

**PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT
COVER SHEET**

- 1. Grant Number: 03150**
- 2. Grantee Name and Address:**
208 Flynn Avenue, Suite 3J, Burlington, VT 05401
- 3. Telephone Number: (802) 488-6000**
- 4. Project Title: Chittenden Region Youth in Transition Grant**
- 5. Period of Performance: February 1- June 30, 2010**
- 6. Approved Project Period: February 1-June 30, 2010**
- 7. Period Covered by Report: February 1, June 30, 2010**
- 8. Author's Name and Telephone number: Betsy Cain, Assistant Director, Child, Youth and Family Services @ HowardCenter (802) 488-6701**
- 9. Date of report: July 23, 2010**
- 8. Comments (if any):**

**1. Major Activities and Accomplishments During this Period:
Quantifiable and Non-Quantifiable**

Two new YIT JOBS Case Managers were hired on April 12, 2010. Full time Case Manager Chris Vaughn is focusing his work on youth within rural areas of Chittenden County while part-time Case Manager Hina Rizvi is focusing her efforts on young adults from the multi-cultural community as well as cultural competence in community systems.

Chris Vaughn's activities included the following:

- Maintained a job board featuring applicable help wanted ads.
- Connected with 10 young adults; 8 are meeting regularly.
- Opened 5 young adults to the YIT Common Study – 3 more waiting for signed parental consent.
- Connected 2 young adults to mental health counseling services at Spectrum.
- Established relationships with school social workers at Milton High School (Kristen Johnson), Colchester High School's Alternative Program (Megan Poor), Champlain Valley Union High School (Meg Howard) and Jean Garvin School (Stephanie Rosenstein). These relationships

resulted in 10 referrals – 8 of these referrals have been consistently engaged with the YIT JOBS Case Manager.

- Met with representatives from Vermont Adult Learning, Community Action, Chittenden Emergency Food Shelter, Salvation Army, CCTA and Bike Recycle Vermont in regards to available services and volunteer/community service/job skills training resources.
- Established connections with many businesses (food service, retail, pet grooming) in Milton, Vermont and Pine Computers in South Burlington.

Hina Rizvi's activities included the following:

- Met with Jacob Yacouba at Association of Africans Living in VT and arranged to give a presentation on YIT grant/JOBS services to a refugee and immigrant community at the AALA office.
- Met and consulted with Karen Fondacaro (Dir. Behavior Therapy and Psychotherapy Center, UVM) and began working on outreach efforts to the refugee/immigrant population, especially minority youth.
- Met with Keegan Albaugh (O'Brien Community Center) re: planning a JOBS training at the teen center in an effort to reach out to minority youth.
- Met with Kristen McCaskey (employment counselor) at the VT Refugee Resettlement program. She is working on referring a young man.
- Spent time with Megan Parker (O'Brien Center) at the teen center and was introduced to some minority youth.
- Met with Malaika DosRemedios (Skills for Life case manager) to discuss support needs in the minority community. Visited Franklin Square.
- Met with Patty Wesley (Dir. of Guidance and Counseling at BHS) to discuss ongoing challenges for refugee students.
- Met with Mike Gray (BHS Counselor) who made referrals and gave contact info to a 21 yr old African male.
- Met with Simon Parlante from Burlington High School to collaborate in identifying ESL students with support needs.
- Met with Sue Blathin from Burlington High School to discuss presenting YIT support services in ESL classes.
- Met with Hal Colston (Neighbor Keepers) and will schedule a time to offer a presentation regarding services.
- Met with 7 youth: provided assistance with immigration related issues, met with probation officer, filled out YIT study and discussed issues with finding a job, helped create a resume.
- Met with program coordinators in key areas of Spectrum including Youth Development Program, Outreach Program, Drop-In Center, youth shelter, SRO (Transitional Living Program), COOP (residential setting for young males in DCF custody).
- Contacted Brenda Bean from the State Team and Jeanine Bunzigyie from Burlington Schools.

