

**PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT
COVER SHEET**

- 1. Grant Number: 03150-7079**
 - 2. Grantee Name and Address:**

208 Flynn Avenue, Suite 3J, Burlington, VT 05401
 - 3. Telephone Number: (802) 488-6000**
 - 4. Project Title: Implementation of Chittenden Regional Plan for Vermont's Youth in Transition Grant**
 - 5. Period of Performance: July 1 – December 31, 2010**
 - 6. Approved Project Period: July 1 – December 31, 2010**
 - 7. Period Covered by Report: July 1 – December 31, 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: January 19, 2011**
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**1. Major Activities and Accomplishments During this Period:
Quantifiable and Non-Quantifiable**

HowardCenter, Spectrum and Vermont Family Network hosted the Federal Site Visit which occurred on October 4-7, 2010. The meetings with young adults and families went very well with 13 youth and 2 family members in attendance. The reviewers were very impressed by the youth who all expressed an interest in wanting to be involved.

Bob DiMasi was hired as the Parent Transition Resource Consultant. During the first months on the job, he has focused on connecting with families in Milton, Winooski and Burlington. In each of these locations he has made contact with the following organizations: schools, community-based family organizations, mental health providers, restorative justice centers and other grass roots organizations that provide natural community supports for families.

So far Bob has made connections with several families, one of which resulted in a referral to a Young Adult Navigator to assist a teen who has dropped out of school. Several other parents received information about the program through a school meeting, Act 264 meeting and casual conversation. Bob is currently working with the services listed below to set up parent information sessions.

Information about the Youth in Transition Grant has been presented to the following organizations:

- Karen Prosiack - Winooski Family Center
- Hal Colston – Neighbor Keepers
- Wanda Hines – Uncommon Alliance
- Steve McQueen – Winooski Police Department
- Tiffany Bluemle – Vermont Works for Women
- J. Ladd – Winooski Community Development (Teen Center)
- Vicky Smith – King Street
- Brett Chonyak – Milton Family Center
- Jacob Bogre – Association of African Living in Vermont
- Cathy Printon – VSAC – GEAR UP

Bob attends monthly meetings to maintain networking opportunities:

- Refugee and Immigrant Service Providers Network
- Association of Africans Living In Vermont
- Transition Age Advisory Team - Spectrum
- YIT Leadership Team – HowardCenter
- ACT 264 Partnership

Bob has created the following documents to share with organizations and Young Adult Navigators:

- Introduction and list of services letter
- Referral sheet

Chris Vaughn, a YIT/JOBS Program Case manager, has done the following in this reporting period:

- Continued the maintenance of a Now Hiring/Job Postings Board with daily updates of current entry level and other applicable positions listed on craigslist.org, 7Days, JobsInVermont.com and related websites.
- Actively participates in Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS) coalition meetings – these meetings are held on the second and fourth Monday of each month and began August 9, 2010.
- Participated in an intensive three day (September 13-15, 2010) Electronic Health Records training which resulted in increased (and proper) documentation of all YIT services provided by this Clinician.
- Attended the YIT Conference at Lake Morey on September 23, 2010. Participated in sessions focused on the Common Study Evaluation and Department of Labor placement, training and temp-to-hire options.
- Designed the “A Young Adult’s Guide to YIT” brochure to increase community awareness of YIT services and supports.
- Participated in the YIT Federal Site Visit October 4-7, 2010 and presented the YIT brochure.
- Attended an Adolescent Brain Development and High Risk Behaviors training on October 8, 2010. Gained much applicable knowledge about the effects of substance use on the brain development and tendencies toward other high risk behaviors of the population YIT serves.
- Attended the CWS Employment Conference (Burlington Hilton site) on November 9, 2010. Connected with clinicians from Reach Up, Economic Services, JOBS Programs in other northern Vermont regions and additional agencies.
- Attended a training focused on the implementation of aromatherapy in client treatment. Have since explored the use of aromatherapy techniques for down-regulation and the management of anxiety and stress with two clients.
- Attended a training focused on the Act 264 Meeting process on November 15, 2010.

- Participated in a CWS webinar training focused on the use of Salesforce in job development and placements.
- Worked with Mickey West, owner of The Red Onion, in developing a bread baking apprenticeship/training for a youth who identified baking as a potential career path. The young adult is currently still engaged in the training two days per week.
- Supported a young adult as he applied to and engaged in a Commercial Kitchen Training offered by Sodexo at St. Michael's College. The young adult completed the six week, two day a week program with positive reviews from his trainers and supervisor, and with a significant increase in culinary skills which can be implemented both in food service employment and in his growing independence.
- Supported one young adult in applying for a continuance of Medicaid and 3Squares. The young adult's coverage had expired, and this Clinician successfully advocated for an extension without any gap in coverage.
- Supported one young adult in their re-enrollment to Vermont Adult Learning. This young adult is currently attending Vermont Adult Learning three afternoons per week as he pursues the completion of his high school diploma.
- Made contact with 18 youth:
 - 7 – Had been working with prior to July 1, 2010
 - 5 – Have continued to provide consistent case management and community support services
 - 3 – Did not follow through with services
 - 1 – Worked with for three weeks while a co-worker was on vacation
 - 1 – Still attempting to engage with on a consistent basis
 - 1 – Inappropriate referral.
 - There are also several youth with whom he is working on setting up initial meetings.
- Opened 4 youth to the YIT Common Study.
- Submitted one YIT Common Study SICC form based on refusal to participate.
- Worked with Smugglers' Notch to place a young adult in a housekeeping position.
- Engaged in job development with The Ground Round restaurant (prior to its closing).
- Have been in contact with representatives from Outdoor Gear Exchange in regard to placing a young adult in a CWS funded temp-to-hire position in the warehouse. While this deal has not been finalized, it remains a promising possibility.
- Supported clients through countless job applications and the creation of resumes and cover letters.
- Made one referral to the Spectrum SRO.

