

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM REGIONAL YIT PROGRESS REPORTS OF 12.31.12

Addison: Hired a former JOBS client as a part-time YIT Peer Worker. The Peer Worker has helped the local substance abuse treatment center organize a recovery support group for young adults battling opiate addiction. An interagency collaboration (Resource Team) of front-line workers was started under clinical supervision to “spread best practices, encourage youth leadership, perform a strength-based [case] review process and advocate as needed.” All case reviews use the TIP case-based review [now called *TIP Solutions Review*] process. “This has led to a shifting of the perception that some youth are ‘difficult to work with’ to the idea that they are strongly independent and that this should be praised by those working with them.”

- The CSAC psychiatrist and children’s mental health director “occasionally speak at the meetings in order to facilitate system level change.” One system change the Resource Team is considering is setting up an Alumni Group of young adults with intellectual disabilities and their adult allies for continuing support after special education so they don’t drift into criminal activity.
- Another system change being discussed is “the use of Orders of Non-Hospitalization (ONH) for young adults (*with serious mental illness*) involved with the court system. These orders allow a young person who is facing some sentence to have their punishment deferred pending their compliance with treatment recommendations set forth by the designated agencies. Often it is successful simply to remind a young person that there is an ONH present and that both the youth and their Transition Facilitator(s) can work together to meet the terms set forth by the court...Facilitators and associated mental health staff have traditionally been loath to [*report to the court that the person has not been compliant*], particularly if the young adult is not otherwise engaging in criminal activity (apart from drug use) and has some relationship with treatment professionals....**The Resource Team would appreciate some state-level input on the best practices in regards to TAY and ONH.**” [*Provided by Bill McMains, MD, Child Psychiatrist for DMH.*] An associated issue is how to deal with families of youth who are experiencing their first or second episode of psychosis, especially when the families are living in poverty with a “host of their own untreated mental health challenges. **Guidance in dealing with this level of complexity would be helpful when trying to implement institutional changes.**” [*Provided by Bill McMains, MD, Child Psychiatrist for DMH.*]
- The Resource Team has been able to involve multiple young people in career-oriented training workshops (LNA, PCA, servsafe) through VR funding and is exploring the use of Work Keys training modules as required by various industries.
- All JOBS entrants are now enrolled into the YIT Common Study.

Bennington: A highlight was continuation of the highly successful interagency 6-week Summer Youth Work Experience program called “Community Action”. As for the past couple of years, it was led by the YIT Youth Outreach Worker who first participated in the Community Action program in the summer of 2009, when those young people took the lead in researching and writing the Bennington YIT strategic plan. The co-facilitator for this 2012 Community Action program was a Teens for Change (T4C) member who took the program the prior year and “has continued to grow as a young adult leader.”...The YIT Youth Outreach Worker and four young women “attended the Vermont Commission on Women’s forum to learn more about Women’s

Rights, gender challenges in society, and analyzed the gaps in services that currently exist for women in Bennington.”

- Also in the summer, 2012, thirteen T4C members and a couple of their adult allies participated in the YIT cultural and linguistic competency training, “which has continued to spark many interesting conversations since. In addition to that, Mercedes [*Avila, YIT CLC Coordinator*] met with the director of Human Resources and the UCS [*United Counseling Service*] Diversity Coordinator to discuss implementing an enhanced diversity program.”....
- “Four T4C members attended a one-day training to prepare for” a week-long day-camp experience for “a group of adults with special needs at the One World Conservation Center.” The T4C members then “volunteered for 5 full days of camp. Mentoring has become a new focus for the group, and this experience led the T4C group to see the impact or importance of mentoring and strong leadership skills.”
- “T4C continues to use Facebook as their primary means for outreach, networking, and state event reporting, with an average of one new ‘like’ per week and over 100 ‘friends’ at the time of this report.”
- In August, “T4C hosted a site visit with several Addison County staff [*who*] met with several UCS staff...as well as sat in on a T4C Youth Advisory Board meeting.”
- YIT “has a positive collaboration with the Public Defender’s Office...is present in the adult criminal court and intercepts YA [*Young Adults*] that want to engage in supports at time of court...and has a regular presence in juvenile court as well.”
- Another interagency Summer Youth Work Experience program in 2012 was 8 weeks of work by 10 JOBS youth “at a local community not-profit park, Lake Paran. Youth were able to learn various aspects of the daily operations, such as beach and water maintenance, grounds keeping, and assisting with the concession stand.”
- YIT “has continued to connect YA with the Bennington Free Clinic when necessary [*because*] many of the PCPs [*Primary Care Providers*] in Bennington County are not currently taking Medicaid or VHAP.”
- UCS is “offering a 3<sup>rd</sup> Personal Responsibility Education Program (P.R.E.P.) which assists YAs with becoming educated about healthy and supportive relationships.”
- **“The YIT Services Board has been collaborating throughout the year to develop a housing option for pregnant and parenting young women. As a result of this informal collaboration, Thatcher House opened January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013 and is now housing several young women with children. We will continue to work together to identify future funding (current funding runs out in a year) and collaborate to bring programming into the house.”**