Both Chris Vaughn and Hina Rizvi attended the following conferences and trainings: Youth Movement Conference in Bolton; Rural Outreach Training, TIP Model Training and Working with Youth Conference in Killington

Chittenden County YIT Leadership Team Members (Ellen Vaut, Mark Redmond, Catherine Simonson, Jane Helmstetter and Annie Wohland also attended the conference in Killington

Vermont Family Network staff participated in five Youth in Transition Team Meetings.

- Ellen Vaut, Family Support Consultant, participated in February, March, April, May and June.

- Christine Kilpatrick, Family Support Director, and June Heston, Executive Director, participated in February.
- Gloria Mahoney, Parent Transition Resource Consultant participated in June.

The initial job description for Parent Transition Resource Consultant was written in February and submitted to the Leadership Team for approval. In April, the Parent Transition Resource Consultation position was advertised; resumes were reviewed and potential candidates were interviewed. Second interviews were conducted in May with the added presence of Jane Helmstetter, AHS Field Services. Gloria Mahoney was hired as the Parent Transition Resource Consultant in May and she began working at VFN in June.

In June, Ellen Vaut and Gloria Mahoney met with Andrea Meier at Spectrum to begin gathering transition resources for project. Ellen and Gloria also participated in the TAAT meeting at Spectrum, and Gloria began researching information for the online transition resource center.

Two part-time Young Adult Navigators were hired on June 29, 2010. **Annie Wohland** and **Michelle Paquette** are employed by Spectrum Youth and Family Services and supervised by Marissa Adamo. They completed the following activities.

- Met with Mark from Bike Recycle to discuss volunteer opportunities for youth.
- Met with Dana from Women Helping Battered Women and discussed an initiative through WHBW to run a safe choices group for 16-24 year old women.
- Met with Lauren Vessella, Spectrum Outreach Coordinator, to discuss collaboration efforts with the Spectrum Peer Outreach Workers.
- Met with Bridget Everets, Spectrum Drop-In center Coordinator, to discuss setting up times to meet with youth in the Drop-In space.
- Met with Melissa Mallette, Spectrum Intake Coordinator, to learn about Spectrum's intake process and youth shelter structure.

So far, staff have been able to enroll 15 youth in the YIT Grant VCHIP Common Study as part of the YIT evaluation process. Follow up has been done on the part of VCHIP to enroll youth into the Vermont Study and National Study. There are several more youth who are in the process of enrolling in the study as well.

2. Problems:

One of the main challenges we faced during this reporting period stemmed around defining the roles of the YIT JOBS Case Managers, particularly around serving minority youth. According to the YIT regional plan, the new part-time JOBS clinician is to follow existing JOBS management structure and youth enrollment requirements. Currently, it's been extremely difficult to find minority youth who fulfill the enrollment criteria. In addition, it has been difficult to acquire sufficient documentation of disability in order for young adults to qualify for Vocational Rehabilitation. Some of the reasons are:

- Families/youth have not been in the country for a long enough time to have documentation on their mental issues and behavioral struggles.
- Huge stigma and stereotype related to mental health related issues, therefore, services are not accessed.
- No understanding of or acknowledgement of depression or PTSD's
- May have been too traumatized to open up and have trusting issues

- When determining eligibility of special education services under an IEP, the barrier of English as a second language precludes assessing for eligibility for an IEP, so the process ends when it is determined that language is a barrier.

It has been very clear in the short time of meeting with young adults from other cultures that for the most part, it does not seem culturally appropriate to disclose/acknowledge that there are any struggles at home, in school, or in the community, and that most report that things are “fine”. Refugee families are pressured to be self-sufficient within three months of their arrival into their new country. Youth are impacted negatively and feel obliged to give up studies in order to find employment to support their family or to leave school in order to stay home with young siblings so their parents can work.