Hina Rizvi, the other JOBS case manager, focusing on multi-cultural youth, sadly moved onto another job in October. In her time before her departure, Hina was able to make connections with several youth and enroll them into the YIT Common Study. She also strengthened connections with the O'Brien Teen Center, the Connecting Cultures Program, and Burlington High School.

Fortunately, another YIT/JOBS Case Manager for multi-cultural youth was hired and started on December 1, 2010. Her name is **Linda Li**, and she comes with a MSW from the University of Vermont, experience as a Chinese interpreter (current), and previous work with adults with mental health issues. The following lists the progress she has made since beginning in December:

- Met with Cryus Patten, Spectrum's Residential Coordinator
- Attended Refugee and Immigrant Service Providers Network (RISPN) and distributed flyers
- Met Jon Bourgo from Community Health Center of Burlington
- Met with Bob DiMasi from Vermont Family Network
- Met with Hal Colston of Neighborhood Keepers

- Met with Dottie Oilo from Boys and Girls Club
- Met with Lauren Vessella and Bridget Everts from Spectrum Drop-in Center
- Attended Howard's New American Peer Supervision Group meeting
- Attended YIT Youth Conference planning meeting
- Met with Jacob Borge from Associations of Africans Living in Vermont
- Met Spectrum Case Manager Ray Braver and toured SRO (Spectrum's transitional living program)
- Connected with four youth and made arrangements to meet

The two part time Young Adult Navigators, Annie Wohland and Michelle Paquette, continue to work on connections in the community with both service providers and young adults to be served.

Michelle Paquette has done the following:

Client Contact:

- 6 active clients on case-load
- Enrolled 2 young adults with YIT paperwork
- Continues to receive referrals from area high schools, social workers, community organizations, counselors, etc.

Outreach/Networking with the Following Agencies:

- Bike Recycle Vermont
- Women Helping Battered Women
- Outright VT
- The Counseling Service of Addison County, Inc.
- Vermont Family Network
- Vermont Adult Learning
- UVM
- Chittenden County Community Action
- VocRehab Vermont
- Community Health Center of Burlington
- COTS
- Burlington Emergency Shelter
- Burlington Housing Authority
- Recycle North
- VT Department of Corrections
- Phoenix House RISE

Trainings/Conferences:

- Trained with the Peer Outreach Workers at Spectrum to do Street Outreach, including provision of basic needs and information of services provided
- Participated in the Youth Advisory Council on Foster Care at Spectrum; an effort to help shape the direction and participation of the current board
- YIT Regional Sharing Day at Lake Morey
- Guest at the YIT Federal Site Visit in early October 2010
- "The Adolescent Brain and High Risk Behaviors" with guest speaker Michael Nerney in Williston on October 8, 2010
- Local Youth Advisory Board Training at the VT Tech Campus in Randolph; reporting, advice and sharing from all counties in VT about the progress of their local youth advisory boards

- Guest at the Legislative Open House in December at Spectrum; a Q&A session with many of our state political representatives

Memberships:

- YIT Leadership Team; monthly meetings
- RISPNet – Refugee and Immigrant Service Providers Network; monthly meetings

Annie Wohland has done the following:

Meetings Attended:

- Adult Local Interagency Team (LIT) Meeting
- Children's LIT meeting
- Truancy Task Force meeting
- School Resource Officers meeting
- Transition Age Advisory Group meeting
- Individual Community Meetings
- YIT Leadership Team Monthly Meetings

Outreach/Networking with the Following Agencies:

- Women Helping Battered Women
- Outright VT
- Joshua Schupp-Star, Addison County YIT Worker from the Counseling Services of Addison County (CSAC)
- Patrick Farnsworth, Spectrum's Co-op Case Manager
- Ethan Mauer from Vermont Adult Learning (VAL)
- Peggy Treanor at Chittenden County Community Action
- Pam Gowland from Voc Rehabilitation
- Nya Pyscachek from Community Health Center
- Amanda Churchill from Spectrum's Youth Development Program
- Cyrus Patten, Residential Director of Spectrum's residential services including the Co-op, Shelter and SRO
- Andrew Jope from Youth Build
- Larry Lewack from Brain Injury Association
- Kym Asam, School Services Director at HowardCenter
- Andy Twite from Chittenden County Court Diversion
- Karen Vastine from the Burlington Community Justice Center (CJC)
- Mary Munns, HowardCenter School Social Worker at CVU for referrals
- Jim Young at King St Youth Center, who facilitates groups
- Trudy Cardinal from Milton School District
- Bob DiMasi from Vermont Family Network
- Christine Sheldon and Danielle Kane from the Department of Labor - Youth Services Division
- Hans Johnson from Department of Corrections

