

1. Major Activities and Accomplishments during this Period

A number of outreach events were held during this reporting period including:

- **YIT/Juvenile Justice Community Meeting:** On April 23, 2010 a YIT/Juvenile Justice meeting was held at NCSS. This meeting was attended by community providers working with youth in transition. The meeting allowed Ebony to meet key individuals who have been involved in the planning process of this grant and introduce herself to the community.
- **Youth Voice Movement Conference:** On May 7, 2010 Ebony and NCSS Adolescent Services Staff brought youth to the first annual Youth Voice Movement for the State of Vermont at the Bolton Adventure Center. We were very proud to be represented by four youth and four staff members who participated in activities and workshops throughout the day.
- **Street Outreach Training and Working with Youth Conference:** Ebony attended these training from May 19-21 in Killington, VT and had a chance to network with other YIT employees from across the state.
- **Community Outreach, Abenaki Pow Wow:** Ebony set-up an outreach table at the Abenaki Heritage Celebration an annual event held in Swanton, VT during the Memorial Day weekend.
- **YIT BBQ/ Community Meeting:** On June 4th 2010 Ebony hosted a Youth Community Meeting/BBQ to introduce the grant to the region and begin to identify youth workers. The event featured a guest poetry speaker from NYC. The event was a great hit and the youth enjoyed the artistic style of the presenter and her focus on real world issues. The event was attended by approximately 10 youth, many of whom expressed interest in joining the youth leadership team.
- **Community Outreach, Juvenile Probation Fair:** On June 7, 2010 The Department for Children and Families held a fair for youth on juvenile probation. Ebony distributed YIT materials and spoke with youth interested in YIT services.
- **Community Outreach, Meeting with Abenaki Community:** Ebony attended several meetings with leaders of the Abenaki community to learn about the Abenaki culture and discuss outreach efforts to youth in this community.
- **Community Outreach, Taylor Park (Lemonade Stand):** Ebony with the assistance of a peer youth outreach worker distributed brochures and lemonade in the park to recruit youth and increase exposure for the grant in the community.

2. Problems

The difficulties encountered during this grant period focused mainly on reaching and recruiting youth, as the main focus of this period was outreach and encouraging youth interest and involvement. The rural nature of our communities and the fact that there are no centralized youth facilities in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties made it difficult to find and engage youth. In addition, a lack of public and private transportation options was a barrier as youth who lived in rural settings lacked reliable transportation to events. During the next period, Ebony plans on addressing transportation problem by developing outreach strategies that involve set-ups at multiple sites. Ebony plans to reach youth through her Eat and Blog events, which involves bringing a mobile internet café to the surrounding communities.

3. Significant Findings and Events

Northwestern Counseling and Support Services is pleased to announce that during this grant period, Ebony Vernice Nyoni was hired as the full-time YIT Grant Coordinator for Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. Ebony's start date was April 19th, 2010. Ebony focused first on learning about the Franklin and Grand Isle Communities, the current services offered to transition age youth, and previous visions put forth through this grant process. Once oriented to Franklin and Grand Isle Counties, Ebony's focus shifted to outreach efforts and identifying youth interested in participating in the process. Therefore, Ebony's main focus during this period was recruitment at community events and sponsoring YIT outreach events to draw in interested youth. She fulfilled these tasks through the outreach events described in the first section of this progress report including the Youth BBQ/Community Meeting. After identifying several interested youth Ebony developed a job description for a peer youth outreach worker and identified a youth to assist her with event planning and the recruitment process. Another task led by the peer youth outreach worker during this period was purchasing personal hygiene products and assembling care packages which will be distributed to youth as outreach efforts continue.

4. Dissemination Activities

Please find the following documents attached:

- NCSS Job Description for Youth in Transition Coordinator
- Resume, Ebony Kirkland
- YIT Brochure
- YIT Outreach Poster
- YIT referral form
- YIT Fact Sheet
- Outreach Poster- Community BBQ/Community Meeting
- Outreach Poster- Youth Summit
- Job Description, Peer Youth Outreach Worker

5. Other Activities

Some of the assessment tools that we have found helpful in screening youth interested in the YIT Programming include the GAIN-Short Screener (Version: GSS 2.0.1). This tool is used for basic initial screening purposes to quickly identify barriers youth may be facing including mental health issues, emotional/behavioral issues, and/or substance abuse issues. When warranted the GAIN-Short Screener can be followed by a GAIN-I Assessment, a more thorough and comprehensive assessment instrument which has eight core sections—Background; Substance Use; Physical Health; Risk Behaviors & Disease Prevention; Mental & Emotional Health; Environment & Living Situation; Legal; and Vocational-- used for diagnosis, placement, and treatment planning. Another tool that we will continue to use with youth entering YIT programming is the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA). The recent addition of the ASEBA tool assists staff with assessing competencies as well as adaptive and maladaptive functioning. These assessment tools, in addition to face-to-face meetings, help staff members to identify the barriers and strengths of each youth entering services and in turn assist staff with identifying appropriate service matching and needs as a youth enters YIT programming.

6. Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period

A number of initiatives are planned for the upcoming year including:

- **Jay Peak Meeting on the Summit:** This event is scheduled for July 23, 2010. It serves as the second meeting of the youth leadership team.
- **Eat and Blog:** This will be the main recruiting tool for YIT and involves offering a mobile internet café in locations across Franklin and Grand Isle Counties.
- **Friday Night Series:** A weekly movie or facilitated discussion will be presented by members of the youth leadership team on topics related to at-risk youth.
- **YIT Day:** A day of remembrances and celebration for youth in transition celebrated annually on the second Friday in the month of November.
- **YIT Conference:** A one day conference assembled on YIT DAY to include workshops, short films, guest speakers and topics related to successful transition.
- **HighLow Project:** Photography exhibit sponsored by VCRHYP which depicts the high and low experiences of 12 transition-age youth in Vermont.
- **12 Steps for Youth:** Development of a group for youth with substance use issues.
- **YIT Leadership Team:** Youth will serve as official youth representatives and respected voices in their communities. Regular meetings will be planned.

Northwestern Counseling & Support Services
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