

PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORTING

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) primarily focuses on demonstrating accountability and achieving meaningful outcomes for all federally funded programs. Please make sure to include information on the outcomes of your project activities and the impact of your project on improving the lives of Youth in Transition and their families in the Program Progress Reports submitted.

One Progress Report for this sub-grant must be submitted for the period from January 1, 2010 – June 30, 2010 (due by July 30, 2010).

Report Contents

1. **Major Activities and Accomplishments during this Period** –

There were several significant accomplishments and activities that occurred during this reporting period. One of the most significant was the hiring of the Youth Outreach Program Coordinator and 2 Youth Outreach Workers. Tom Campbell, a long time resident of Bennington and employee of United Counseling Service became the YOP Coordinator in February. The interview and hiring process was collaborative and included the young women who were involved in developing the grant. Tom knows the Bennington community as well as the social service system so he was able to hit the ground running. The young women, Katrina Hollis and Crystal Careau were hired into the 2 Youth Outreach Worker positions. They were pivotal in the development of the Youth Outreach Worker concept and had been on the grant committee for 6-8 months, they too were able to jump right into their positions.

The program staff quickly began making a name for themselves in the community. The outreach process was intensive and extensive. They met with several partner agencies, such as Corrections, Vocational Rehab, the local parent child center, Sunrise, Department for Children and Families, and Thatcher House and Six Bank Street, local homeless shelters, businesses, and youth. Tom Campbell attended a young person's open Narcotics Anonymous meeting at the Turning Point Club to discuss the Youth Outreach Program. As a result of this, Tom connected with a young man who was struggling with staying clean and making positive connections with his community. The young man continues to maintain his recovery and he was also able to participate in a Summer Youth Employment Program at Youth Outreach "assisting" Tom.

The youth outreach workers and young people marched in the May Fest parade to help promote the program as well as developing brochures to promote the YOP and Teens for Change (T4C) concept. T4C is an advisory council, support group, and events planning group whose mission is to "support the development of a positive youth culture in Bennington by building meaningful relationships, courage and, confidence". T4C meets weekly to discuss issues in the community to be addressed and plan positive youth activities. There are typically up to 10 participants each week.

The T4C group planned and coordinated 2 events this reporting period. The first event was a dance that was held in April at the Moose Family Center in Bennington. The event included free admission, food, DJ with dance contests and giveaways, and gave the opportunity to "recruit" more youth. The Moose donated the space, soda, and clean

up. The event went so well, the Moose Family Center offered to continue to work with T4C for future events. Approximately 70 youth attended the dance. Several volunteers, including parents, chaperoned.

The second event was held in June at the Bennington Lanes Bowling. 53 youth attended the event and bowled, ate pizza, won prizes, played in the pool tournament, and played Wii Dance, Dance Revolution. The youth who planned the event received more than 90 prize and food donations from businesses including Price Chopper, Stewarts, and local area businesses. Each young person who attended the event was given a T4C ID badge to be used at future events and the hope is to work with local businesses to recognize the badge as a way to give discounts to youth.

At the time of this report the Youth Outreach Program is working with 9 youth who have not been connected with other services and who are at risk of becoming involved with Corrections. Program staff has completed the required VCHIP data collection.

The Program staff attended several trainings including the Working with Youth Conference and the YIT pre-conference training opportunity. The Youth Outreach Workers facilitated a workshop at the first state-wide conference for youth. The Youth Voice Movement conference was a great success and well attended. The Youth Outreach Workers did a great job in presenting their information at the workshop in a very engaging and creative manner. The Youth Outreach Workers attended several local and in-house training including general orientation to the agency, Mandated Reporter training, Boundaries and ethics, professional behavior in the work place, and first aid and CPR. Training will continue to be made available to the Outreach Workers.

The Youth Outreach Program, Sunrise, and the Department of Labor collaborated this summer to create and offer a Summer Youth Employment Program to four youth. Katrina and Crystal, Youth Outreach Workers, along with their supervisors, developed a six-week "Community Action" curriculum. The curriculum consisted of the youth exploring themselves and what they "stand for" as well as exploring their community resources, identifying a community issue important to youth and creating an activity or response related to that issue through facilitating a focus group, and then planning the activity. We look forward to reporting the outcome next review period.

