from ever happening again.

We are honored to co-facilitate the coalition, fighting alongside these powerful leaders for clean water and accountability.

After nearly a decade of unrelenting pressure, we celebrated a historic victory this spring when **we won a strong national, enforceable drinking water standard for six PFAS chemicals**. Public drinking water systems will now have to test and treat these chemicals—**protecting 100 million people from PFAS exposure.**

We know the fight is far from over. We continue to push to regulate all of the thousands of PFAS chemicals, to turn off the tap of contamination, and to ensure that polluters pay for the damage they have caused.

Together, we'll keep fighting until every community has access to clean, safe drinking water.



FACILITATING MEETINGS & TRAINING WORKSHOPS



PAIRING COMMUNITY GROUPS WITH LEGAL, SCIENTIFIC, & PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERTS



TRAINING & DEVELOPING GRASSROOTS LEADERS



CO-ORGANIZING ACTIONS & EVENTS



CONNECTING COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE REGION

SLINGSHOT ORGANIZING TOOLBOX



BUILDING THE ZERO-WASTE MOVEMENT

We dream of a future where our communities are no longer burdened by the toxic legacy of waste. A future where the very concept of waste is transformed, and where resources are valued, preserved, and regenerated.

Alongside long-time community leaders who've spent decades living in the shadow of incineration and landfill pollution, we've been convening **"Trash Talks"—a space to strategize and organize for zero waste solutions.** By deepening relationships among community groups, sharing knowledge, and taking collective action, we are building a movement that will put an end to the burning and burying of trash in vulnerable communities.

This vision is already taking root, thanks to the efforts of groups like the **New Hampshire Network.** Through their

innovative **Ten Towns Toolkit**, they are empowering municipalities to lead the way on zero waste by eliminating single-use plastics, implementing reuse and repair programs, and recovering or composting food waste. By building support at the local level, visionary leaders like **Cindy Heath, Cynthia Walter,** and **Patsy Beffa-Negrini** are creating a groundswell of change that is putting pressure on state leaders to pass bills that reduce the amount of waste we produce in the first place.

Together, we are creating a future where every community can thrive, free from pollution from landfills and incinerators, and where **the very concept of trash is replaced by a 21st century zero waste economy** based on reuse, repair, and regeneration of materials.



FLIPPING THE SWITCH TO A JUST ENERGY SYSTEM



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For years, community leaders have been fighting for a more sustainable, affordable, and reliable energy system through our **Fix the Grid Campaign.** Our efforts led to more progress in 2024, with state and federal leaders leveraging their platforms to advocate for climate justice and a just transition to a 100% renewable energy future.

Senators **Ed Markey, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren,** and **Sheldon Whitehouse** used our campaign demands as a foundation for a letter they sent to our region's grid operator, **ISO-New England,** calling for **transparency, accountability and a commitment to renewable energy.** Senator Markey then introduced a bill in Congress outlining many of the same reform priorities.

At the state level, we deepened our relationships with leaders whose work is closely tied to our energy system, encouraging them to be champions for this overdue transition.

We also invested in strengthening our base, hosting our first ever in-person **Fix the Grid Community Summit** in Southern New Hampshire at the end of March. Almost **50 local leaders** from communities in the shadow of our region's fossil fuel industry braved a snowstorm to come together, learn about the power players in the grid landscape, dig in on what energy democracy looks like, and map out next steps for the grid we need.

We're excited to build on this momentum and keep up the pressure on ISO-New England.



Marilyn Humphries Photography



COMMUNITY ORGANIZING HIGHLIGHTS

At Slingshot, we tackle environmental health threats by taking aim at polluters and **building community power**.

Through workshops on campaign strategy, messaging, fundraising, and more, **we equip local leaders with essential grassroots organizing tools**, enabling them to spearhead local and regional movements for change. From day one, we work alongside residents, facilitating meetings, coordinating actions, and extending local change-making capacity. Together, we are **building and connecting a network of leaders** to secure victories at the local, state, regional, and national levels. Thanks to your support, we've continued to assist over **50 community groups** and have expanded our support to **seven additional communities** this year.

