

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](mailto:nekys@nekys.org) or visit our website at: [www.nkeyouthservices.org](http://www.nkeyouthservices.org).