The Youth Outreach Workers created the T4C mission and brochure in order to promote their group and use the brochure as a way to increase donations from local businesses. The mission of Teens For Change: *Our mission is to support the development of a positive youth culture in Bennington by building meaningful relationships, courage, and confidence.*

The program staff created the YOP brochure as a way to promote the program and recruit youth.

2. **Problems** –There have been few problems with the start up of the program. One minor difficulty is in expanding the Youth Service Council beyond the core group of providers who have been participating through out the grant process. Although the team has met on a regular basis, the members of the team vary from month to month. We will continue to work on this important aspect of the program in the coming reporting period.

3. **Significant Findings and Events** –No additional events to report at this time.
4. **Dissemination activities** – Briefly describe project related inquiries and information dissemination activities carried out over the reporting period. Itemize and include a copy of any newspaper, newsletter, and magazine articles or other published materials considered relevant to project activities, or used for project information or public relations purposes. In addition to the brochures that were created and the outreach to community partners, program staff and the agency were featured in local newspaper articles regarding the purpose of the program and activities. Specifically, the local paper ran a story about the bowling event, discussed the goals of the activities, and how youth who are interested in participating can get in touch with the T4C group.

Katrina Hollis and Tom Campbell were interviewed at the local radio station about the new program and its intent to increase youth voice in the community.

5. **Other Activities** – No additional activities to report,
6. **Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period** –
In the next reporting period the Teens for Change group will create a Facebook page to promote activities and inform youth in the community of issues important to them. The events that have occurred so far have been promoted using the traditional methods such as newspaper and fliers, but we have found that inviting youth through facebook has been most effective. The Youth Outreach Workers are looking to the CDC at the high school to partner with them to develop the facebook page. As Katrina said, “They are our target age and population, so shouldn’t we be partnering with them?”

The Youth Service Council will work together to combine efforts in developing a community wide advisory board. During the YSC meetings it was discovered that several community service agencies were trying to develop Youth Advisory groups, but having challenges with finding youth who were interested in serving on such a council. The Youth Development Program (YDP), for instance, has been trying to put together an advisory council, but they have only been able to recruit two youth. We discussed the possibility of stigma attached to a “foster care” group. It is our intent to bring together other agencies to develop one advisory group, most likely continue to be called Teens for Change, and then create sub-groups who work on issues important to them. Again, using YDP for example, they are looking to get input about the foster care system from the youth involved with DCF. Therefore a sub-group of foster youth through T4C will be created.

The next T4C event is scheduled for September 11, 2010 for an “End of summer bash” at Willow Park. The participants of the “Community Action” Summer Youth Employment Program is currently putting together the planning for the event and activities will include music and dancing, a BBQ, volleyball tournament, and a movie “on the big screen” will end the evening.

The Youth Outreach Program staff will explore the potential of creating a Teen Radio Hour with the local radio station. After the radio interview, there was a discussion regarding the lack of teen voice and programming at the local station. Several youth thought it would be great to be able to work with the station to program an hour of teen topics and music after school hours. Staff will explore this in the coming reporting period with the hope of starting something up in the winter.

T4C will continue to grow through the next reporting period. Through the commitment and persistence of the Youth Outreach Workers T4C will become a “louder” voice in the community and members of the board will begin to participate in community civic groups.

**PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT
COVER SHEET**

1. Grant Number: 03150-7035
2. Grantee Name & Address: United Counseling Services of Bennington County
PO Box 588; 100 Ledge Hill Drive; Bennington, VT 05201
3. Telephone Number: (802) 442-5491
4. Project Title: Youth Outreach Program
5. Period of Performance: January 1, 2010 thru June 30, 2010
6. Approved Project Period: _____ thru _____
7. Period Covered by Report: January 1, 2010 thru June 30, 2010
8. Author's Name and Telephone number: Lorna Mattern, (802) 442-5491
9. Date of report: June 30, 2010
10. Comments (if any):