-  ENERGY
-  WASTE
-  WATER
-  TOXICS



COVENTRY, VT


After Casella spilled thousands of gallons of toxic leachate or “garbage juice,” **Don’t Undermine Memphremagog’s Purity** demanded that the Agency of Natural Resources intervene to protect the lake from these dangerous leaks. The state responded by putting a pause on the unpermitted leachate processing operations, and the group now continues to fight for a landfill closure and a more equitable waste management system.





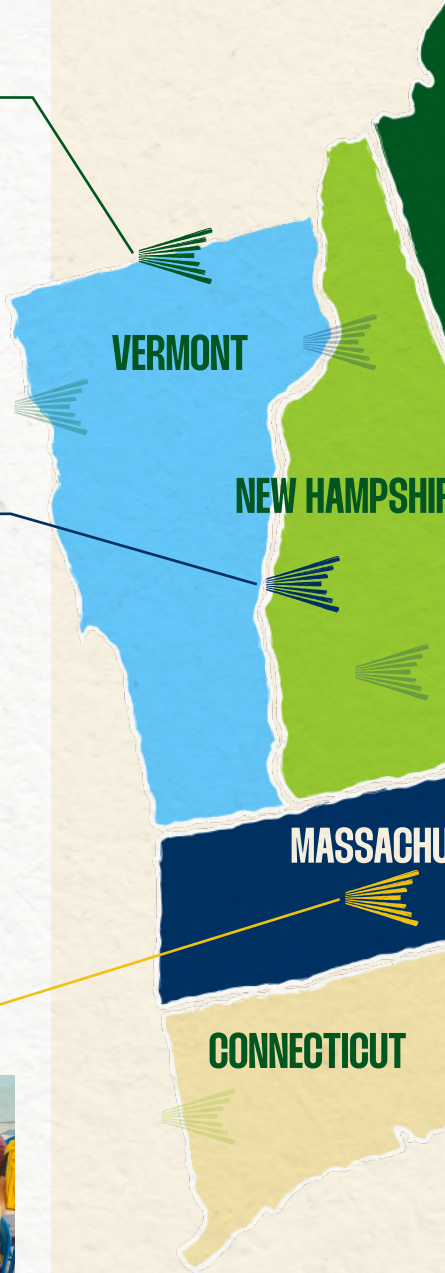
CLAREMONT, NH

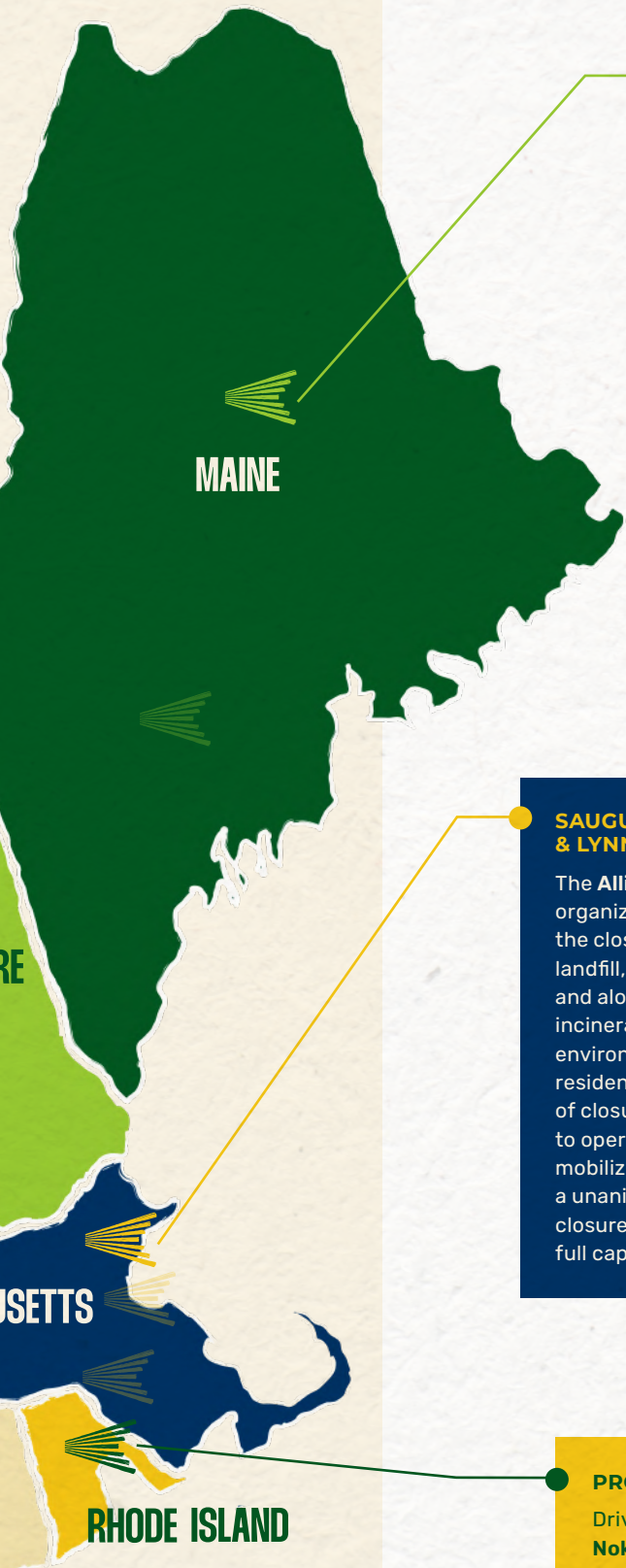
Members of **A Better Claremont** organized resistance to a toxic waste transfer station proposal, securing widespread support from small business owners, elected officials, and the city zoning board. We’re supporting the group in calling on the Department of Environmental Services to hear residents’ demands, respect local land-use regulation, and uphold the City’s denial of the proposal to site yet another massive waste facility in town.



HARDWICK, MA

In 2006, residents in the small town of Hardwick, MA won a years-long fight to close a leaking mega-landfill located above their town drinking water aquifer. But in 2023, huge waste corporation Casella moved to reopen the retired site and quadruple the size of the landfill. We organized with **Hardwick Villages for Responsible Growth** to win a unanimous negative vote from the town’s Planning Board, and the community is continuing to fight to shut the door on the landfill for good.





PENOBSCOT COUNTY, ME