Job opportunities in the Milton and Hinesburg area are limited and it has been difficult to identify available and viable jobs in those communities. Note that this is not new information, but has been brought to light even more as the YIT JOBS Case Manager is working to help youth in these key areas to secure employment. In addition, another significant challenge is transportation and access to resources. Although there now is a CCTA bus running making limited runs to Milton, individuals cannot access it with a Medicaid bus pass. This is due to the fact that it is considered a chartered bus and a Medicaid bus pass will not be honored. This affects a young adult’s ability to not only get employment, but also to get to services needed that are outside the Milton area.

Another interesting factor to note is that Refugee Resettlement program will not provide employment counseling to the minority youth who are under 18 yrs of age.

Finally, the Parent Transition Resource Counselor was hired in June. Summer can be a challenging time to connect with school staff and families, so there was a slow start due to timing. However, this enabled Gloria to have time to research other Chittenden County resources and gather some of the information she will need when offering support to families.

3. Significant Findings and Events:

Many families from other cultures who have recently come to this state do not tend to access mental health services, even though they may be eligible for them. Many feel it is stigmatizing and not accepted in their culture. Lack of effective outreach by providers in this community may also be a factor.

4. Dissemination Activities:

Please refer see answers to question number one.

5. Other activities:

- Established a relationship with Pine Computers in South Burlington – Currently establishing an apprenticeship for clients pursuing a career in computer/tech support... This should be finalized on July 2.
- Met with Burlington Food Shelf and have been discussing participation in “Community Kitchen”, a culinary training program.
- Discussions occurring on holding a “jobs skills” class co-facilitated by Hina Rizvi and Keegan Albaugh at the O’Brien Teen Center for multi-cultural youth, utilizing Spectrum’s current jobs skills class curriculum, modified for this population.
- Support group for minority youth struggling to find employment

- Expansion of YIT Leadership Team. Now includes Dave Jacques (Corrections) and two new Young adults (Junie is Chinese and Iris is Bosnian)
- Discussion with Women Helping Battered Women to work with young women between 16-21 to provide support around healthy relationships and accessing supports/activities in the community.
- Mark Redmond and Jane Helmstetter met with Paul Dettman, the director of Burlington Housing Authority to explore housing options and improve collaboration.

6. Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period.

- Hina Rizvi, Betsy Cain and 3 young adults from Chittenden County will be attending the National Systems of Care Training Institute in Washington, DC from July 14-18. Hina will also attend Pre-Institute Training on Cultural and Linguistic Competence.
- In conjunction with other partners, develop a comprehensive list of resources specifically for minority youth: information pertaining to refugee and immigrant work permits, personal rights, important links, names and contact information of organizations, mentoring, info on different trainings such as ESL classes, employment trainings—this could either be part of or a link on the online resource center that will be developed.
- Identify names of counselors who are cross-trained in youth culture, understand specific struggles specific to immigrant youth.
- Presentations for minority youth at Association for Africans Living in Vermont.
- Presentations for ESL students at Burlington High School regarding available support services.
- Meeting with coordinators of Young Adult Movement to gather information/data from participants to begin working on establishing a youth advisory board.
- Young Adult Navigators will meet with the Parent Resource Consultant to collaborate services on July 23rd.
- Young Adult Navigators will continue meeting with organizations in the community and establish a “client base” with whom to provide support services.
- Continued outreach efforts to multicultural organizations/community groups.
- Visits to YouthBuild and Job Corps to gather information about variety of resources and make connections.
- Meet with CenterPoint Parent Advisory Group to survey what parents want and need from support groups and where there may currently be gaps.
- Create a presentation to provide to local groups about the Chittenden County YIT project, including supports available through the Parent Transition Resource Counselor and online resource center
- Once activities are underway in Milton, branching out and connecting with refugee liaisons in the Burlington area, Sara Holbrook Center, and Imani Center, and arranging presentations for those groups.
- Ellen Vaut, Betsy Cain and Annie Wohland will meet with people at Essex Tech to discuss the online Resource Center
- Rich Tulikangas has scheduled a meeting with Burlington High School Counselors in September to discuss YIT
- Continue to recruit YIT Leadership Team members, including school personnel, young adults and greater diversity