

Northeast Kingdom Youth Services
24 Bagley Street
St Johnsbury, VT 05819
Youth In Transition Grant #03150-7050
Program Progress Report

Progress Report due by July 30, 2010, (covers work done from January 1-June 30, 2010)

Report Contents

1. Major Activities and Accomplishments during this Period – Report both quantifiable and non-quantifiable accomplishments for the General Expectations and Regional Goals listed in Attachment A of the grant award (see pages 3-5):

Quantifiable accomplishments include numbers of youth/families served, people trained, support groups established, etc.

Since implementing YIT on March 22, 2010, we have made the following accomplishments.

1. Contact has been made with 15 youth.
2. 13 Common Studies have been completed.
3. Evaluator, Jody Kamon, has completed 4 Vermont Studies and 4 National Studies.
4. The Youth Advisory Board meetings began on May 13th of 2010 with 2 youth participating in this initial meeting and 3 youth participating in the second, June 23, 2010 meeting.
5. YIT provided training and education to 5 schools including Lyndon Institute, Caledonia School, Danville School, Blue Mountain Union School, and Concord School.
6. The YIT Facilitator met with 7 area agencies and community partners including Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation, JOBS, Community College of Vermont, Economic Services, Northeast Kingdom Community Action, and Probation and Parole.
Additional agencies including Umbrella, Department of Children and Families and Churches have been contacted through weekly community partner meetings.

The YIT Facilitator has spent a significant portion of the time in this position connecting the youth to the appropriate agencies that will help them. The following connections have been made.

1. 1 pregnant youth has been referred to Parent Education offered through NEKYS.
2. 1 youth was connected to NEK Human services for evaluation for mental health services.
3. 7 Diversion participants are accessing YIT services. The facilitator is motivational in assisting them to meet their contractual requirements to

avoid returning to court. They are also being connected to services that will support them to not commit any further crimes.

4. Connections have been made with 5 youth to Economic Services to receive health insurance and 3 squares VT.
5. 1 youth has been taught about the Social Security System and how to access services.
6. 2 youth have been assisted with completing housing applications.
7. The YIT facilitator meets with the LIT (Local Interagency Team) each month to give updates and receive feedback.
8. 3 youth have been referred to the Department of Labor for assistance with finding employment.

Non-quantifiable accomplishments should be listed in chronological order. Describe any draft/final products in this section.

The YIT facilitator has attended the following trainings since March 22, 2010:

- “Nurturing Healthy Sexual Development,” on 4/16/10
- “Youth in Transition: Building on Our Strengths,” on 4/20/10
- NAMI training held on 5/6/10 and 5/13/10 (discussed mental illness types, descriptions, and medications).
- Street Outreach training on May 19, 2010
- Working With Youth Conference on May 21, 2010 (learned about “TIPS”)
- YASI (Youth Assessment Screening Instrument) training on June 17th and 18th.

2. Problems – Describe any deviations or departures from the original project plan including actual/anticipated slippage in task completion dates, and special problems encountered or expected. Use this section to describe barriers to accomplishment, actions taken to overcome difficulties, and to advise DMH of any needs for assistance.

There are no barriers.

Our work with 15 youth, and community connections demonstrate our achievements in completing the goals set forth in this grant.

Since the YIT Facilitator has been working in this position, activities and initial outcomes and goals from the grant that have been tracked are listed below.

- Recruit and train of young adults for participation as contributing advisors to the LIT.
- Increase the number of eligible youth/young adults participating and successfully completing the JOBS, YDP and Teen Parent Education Programs.

- Educate all staff in all agencies on the Youth in Transition Initiative.
- Increase efforts to develop long-term connections that support and assist eligible youth/young adults to access the services that will support them in independent living.

I have encountered barriers within the system for youth/young adults as I have stated below.

Barrier #1: Health Insurance

If a youth lives at home and they are under 21, they have to count their parents' income. Sometimes youth do live at home, but they do not receive any money from their parents. Having to use their parents income can either make them ineligible or have to pay a premium that it unreasonable.

Barrier #2: 3Squares VT

If an individual is living in a home with their parents and are under the age of 23, he/she can not have their own 3Squares VT.

Barrier #3: Housing and accessibility to benefits

Even though, it is really something that is out of the control of my property managers, the waitlists for Sections 8 vouchers and subsidized housing are very long. So, therefore many youth who are over 18 stay at home, but this leads to inability to receive many of the benefits such as 3SquaresVT and health insurance without a premium. These youth are living with their parents, but are not necessarily receiving any money or access to the food.

Barrier #4: Transportation

Many youth do not have transportation as well, so youth that live in areas such as Concord, Sheffield, Groton make it impossible to get to employment or appointments, because these areas due not have public transportation.

Barrier #5: Reach Up

We have encountered barriers in regards to receiving a Reach-Up grant. There was a teen mom age 16, who wanted to live with her boyfriend, age 18 and Economic Services said that she may not receive hr grant money, because he is not the father of the baby and/or he is not 25. The mom was quite frustrated, and stated, "So, if I was living with a 25 year-old, they make that an approved living situation?!" Thankfully after some hard work and a team meeting, she was approved to live with her boyfriend. However, the stress of the initial barrier caused a lot of turmoil and frustration.

Youth I have met with through case management as well as through the Youth Advisory Board, have made the following comments in regards to barriers in the system of care that make it sometimes impossible for successful transition.