Canadian mining company Wolfden attempted to build an open-pit zinc mine near Pickett Mountain in the Katahdin region, sacred to Wabanaki Nations. We stood in solidarity with the **Penobscot Nation** and **Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians**, and with leaders from **Don't Waste ME**, **Citizens Against Residential Mining Activity**, **Community Water Justice**, **Sunlight Media Collective**, **Conservation Law Foundation**, **Natural Resources Council of Maine** and the environmental community to oppose the project. After a series of powerful rallies, hearings, and testimony delivered to Maine's planning commission, the proposal was rejected!



SAUGUS, REVERE, & LYNN, MA

The **Alliance for Health and the Environment** organized a mock "retirement party" to urge the closure of the WIN Waste unlined ash landfill, which is located in Rumney Marsh, and along with the neighboring trash incinerator, has threatened public health, environment and quality of life for nearby residents since the 1950s. Despite promises of closure since 1996, the landfill continues to operate. We helped community leaders mobilize local town meeting members for a unanimous vote in favor of establishing a closure committee as the landfill approaches full capacity.



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PROVIDENCE, RI

Driven by leaders like **Rochelle Lee** and **Bella Noka**, **Native Green** is tackling a dangerous scrapyards in the historic Providence Port. Not only are they working with Slingshot to shut down the Allen Avenue project, but the group is also seeding solutions through their community gardening, neighborhood greenery, and youth education programs.