Caledonia: For State FY2013, Northeast Kingdom Youth Services (NKYS) received a sub-grant from the Department of Mental Health’s (DMH’s) Adult Division to develop a peer-led program to reach out to and serve young adults with serious mental illness. In response to this new NKYS focus, the YIT worker has been organizing training for staff and young adult peers (WRAP, Non-Violent Communication, CLC, Leadership 101) – especially those connected with the NKYS Living Room Community Center – as well as supporting young people in need of service. She has helped to create and train a young adult Speakers’ Bureau. Collaboration with Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS, mental health) has continued and deepened through this peer work – including the Speakers’ Bureau – and thanks to a therapist specializing

in adolescent development and substance abuse therapy who has “built wonderful relationships with the young adults and changed their view[s of] mental health services. This has increased the number of young adults that are receiving therapy throughout NEKYS as an entire agency.”

#### Chittenden:

- A LOT of attention was paid to developing youth empowerment within the Diversity Rocks! multi-cultural youth group (now consisting of 100 or so young people), some of whom participated in leadership training (including use of facilitation skills and Appreciative Inquiry) and then helped to lead a workshop with the rest to identify the group’s preferred operating structure and priorities. This set the stage for the group to raise funds (including apply for multiple grants) to turn their big dreams into plans. For instance, in the fall Diversity Rocks! participated in the UN Day of Peace ceremonies in New York City and travelled to Washington, D.C. for a tour of this nation’s capital and meeting with our elected officials.
- Chittenden’s interactive website of resources for young people - developed with young adult guidance and foot-work (see [www.impactvt.org](http://www.impactvt.org)) – launched in the summer, 2012. WOW! CHECK IT OUT! Related maintenance and use of the YIT-Chittenden County Facebook page and a Twitter account, managed by the Young Adult Navigator, “announcing events, activities, information and resources for young adults.” There is also a new “YIT Line messaging service, a phone line available exclusively for referrals, information, and education about YIT strategies and practices.”
- Individualized and culturally competent service across multiple life domains for many young people.
- Assisted young adults to participate in life skills, job skills, and Talking SMACK (Sexual choices Managed with Awareness, Confidence and Knowledge) classes.
- Continued monthly meetings of the interagency case consultation Transition Age Advisory Team, facilitated by the YIT and JOBS Program Coordinator/Supervisor. The “Business Account Managers from CWS (Creative Workforce Solutions) now regularly attend JOBS and YIT meetings to hear about young adult employment needs and make connections with area employers.”
- YIT Young Adult Navigator (peer worker) serves on the Court Diversion Panel to “develop plans to help young adults not re-offend and follow-through with restitution.”
- YIT Young Adult Navigator also has a “regular presence at the Wellness Coop, a drop-in center for ages 18+ using a peer support model and run by Pathways to Housing” as part of the DMH Adult MH Transformation Grant. There she works “with participants around job search and resource referral.”
- Participation in “supervision group organized by [UVM] Connecting Cultures to build competence and provide peer consultation.”
- More Chittenden programs/agencies joined the TIP training (Spectrum Residential Program and NFI Community Program).

Franklin-Grand Isle: The YIT New Generation Youth Advisory Group continues strong - building its team spirit, leadership skills, and community involvement (raising funds through a Poetry Slam event at a **partnering restaurant** to support a **domestic violence shelter** and through another supporting **United Way**). There are many signs the youth group has gained **community acceptance**, largely as a result of YIT working “tirelessly to challenge the

community with changing their perceptions about stereotypes of the ‘type of people’ seeking mental health treatment.”

