

Vermont Regional Youth in Transition (YIT)  
System of Care Plans and Progress  
Compared with Federal Expectations  
As of September 30, 2010

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## PREFACE

This document has been prepared for the official Year 2 site visit on October 4-7, 2010 from the federal Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) to review the progress of the Vermont Youth in Transition (YIT) program against the requirements of Children's Mental Health Initiative (CMHI) Cooperative Agreement # 1U79SM058485-01 and -02.

The YIT is a statewide program funded through the Vermont State Department of Mental Health (DMH). It is advised by the interagency, interdepartmental YIT Leadership Team established by the Agency of Human Services (AHS) years before the grant was written and awarded; the Leadership Team now meets quarterly. The YIT program interfaces with the State and Local Interagency Teams which carry out Act 264 and the AHS-DOE (Department of Education) Interagency Agreement to serve children and youth with serious emotional disturbance and other disabilities. A YIT Operations and Outreach Team meets monthly to guide the program's activities.

All positions required by CMHS to implement this Cooperative Agreement are filled at the state level to provide support to the twelve regions delivering the services. Thus, none of the twelve regions received resources specifically for a Principal Investigator, a Project Director, a Lead Family Contact, a Youth Engagement Specialist, a Cultural and Linguistic Competence Coordinator, a Social Marketing Coordinator, or for a Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator. The CMHS requirement for all of these positions also means there are fewer dollars available for (regional) services.

Nevertheless, when the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team issued its "Invitation to Communities" in February, 2009 to the regions to engage in strategic planning to strengthen and build a system of care for young adults in transition, all twelve regions chose to participate. The Invitation specified that the regions must include family, youth and cultural representatives in their planning and ongoing management of program implementation. The Invitation also instructed the regions to specify what they would do to provide case management and other evidence-based practices and training for their staff and for families and youth. The Invitation spoke about the need to create a vision, develop consensus among competing perspectives about youth, and offer public education and outreach about the chosen services. It also said the regions must pledge to cooperate with the evaluation and identify a liaison for data collection.

The following pages present a synopsis of each regional plan and progress specifically related to the federal requirements for strategic planning, establishing a system of care structure, fiscal management, services and supports, cultural and linguistic competence, family and youth leadership, public education and social marketing and evaluation.

The statewide progress related to each of these requirements is described in a separate document, the federal progress report. Both documents are based on sub-grantees' progress reports submitted to the DMH for the time period ending June 30, 2010, also on supplemental information from the YIT Evaluation Team, from emailed correspondence and phone calls, and on field observations.

The information has been compiled by Brenda Bean, YIT Project Director. If the reader has any questions or concerns about this document, please contact her at 802-229-1310 or [BrendaJBean@comcast.net](mailto:BrendaJBean@comcast.net).

## SUMMARY OF YOUTH IN TRANSITION PLAN AND PROGRESS FOR Addison

**System of Care Planning:** This region completed a strategic plan in accordance with the Youth In Transition (YIT) “Invitation to Communities” issued in February, 2009. The plan was approved by the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team before a sub-grant for implementation was issued by the Department of Mental Health to a fiscal agent (Counseling Service of Addison County - CSAC) on behalf of the region.

**System of Care Structure:** Young Adult Services Council: Subcommittee of the LIT to strengthen the system of care by: Educating the community on the role and associated benefits of this project.

- Strengthening coordination at key intercept points (Court system, etc.)
- Offering county-wide training opportunities to service providers.
- Council facilitated by Young Adult Advocate (Full-time Case Manager).

**Fiscal Management:** The fiscal agent manages the budget in accordance with the regional plan with input from the Young Adult Services Council, the regional YIT Steering Committee. The Young Adult Advocate, in conjunction with the CSAC Youth and Family Director and with input from the Peer Outreach Worker, manages a pool of available dollars to meet the needs of young adults that cannot be funded from other sources.

- Use of the funds focuses on addressing basic needs and barriers to accessing services.
- Young adults must request these flexible funds through an application process.