WHITEFIELD, NH

North Country Alliance for Balanced Change and allies continued their multi-year campaign to halt a proposed landfill in the Ammonoosuc River watershed and right next to Forest Lake State Park. In addition to pushing for legislation that would pause permitting for new landfills until 2028, giving the state time to update their outdated regulations, they are urging both state and federal agencies to reject the polluter's revised permit applications.



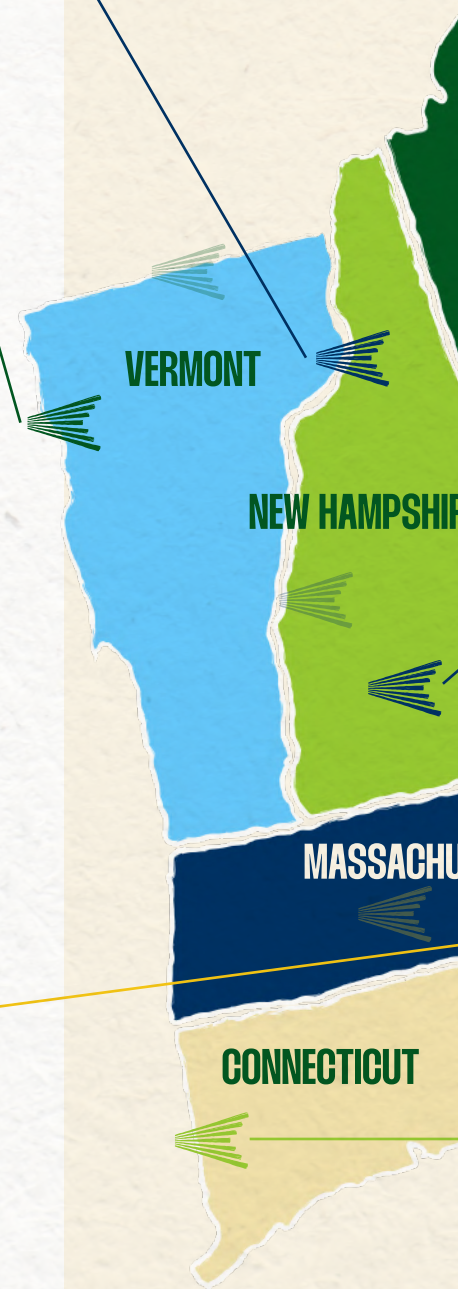
BURLINGTON & WINOOSKI, VT

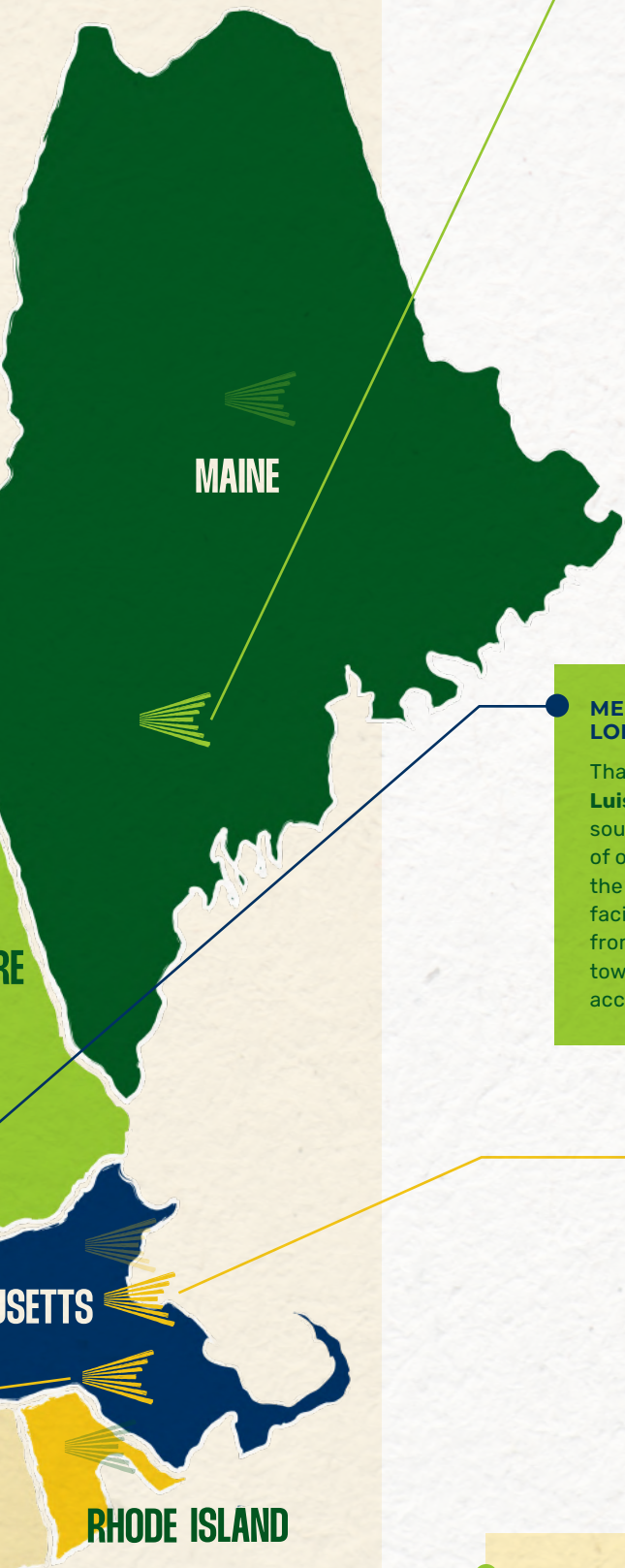
We are working with local leaders to phase out the McNeill biomass incinerator in Burlington's Old North End. Recognizing that large-scale wood burning releases harmful pollutants associated with respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, the group opposes the facility's expansion and demands a shift to truly clean, safe energy. Through campaign strategy workshops and individual coaching sessions, Slingshot is supporting leaders' abilities to build a different energy future for Burlington.



TAUNTON, MA

Residents living near the town's cement plant formed **Weir Concrete Dustbusters** to raise concerns about dust, noise, idling, diesel traffic, and lack of buffers. The Dustbusters are calling for compliance and improvement to ensure the plant is held accountable for its pollution. Through workshops and coaching sessions, we've supported the community group in honing their message and tactics as residents organize for a healthy community and environment in Taunton.





AUGUSTA, ME