- One sign of success is the youth group finding space to share to “allow YIT programming to be more readily accessible to youth in the downtown community of St. Albans and also allow the opportunity to facilitate more groups. The New Generation Youth Center has full occupation of the building on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday”...thus fulfilling one of the major goals of the region’s YIT strategic plan. Some of the group events will be offered in **collaboration with other agencies like DCF, NFI, BFA, Turning Point, the Juvenile Court, etc.**
  - The youth group held a celebratory open house which was reported in the St. Albans Messenger and videotaped by the new YIT Peer Youth Advisor for an upcoming New Generation public access TV show. The Peer Youth Advisor was trained by the **public access channel** how to produce and record television shows. She is working on a New Generation Documentary and so far “has interviewed 11 youth and 5 community partners.”
  - “Since joining the leadership group, an additional 15% of youth report feeling safer talking to adults in the community.”
  - The New Generation Youth Advisory Group has begun to focus on the plight of the homeless. It participated in a national mural contest to raise awareness of the needs of homeless youth in transition.
- The St. Albans **Mayor** spoke at the annual YIT Transition Ceremony honoring young adults experiencing such successful transitions as entering college or full-time employment or parenthood....”75% of youth participating in the New Generation Leadership Group have gained employment while participating in the group.”
- The annual YIT regional conference for young adults was planned for delivery in January, 2013 at Bellows Free Academy (BFA), a locale suggested by the **high school’s principal**.
- Parents of young adults support their involvement with YIT, often “by providing resources for events or transportation. For example, parents helped to transport (sometimes with help from YIT-provided gas cards) girls to the training hosted by the **Vermont Professional Business Women.**”
- The Northwest Counseling and Support Services (NCSS) Adolescent Services Team has completed the TIP training. One member, Justin Philie, JOBS worker and primary writer of the region’s YIT strategic plan, is one of 7 people in VT working toward certification as a locally-based TIP trainer.
- The YIT Coordinator serves on the St. Albans Community Justice Center. A young person from New Generation was nominated to serve on the Justice Center’s new board addressing truancy.
- “The YIT Coordinator works to emphasize the importance of physical health while pursuing mental health services. The YIT Coordinator has clients sign releases to share information with drug treatment programs, Planned Parenthood, and primary care physicians.”
- Through NCSS and the VT Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs (VCRHYP), Mental Health First Aid training and Personal Responsibility in Education

Program (PREP) trainings were offered in the region. Suicide Prevention Training and Restorative Justice training were also offered.

- NCSS employees now have laptops with access to electronic medical records and computerized signature pads, allowing “support to consumers in their everyday environments in order to better serve families and reduce stigma.”

Lamoille: The earlier Dreamin’ Teens group has ended, and the former Peer Worker position has been filled with a new Outreach Worker who is studying to become a substance abuse counselor. A “Get Your Stuff Together” (G.Y.S.T.) mentor-to-peer and peer-to-peer group was formed for “males aged 16 to 24 with struggles related to criminal justice, substance abuse and/or mental health issues....G.Y.S.T. is a group for young men who hate groups....This sub-group of YAs [*Young Adults*] shares the perception that they are labeled and identified by the local community, providers and often family members as hopeless trouble makers who will never amount to much. The YAs were asked to attend one meeting....The structure is to have members of the community who have made mistakes, been incarcerated, and have some time in recovery, speak to the youth as if they were able to speak to themselves at that age. It has been very successful so far....Each YA has returned, and the group has grown exponentially....” It is showing “promise for growing leaders in the population of youth and young adults with substantial barriers to moving forward into adult life. Ownership of the group by its members is strengthening and with it, hope and confidence in group member abilities to problem-solve real life difficulties....GYST gives each member an opportunity to lead discussions and help other members who may be experiencing similar problems/situations in a leadership capacity.”