**System of Care Services and Supports:** Young Adult Advocate provides a tangible, familiar connection (e.g., *case management service*) for young adults. Primary job functions:

- Supervise and effectively utilize a part-time Peer Outreach Worker;
  - With Peer Outreach Worker, conduct outreach to and build leadership among young adults;
  - Work with individual young adults to identify a “Team” and build a Coordinated Service Plan that addresses their expressed and revealed individualized needs.
  - Schedule and facilitate, when appropriate, service provider team meetings, modeling the 264 process.
  - Maintain a caseload of a minimum of 15 young adults for a period of not longer than one year per person.
  - Complete required data collection and evaluation activities.
  - Facilitate a community process to clarify the local system of care and develop corresponding MOU's, identify area resources and work towards service development for young adults in transition.
- **Good news:** Joshua Schupp-Star was hired in June, 2010; his outreach experience and crisis background will be particularly helpful. He is employed through CSAC and shares an office with the JOBS program.
  - **Barriers:** The LIT Team struggled with hiring for the position. The Team interviewed multiple candidates and actually offered the position and was refused twice before successfully recruiting Josh. The salary was the primary reason for the refusals. In retrospect, the Team may have been looking for the wrong type of candidate initially. It had focused on finding a staff person who had considerable background in systems work, and through the process of interviewing came to the conclusion that someone who can connect well to youth is a more important priority. This decision helped refocus the recruitment, leading to a better result.

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- **Number served through end of August, 2010:** 2 reported through Study Inclusion Criteria Checklist (SICC) for the YIT Evaluation Team.

**Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC):** This region has focused on responding to youth culture, especially the culture of youth with low socio-economic status. In addition, the Young Adult Services Council, with the help of the Young Adult Advisory Board, Young Adult Advocate, and Peer Outreach Worker, infuses CLC into the key human services systems and programs within Addison County as follows:

- Partnering with the local Migrant Worker Coalition. *[At the request of the Addison Young Adult Services Council, the statewide YIT CLC Coordinator presented a workshop at the annual Migrant Workers' Coalition Conference.]*
- Advocating for the design and delivery of services and supports to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse groups (e.g., family-guided and community-based; flexible times, service hours; language access services; non-traditional therapeutic practice, culture-specific assessments, interventions and treatment)
- Conducting training on the use of appropriate strategies to address barriers to the design and delivery of culturally and linguistically competent interventions, services, and supports (e.g., staff attitude and manner, service hours, service location, language, insurance, lack of awareness about systems of care principles and practices including failure to consider family, lack of knowledge about diverse cultural groups, fear and distrust of the service system, stigma associated with social-emotional and behavioral disorders or mental illness)
- Utilizing outreach to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities among other young adults experiencing social-emotional and behavioral disorders or mental illness
- Evaluating the quality of outreach, interventions, services, and supports by incorporating into the Coordinated Services Planning process the use of family and youth/young adult satisfaction surveys.

**Family Driven Care:** The region understands that family driven care is important for children and adolescents. The YIT staff and agencies represented on the Young Adult Services Council do all in their power to ensure that the young adults being served are supported by their families and/or other adult allies. Some of the young adults are pregnant or parenting teens; they receive mentoring and other support from the agencies on the Council (especially the Addison County Parent-Child Center) to strengthen their capacities as parents.

- **Youth Guided Care:** Youth and young adults guide their own individualized plans of care. Also, there will be a Young Adult Advisory Board. Its primary role is to work with the Addison County LIT and the Young Adult Services Council in order to further develop an appropriate System of Care for this population and to develop leadership among young adults. Stipends support young adult participation on this Board. The Board will be facilitated by the part-time Peer Outreach Worker. Responsibilities of Board members include:
  - ❖ Consistently including the voice of young adults in defining the direction of service delivery.
  - ❖ Serving as trainers or presenters to teach students/service professionals what is important about engaging and serving young adults.

**Public Education and Social Marketing:** The mission of the Young Adult Advisory Board shall be authored by the participating young adults but may include guiding the LIT Team and the Young Adult Services Council in "Increasing Awareness and Reducing Stigma" by promoting and marketing young adult involvement, what it is, how to do it, and what the benefits of young adult involvement are for other young adults, service providers and the community.

One early activity will be sponsoring an exhibition of the High/Low Project as community education in collaboration with CSAC, the VT Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs and the Parent/Child Center. The High/Low Project

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uses visual and audio materials to document the high and low points of individual young adults in transition using their own words and chosen images.

Every other week, the Department of Mental Health publishes an electronic Bi-Weekly Update. This region provided an article for the Bi-weekly Update to inform legislators and other key policy-makers and stakeholders about the start-up of its YIT program.

**Evaluation:** The region agreed in its strategic plan and sub-grant from the Department of Mental Health to cooperate with the YIT Evaluation Team to meet the national and state evaluation requirements. An Evaluation Liaison has been assigned to facilitate the timely submission of regional data to the Evaluation Team.