Quote #1: "I feel like I am judged by the community based on my appearance and my age when I apply for employment. I feel that I do not have an equal opportunity to be hired and given a chance to show what I can do."

Quote #2: "The school environments in the NEK do not provide a challenging environment, therefore I do not want to go to school, I'd rather drop out. I do not feel as though I have a voice in the classroom. The teacher's opinion is the only one that matters and you are not allowed to add in your own opinion."

3. Significant Findings and Events – (For special notice to Principal Investigator, State Outreach Team for Youth in Transition, Federal Project Officer, etc.. This should include any changes in staffing, including of persons, time spent, and/or responsibilities. Attach resumes and qualifications of new staff.)

We are on track and do not have any changes 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.

Every other week, the Department of Mental Health publishes a Bi-Weekly Update to help foster an informative relationship between the community and the Department. I completed an article (with input from Executive Director, Marion Stuart and Supervisor, Alexis Proia.) for the May 12th edition. The article gave an overview of the YIT program in the Caledonia and Southern Essex counties as well as served as an introduction. The article is as follows, we provided the information after the Caledonia/South Essex Region- St. Johnsbury District:

YIT (Youth In Transition) Facilitator
Tammy Knights
5/10/2010

Northeast Kingdom Youth Services' (NEKYS) Executive Director, Marion Stuart, is pleased to announce Tammy Knights has been hired as a Youth In Transition (YIT) Facilitator. YIT fits extremely well into NEKYS continuum of programs to support youth through their transition years. Tammy started on March 22, 2010. The federal Substance

Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) awarded the State of Vermont \$9 million dollars over the course of six years for a Youth in Transition initiative to strengthen the system of care and increase services for youth aged 16-21 years. There are 12 regions throughout Vermont that will have a YIT Facilitator work on this initiative.

YIT is designed to assist youth (ages 16-21 years) who are in some type of transition whether it be to housing, post-secondary education, or employment as well as providing support around mental health services, navigating the system (health care and other benefits), and building caring relationships.

In this first year of the grant, the goals that will be worked on most closely are as follows:

- Educate all staff in all agencies on the YIT Initiative.
- Increase efforts to develop long term connections that will support and assist age-eligible youth/young adults to access the services that are essential and supportive to them living independently.
- Increase the number of age-eligible youth/young adults participating and successfully completing programs such as JOBS, YDP (Youth Development Program), and Teen Parent Education Programs.
- Develop a Youth Advisory Board:
 - ✓ This will be comprised of youth/young adults who have successfully navigated the system, are familiar with the services offered in the community, and/or have had experience with educational programs.
 - ✓ There will be 5 youth/young adults on this board/committee.
 - ✓ These youth will receive a monthly stipend of \$25.00.
 - ✓ This group will work with the YIT Facilitator and LIT (Local Interagency Team) to advocate for system development, expansion, and evaluation.

There are currently 2 youth who are signed up to be a part of the board and we are searching for 3 more youth (16-21) who would like to join. Meetings are going to begin May 2010. Tammy is meeting with community partners, agencies, and schools to discuss YIT. Tammy has met with/educated the following agencies on YIT: Probation and Parole, JOBS, Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation, and CCV. Tammy will continue community outreach to the following agencies: Department of Corrections, private behavioral health providers for mental health and substance abuse, and the Parent Child Center.

Tammy states, "All of the local agencies have been excited to learn about the Youth In Transition initiative and feels as though it is a much needed program."

Tammy has met with the following schools: Blue Mountain Union (Wells River, VT) Concord School (Concord, VT), Lyndon Institute (Lyndonville, VT), and Caledonia School (St. Johnsbury, VT). She will continue her school outreach to the following schools: Danville School, St. Johnsbury Academy, Cornerstone, Northeast Kingdom Learning Services, Community High School of Vermont (which is under the supervision of the Department of Corrections), and the LEARN alternative program.

Tammy has had contact with approximately 10 youth/young adults (this number increases daily) who have mentioned needing help/support being connected with housing, employment, caring relationships, mental health services, education, and health care insurance. These youth have come to the YIT program through self-referral and in-house referral (primarily from the Diversion program). Tammy is also hoping to receive referrals from outside agencies and/schools.

According to Alexis Proia, YIT Program Supervisor and NEKYS Service Coordinator, “this is a great opportunity for our community to strengthen our system of care and focus on the strengths of the young people so that they can become supportive members of our community.”

For additional information please contact, Tammy Knights, YIT Facilitator, at NEKYS at 748-8732 or email at nekys@nekys.org or visit our website at: www.nekyouthservices.org.

For the entire article please visit the following website:
http://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/sites/dmh/files/publications/biweekly/DMH-UPDATE_05_12_10.pdf

5. Other Activities – Briefly describe other activities undertaken during the reporting period.

The YIT facilitator transported and supported youth to two different conferences the Youth Development Conference at Castleton State College on April 8th, 2010 and the Young Adult Voice Movement in Bolton, VT on May 7th, 2010.

6. Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period – Briefly describe the project activities planned for the next reporting period.

YIT will continue to meet with area agencies to discuss and educate in regards to the program and will be coordinating with the Caledonia School with a Resource Fair. Additionally, YIT will be teaming with the Street Outreach Program and will provide outreach to many locations in which the youth “hang out”