- The North Central Vermont Recovery Center (NCVRC) has grown to be a solid support for the youth and young adult men involved with the G.Y.S.T. group....A female G.Y.S.T. will begin soon with like female supporters from the NCVRC and the community at large [*ex: from businesses*].”
- The Lamoille State’s Attorney is referring all youth and young adults who come to the attention of that office to YIT for a Rapid Assessment. YIT is providing substance abuse screening and assessment (if needed) for all youth and young adults entering Court Diversion. Local law enforcement agencies are also making referrals due to ‘results they have seen.’ This resulted in 28 young people actively engaging in substance abuse treatment during the reporting period. All substance abuse treatment services delivered through Community Health Services of Lamoille Valley (the YIT “home”) “are administered in a co-occurring model with psychiatric assessment and recommendations for [mental health] treatment included.”
- In collaboration with school and ADAP staff, YIT is leading a substance abuse treatment group at Stowe High School and forming others at Hazen Union and Lamoille Union High Schools. Young people undergo screening and assessment to participate in the groups.
- A Central Vermont Community Action Center (CVCAC) transitional apartment has been used for some YIT participants. This allowed the current resident to thrive by avoiding incarceration and engaging in wraparound services.
- YIT staff participated in the TIP and CLC trainings.
- The YIT Steering Committee organized a SOC meeting at Johnson State College in October to review data and participate in a “Turn the Curve” exercise to identify “enough

synergy and common purpose to reach a tipping point” for success in action planning “to improve the system.

Orange/No. Windsor: The Clara Martin Center (CMC), in 2012, offered another Summer Intensive for Transition-Aged Youth (TAY). It included a “community service component which encouraged group members to contribute to the community through volunteerism.” It “even include[d] groups that parents can attend with their young adults.”

- “CMC developed a Peer Specialist Training Program and subsequently provided 5 Peers with employment for the summer” at 2 different sites. One of the peers continued as a paid Peer Navigator after the summer to support the YIT program during the academic year. The “Peer Navigator met with 34 young adults and offered services to 28 clients who [were] actively enrolled in YIT.”
  - This young adult “was selected to receive the YIT Young Adult Leadership Award.” He and several others were also honored “for their leadership and accomplishments at the CMC Annual Agency Dinner. With their parents and supports present, the youth were honored and given a chance to share their experience with the agency [staff] as a whole, as well as [with] CMC Board members.”
- Despite experiencing “a great deal of turn-over” in staffing for the YIT program, the CMC continued “to work on development of New Horizons Youth Leadership Board, and help youth develop the interest in their communities and leadership skills. We continue to provide youth with many programming opportunities, including a multitude of group activities, including substance abuse groups, pizza and movie groups, New Horizons, Adventure [and Wilderness] Programming, and expressive arts groups. CMC continues to empower young adults through New Horizons. They are in the process of planning the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Youth Summit for the Orange and North Windsor regions for September, 2013...This has proven to have tremendous impact and success in engaging local communities and engaging them in a supportive process of understanding and destigmatizing our youth.”
  - All TAY (including YIT and JOBS) staff, including the young adult Peer Navigator, participated in Transition to Independence (TIP) training.
- The CMC continues to collaborate closely with multiple partners - especially The Junction teen center - “to intercept young adults who are out of school and engage them in productive activities and work towards gaining employment, participating in Mental Health Treatment, maintaining or securing safe and stable housing...and obtaining health insurance as needed.”

Orleans/No. Essex: The YIT plan for this region was originally – and remains - to use the existing Teen Drop-in Center (run by Northeast Kingdom Community Action, NEKCA) to support young people who are not receiving the services they need from other sources. During this period “one of NEKCA’s biggest challenges was losing the Street Outreach Grant from the Federal Youth Service Bureau. We have had this grant for many years with no increase. However, this paid for a part-time position to help with the Teen Drop-in Center. Now NEKCA is dependent upon the YIT Grant to run the Teen Drop-in Center. If YIT ends our small rural community could lose the one place youth and young adults have as a safe place to hang out.”

- The 2 part-time YIT Coordinator positions also coordinate NEKCA’s Runaway and Homeless Youth Program (RHYP) for enhanced integration of service. Both Coordinators attended the national annual RHYP conference, also Mental Health First Aid, USA training. “They are currently working on revamping the Orleans County Youth Advisory Board (OCYAB) and actively recruiting new members [including from the Teen Drop-in Center] to fill seats on the Board. The majority of the previous OCYAB members have moved on to other opportunities due to employment and educational opportunities outside of Orleans County.”
- The YIT/RHYP Coordinators work with young people at the Teen Drop-in Center on a “genogram or family connections map,...a ‘Planning My Future’ worksheet,...and actively use Rationales and In-Vivo teaching [from TIP training] to assist the youth with following through” on their goals, including use of mental health services.
  - A substance abuse counselor from Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS) comes to the Teen Drop-in Center weekly. The counselor “will schedule appointments and meet with the youth and young adults in one of the NEKCA offices if that is what makes the young people feel comfortable.”