Leaders with **Don't Waste ME** introduced and passed a bill to protect the state from the threat of so-called "advanced chemical recycling"—a needlessly complicated, toxic, and expensive way to burn plastics. Around the country, the fossil fuel and chemical industries are attempting to exclude these chemical processing facilities from safeguards that protect public health and the environment. The legislation clearly defines advanced chemical recycling and clarifies that these facilities are subject to the same health and environmental safeguards as other trash facilities in Maine.



MERRIMACK & LONDONDERRY, NH

Thanks to tireless organizing by leaders including **Luisa Piette, Ray Breslin, and Laurene Allen**, southern New Hampshire celebrated the closure of one of the region's worst PFAS polluters, the Saint-Gobain chemical manufacturing facility. Now we're organizing with residents from Londonderry, Merrimack, and neighboring towns to get clean water and hold the company accountable for its pollution.



BOSTON, MA

The Medical Area Total Energy Plant is an oil- and fracked gas-fired power plant in the densely populated Longwood neighborhood of Boston that provides power to a large complex of hospitals and medical schools. As one of the dirtiest peaker plants in the state, it's among the top priorities for our **MA Clean Peak Coalition** to transition to clean, renewable energy. We're partnering with a group of medical professionals, students, and local residents to chart the best path forward and bring the owners to the table to discuss a just transition to clean energy.



NEW MILFORD, CT

After residents in New Milford, CT discovered PFAS contamination linked to a local Kimberly Clark paper and plastics manufacturing plant, they formed the **New Milford Clean Water Coalition**. Slingshot is supporting residents as they build the community group to demand clean drinking water and cleanup. Together, we're pushing for accountability and a safer future for New Milford residents.