Conferences and Trainings Attended:

- Behavioral Interventionist Conference
- Vermont Association of Mental Health Conference
- Building Bridges Out of Poverty training

Client Contact:

- Met with 6 young adults
- Three pending referrals and working to get them enrolled in the common study

2. Problems:

Continue to work on understanding the needs of the multi-cultural community and presenting programming in a way that is culturally sensitive. There has been significant outreach in the community to support multi-cultural young adults, and while a positive response is received and interest in developing strategies to engage this population, movement feels slow and there are issues with follow through.

One area of concern identified by Linda Li, the YIT/JOBS Case Manager focusing on the multi-cultural community, is that many service providers in the area are unaware of services that already exist for multi-cultural families and lack an understanding of how to access these services, such as interpreters, support groups, and parenting groups. The hope is that the outreach by staff from the YIT grant can help raise awareness of resources already in place, and that this grant can help reduce the stigma of accessing these services. Linda Li has been working diligently on presenting to organizations and groups in the area.

Transportation continues to be an issue of young adults in rural areas. Work continues on creatively finding ways to help these young adults access needed resources and find viable employment opportunities in the community. Job opportunities in the Milton and Hinesburg area continue to be limited.

Another challenge this reporting period was differentiating for the community the difference between the JOBS case managers and the young adult navigators: JOBS is a program that provides comprehensive care while the young adult navigators provide a supplemental service.

The case managers have been successful in enrolling clients for the Common Study; however, many clients tend to hold back with the larger study. One challenge has been that the interview must occur when the client is new, which means that clients may be giving more optimistic answers as there has not been any time for rapport building. For clients where English is not their first language, the evaluation questions are often challenging. In one instance, a young man shifted his answers based on a conversation he had with his older sister in their native language.

Significant Findings and Events:

There are still many young adults in the community who are not accessing services or utilizing existing resources. This further validates the need for an online resource center for transition age youth to fully understand the scope of services and resources available in the community. Planning continues with the Center for Technology in Essex to develop a comprehensive, easily accessible online resource guide specifically geared towards young adults.

The lack of attention given to transition planning for young adults has become more evident, which has resulted in the deficit of independent living skills acquired by many transition age youth in the community. This has often led to homelessness, truancy, involvement with Corrections, and substance use as a coping skill. Proactive work in reaching these young adults is essential.

4. Dissemination Activities:

Brochures have been developed and have been distributed to community organizations. Work is currently being done on getting the brochure translated into several languages

5. Other activities:

- Brief overview of the project was presented to Chittenden County Guidance Counselors on November 12, 2010.
- The Leadership Team began wrestling with ways to ensure that every young adult age 15 or older with a Coordinated Services Plan has a transition plan. The team discussed the pros and cons of integrating questions into the CSP as opposed to creating another meeting.
- The Leadership Team discussed a lack of enforcement for young adults ages 16-18 who are not attending school. The team decided that it would be helpful to continue the conversation with additional input from Martha Maksym, Andy Strauss and Ann Pugh in an effort to become more proactive in providing support services.
- Judith DeNova, Essex Superintendent, is in the process of collecting potential meeting times from the director of the Center for Technology. Judith will report times back to Betsy Cain so a meeting about the Online Resource Center can be scheduled.
- Presentation at the Refugee Health Committee for outreach and referral purposes.
- Involvement in Health Education and Access Linkages (HEAL), which is a multidisciplinary health education strategy based on relationship-building to improve the health education of low income Vermonters. The focus is on nutrition, chronic illness management, stress, child development, women's and men's health, and other issues identified by the community. HEAL engages medical students from the University of Vermont Colleges of Medicine to educate each other and the community and improve the health education of low income Vermonters, including New Americans from the recently resettled immigrant and refugee community.
- Discussions with the Boys and Girls club to set aside time and space to meet with multi-cultural youth in the space and provide pizza while talking about services available.

6. Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period.

- Invite Martha Maksym, United Way, and Andy Strauss, States Attorney, to a Leadership Team Meeting to continue discussion about young adults who are not in school.
- Work on developing a transition plan that can be embedded in the Act 264 process.
- 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.
- Distributing YIT brochure that has been translated into several languages.
- Identify names of counselors who are cross-trained in youth culture, understand struggles specific to immigrant youth.
- Meeting with coordinators of Young Adult Movement to gather information/data from participants to begin working on establishing a youth advisory board.
- Collaboration with Karen Fondacaro, PhD, Director of the Behavior Therapy and Psychotherapy Center and her Connecting Cultures Program to provide a support group for multi-cultural transition age youth.
- Presentation to the Parents Group at the Association of Africans Living in Vermont to explain services available for transition age youth.