Rutland: The Boys and Girls Club of Rutland’s Life Skills or Drop-in Center served 228 young people over this six months, first reaching most of them through Friday Night Live or other community events. Many then came to the Drop-in Center for help finding work, housing, a meal or to learn how to cook or do community service or an internship. The staff (including the new Drop-in Center Coordinator) participate in numerous community collaborations to stay informed about housing, employment, higher education, and substance abuse prevention opportunities for young people. They applied for and received a grant and training from the Vermont Department of Health to offer the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP), a sexual education program for young people aged 10-20. The YIT staff completed TIP training, and the YIT Coordinator attended the national Leadership Academy offered by Georgetown University.

Southern Windham: YIT is one of several youth-serving programs operated by Youth Services, Inc. The YIT Grant pays for case management for supportive housing. Youth Services also provides at least Peer Outreach, Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs (RHYP), Diversion, and Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ). It has strong collaborative relationships with the local Boys and Girls Club (where Youth Services provides a weekly dinner during a Drop-in Evening for young adults); HCRS (with mental health and JOBS services), Vermont Adult Learning and the Community High School of the Vermont State Department of Corrections (DOC), along with other State Departments (VR, Children and Families, etc.). “During this period, Youth Services hosted five Provider Meetings where system of care providers discussed common cases in order to update other team members on young adults’ progress or to troubleshoot challenges in the young adults’ lives.”

- “One of the biggest goals for young adults that case managers work with is finding stable housing....We have a total of 2 young adults who have continued to live in the Cobblestone (a Single Room Occupancy building) through the collaboration with Windham Windsor Housing Trust (WWHT). Additionally, we have housed 12 young adults and two children in the shelter apartment run by the Morningside Shelter/Youth Services Collaboration. Youth Services provided housing subsidies for independent

living to 12 young adults in the Transitional Living Program (TLP). Youth Services provided 729 nights of housing for young adults in this reporting period (that does not include the children of the youth served).”

No. Windsor/No. Windham: During this period, Health Care and Rehabilitation Services (HCRS) consolidated its JOBS and YIT programs and staff for transition-aged youth across three regions (Brattleboro, Springfield, and Hartford) under one supervisor. The YIT Case Manager and Peer Worker from HCRS continued to work in the Springfield area with “partners from Department of Labor (DOL), Youth Development Coordinator (YDC), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), JOBS, and Department of Education (DOE).” They continued to “meet twice a month to collaborate on client service plans and young adult programming”...including the Real Game and “a la cart employment workshops” for young people delivered with the Department of Corrections (DOC) Community High School and Vermont Adult Learning (VAL). They collaborated closely with the Springfield Prevention Coalition and the Making Change “substance abuse support group for young adults who are considering or committed to recovery....Two YIT grant involved young adults continued to serve as full board members of the Springfield Prevention Coalition.” Also, a “Springfield Youth Advisory Board has begun to meet,” and there is interest in creating a teen center.

Washington: The System of Care (SOC) Coordinator for this region uses 2-3 young adult Youth Engagement Specialists (YES) to plan and lead meetings of a Youth Advisory Group of about 10 regular members who meet monthly at a local church. “The church has their own Youth Group and have talked about getting both groups together for a few meetings and then join together to reach out into the community and volunteering.” The YES attended the annual conference of the National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health where they had “a huge opportunity to see what other States were doing with their Youth Advisory Groups. They learned a lot from the workshops that they attended....They came back excited to...get the group to move forward to peer outreach for the group and to the community.” The group members are now wearing Teens 4 Change T-shirts to community events.

- One YES was hired by Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMHS) for 20 hours a week working with the Chocolates for Change Program.
- Another aspect of the YIT program in this region is delivery of Family Round Table events. One Pre/Postvention Suicide training was delivered to 6 parents.
- An earlier attempt to create and staff a very time-limited Drop-in Center will be revamped, perhaps to offer scheduled training around specific topics.
- Though few young adults were ready to enroll in mental health services, they did request use of Flex Funds to meet basic needs – such as for phone cards, gas cards, bus transportation, maternity clothes or clothes for interviews, household goods to move out of homelessness, a car seat or other baby things for new Moms, driver’s permit, books for college, stipends to attend workshops, art supplies for art therapy, etc.