FEATURED COMMUNITY LEADERS



NAIA TENEROWICZ Springfield, Massachusetts

Just like her neighbors, Naia Tenerowicz is tired of Springfield, MA being targeted over and over again for polluting projects. But that doesn't stop her from organizing day in and day out to protect her community. After **successfully fighting off a proposed biomass plant**, she and the rest of the **Springfield Climate Justice Coalition** have immediately turned their attention to a proposed fracked gas pipeline that would run right through an environmental justice neighborhood. Naia doesn't pull any punches, whether she's testifying before the state legislature or speaking at a rally. **She powerfully shares her story and demands the cleaner, healthier future Springfield more than deserves.**

SANDY WYNN STELT Belmont, Michigan

A year after abruptly losing her husband Joel to liver cancer, Sandy Wynn Stelt discovered that the idyllic Christmas tree farm across from their home had been a dump site for the shoe company Wolverine Worldwide. **She and Joel had been drinking water severely contaminated with PFAS for over two decades.** Relentlessly, Sandy raised a ruckus in her community, state, and in DC, pushing for drinking water standards, health studies, and regulation. **She co-facilitates the National PFAS Contamination Coalition**, fighting to prevent others from experiencing the same heartbreak. Her fierce organizing helped lead to the **first national drinking water standard for PFAS** that came into effect this year.



JODY MENDOZA & RICHIE PEÑA Winchendon, Massachusetts

In 2022, Jody Mendoza and Richy Peña left behind successful businesses in Boston to start an organic farm in Winchendon, Massachusetts and **provide healthy produce for people in food deserts.** When they learned that a "closed" landfill nearby was starting to take **over 900,000 tons of contaminated soil**, Jody and Richy organized their neighbors to stop the contamination, hold the company accountable, and make sure the local and state government protect residents.



DON WHITE Bucksport, Maine

When former Bucksport selectman Don White discovered that the waste management company American Iron & Metal was **proposing to reopen a landfill at the town's closed paper mill**, he sprung into action. Don connected with other community members, **forming a group who effectively engaged the community, media, and local legislators** to oppose the proposal. They celebrated when the Department of Environmental Protection ordered the permanent closure of the landfill, water quality tests, and replacement of the landfill's damaged cover. The group continues to watchdog the situation and push for zero waste solutions. In Don's words, **"We need the industry to do different things instead of throwing stuff in the ground, calling it good, and leaving it for generations."**





ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

We are sincerely grateful to the following organizations for their financial support during our 2024 fiscal year:

- Anonymous
- Barr Foundation
- Elmina B. Sewall Foundation
- Energy Foundation
- Family 140 Fund
- The Fracking Fund of the New World Foundation
- The Grassroots Fund
- The Harris and Frances Block Foundation
- The Herman and Frieda L. Miller Foundation
- Island Foundation, Inc.
- The JPB Foundation
- Lawson Valentine Foundation
- New England Biolabs Foundation
- New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
- Onion Foundation
- Rights & Democracy Education Fund
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

GRASSROOTS SUPPORT

We'd like to thank the donors who contributed an exceptional gift to support Slingshot's work organizing alongside frontline communities, including anonymous donors:

CONTRIBUTIONS OF \$5,000 OR MORE:

- Ghassan Bejjani & Kristin Andersen • Lise Olney & Timothy Fulham • Katherine & Ted Gekas • Marjorie & Nick Greville • Whitney Hatch • Alex & Paul Herzan • Ruth McKay & Don Campbell • David Moir • Lynn Nadeau • Kirstie & Tim Pecci • Barbara Resnek • Jorge Rodriguez • Polly Hoppin-Thomas & Robert Thomas

CONTRIBUTIONS BETWEEN \$1,000-\$4,999:

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OUR REGION

MAINE

NEW HAMPSHIRE

MASSACHUSETTS

CONNECTICUT

RHODE ISLAND

VERMONT

OUR TEAM

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HAYLEY JONES

Vermont & New Hampshire
State Director

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Massachusetts & Rhode Island
Community Organizer

SHANNON BEATTIE

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