

## **YIT Article from Rutland for DMH Newsletter for week of June 21, 2010**

**Rutland collaborates to help youth in transition:** Over 30 local agencies and organizations have come up with a plan to help youth and young adults as they make the transition into adulthood. The result is a street outreach team and new life skills center that opened on June 7<sup>th</sup>. The Boys & Girls Club of Rutland County along with Rutland Mental Health, the Vermont Achievement Center, the Rutland Free Clinic, and many others decided to open "the Center" at the Merchants Row Boys & Girls Club. The Center is open 4 days a week with free lunch and opportunities for young adults ages 16-21. The Center is a central point where youth in transition can access services and build caring relationships with a great staff and community volunteers. In addition to the Center, a street outreach team has been formed to go to places where youth "hang out" to both reach out to them and to inform them about the Center.

The Rutland Region Youth in Transition life skills center and street outreach program are funded by the Vermont Department of Health and SAMHSA. The goal of this six year project is to improve the system of care for Vermont's transition-aged youth and young adults (16 through 21) so that they have adequate preparation and the necessary supports to be productively engaged in the community and free from incarceration.

Staffing the Center are director Brooke Nuckles, coordinator Alisha Keel and peer outreach worker, Sarah Schrieber. The street outreach and center is also supported by the Vermont Achievement Center (VAC), with Teresa Felix who prepares and serves lunch and also offers cooking for life classes. Jeff Durkee and interns from VAC and the Vermont Coalition for Runaway and Homeless Youth Program will also be present at the center doing outreach. The Rutland Free Clinic will contribute by helping uninsured youth and young adults access healthcare and health insurance. All the services and opportunities at the life skills center are free of charge.

"Whether it's shelter for the night or job skills to gain meaningful employment, we want to help people in the long run. Our goal is to help someone who is disenfranchised from the community and lost to learn skills so they can become a productive member of society," said Center Director Brooke Nuckles. "This program is a great collaboration for the Rutland region and we are very excited to begin."

The grand opening and ribbon cutting for the life skills center took place during lunch on Monday, June 7<sup>th</sup>. The community was invited to attend, tour the center and meet the street outreach team and center staff. Lunch was served.

If you would like more information or have something you would like to offer to young adults as a part of the Rutland Region youth in transition program, please contact:

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