

The Bennington area's Youth in Transition (YIT) Youth Outreach Team has been recruited and hit the ground running! On February 24, 2010 the Youth Outreach Program Coordinator, Tom 'Soup' Campbell, arrived eager to get started. We hired two fabulous youth outreach workers (AKA: YIT YOW's), Crystal Careau and Katrina Hollis, who were a HUGE part of developing the regional plan for Youth in Transition. We heard their voices loud and clear, and we are learning something new each and every day about our community's youths and their needs to feel as a part of the community.

These three dedicated employees have taken steps to make the program professional and official. Business cards, brochures and identification badges have been developed for outreach and presentations to community partners. The Team began with the local Community and Restorative Justice Program manager, Leitha Ciprano, who helped improve the draft referral form, which was then left at different agencies. The Team has received two official referrals already!

The Outreach Team is accepting invitations to any community event or opportunity to spread the word about this program. The Team has ventured to the local high school, collaborated with Vermont Department of Labor, the Vermont Department of Corrections, and will soon be visiting with the Bennington Tutorial Center, the Twilight Program, and Gamers' Grotto. The Team will promote the program at the high school's yearly Transition Fair.

The YIT YOWs developed Teens for Change (TFC) to engage youth and young adults in community events of interest to them. Crystal and Katrina made a presentation to the Transitional Living Program, also made a beneficial connection with the Teens of Bennington, another teen-driven organization. Teens for Change now has two community events scheduled for Bennington: a dance at a local fraternal organization in April and a bowling event in May. YIT Youth Advisory Board members will be identified from area youth and young adults who participate in these groups and events.

The Youth Outreach Coordinator and Workers are registered for the training events in May about Street Outreach and the Transition to Independence Process (TIP), also for the annual Youth Workers' Conference. The Team looks forward to bringing youth and young adults (*we have had many inquiries*) to the May 7 Young Adult Voice Movement Conference.