## SUMMARY OF YOUTH IN TRANSITION PLAN AND PROGRESS FOR: Bennington

**System of Care Planning:** This region completed a strategic plan in accordance with the Youth In Transition (YIT) “Invitation to Communities” issued in February, 2009. The plan was approved by the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team before a sub-grant for implementation was issued by the Department of Mental Health to a fiscal agent (United Counseling Service of Bennington County - UCS) on behalf of the region.

**System of Care Structure:** The Youth Services Council (YSC) consists of a core group of interagency partners who worked together to develop the YIT regional plan. The YSC is an extension of the Local Interagency Team (LIT). The primary goal and mission of the YSC is to develop a coordinated system of care for transition age youth and young adults, paying particular attention to those who are experiencing serious emotional disturbance (SED). The YSC builds on the strengths of the regional YIT plan and identifies ways of filling the service gaps. It is in the identification of service redundancy and the realization that services are often disjointed that the YSC feels it can make the most difference in developing a more cohesive, efficient system of care for transitioning young adults.

For instance, one area of overlap identified was that of the skills development groups offered by the various independent living programs: Transitional Living, Youth Development, Teen Housing Options programs and others. Each program offers transitional living skills development groups that are required as part of their programs. The YSC has suggested that the facilitators of the groups work together to identify a common curriculum and divide up the facilitation process in order to make the system more efficient and share limited resources. The Youth Outreach Coordinator and a Youth Outreach Worker (YOW) co-facilitate the YSC to ensure attention to these kinds of system improvements.

**Fiscal Management:** The fiscal agent manages the budget in accordance with the regional plan with input from the YSC, the regional YIT Steering Committee.

**System of Care Services and Supports:** The two primary focus areas of the Youth Outreach Program (YOP) are outreach to young people and enhancing the existing system of care (see System of Care Structure, above). The YOP consists of one full time Youth Outreach Coordinator and two to three part time Youth Outreach Workers (YOW). The YOP staff are housed with the JOBS and Transitional Living Program staff and supervised by the JOBS manager.

The YOP Coordinator seeks out transition-age youth and young adults who have been identified by the community as at risk of entering the Correctional system or of other dysfunctional behavior, develops a supportive relationship, builds a strength-based plan, connects them with services as needed and with a positive peer group or mentor either through a Youth Outreach Worker (YOW) or the Youth Advisory Council (YAC).

For the YOWs, in general, the plan is for the Youth Outreach Coordinator to work with the YSC and YAC to identify 2-3 young adults who have been served by the system of care and are in recovery. The YOWs are hired on a part-time, short-term basis and paid a stipend for being trained peer mentors with young people for up to a year, at which time other YOWs will be identified and trained as paid supports. This rotation will continue throughout the grant cycle. The “graduating” YOWs will mentor the new YOWs during the transition period.

**Good news:** Tom Campbell, a long-time resident of Bennington and employee of UCS, became the YOP Coordinator in February. The interview and hiring process was collaborative and included the young women

who were involved in developing the grant, Katrina Hollis and Crystal Careau. They were hired as the first 2 YOWs. The program staff quickly began an intensive and extensive outreach process, meeting with several partner agencies such as Corrections, Vocational Rehab, the local parent child center, Sunrise, Department for Children and Families, and Thatcher House and Six Bank Street, local homeless shelters, businesses, and youth. Tom Campbell attended a young person's open Narcotics Anonymous meeting at the Turning Point Club to discuss the YOP. As a result, he connected with a young man who was struggling with staying clean and making positive connections with his community. The young man continues to maintain his recovery and was able to participate in a Summer Youth Employment Program at YOP assisting Tom.

- **Barriers:** Because they are a critical component of the YIT plan but inexperienced as employees, there may be a need for both more continuity and more supervision of YOW staff than originally envisioned.
- **Number served through end of August, 2010:** 9 reported through Study Inclusion Criteria Checklist (SICC) for the YIT Evaluation Team. Before engaging with YOP, none were connected with other services and all were at risk of becoming involved with Corrections.

**Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC):** This region has focused on responding to youth culture, especially the culture of youth with low socio-economic status.

**Family Driven Care:** The region understands that family driven care is important for children and adolescents. The YIT staff and agencies represented on the YSC do all in their power to ensure that the young adults being served are supported by their families and/or other adult allies. Some of the young adults are pregnant or parenting teens; they receive mentoring and other support from the agencies on the Council (especially the Sunrise Family Center) to strengthen their capacities as parents.

**Youth Guided Care:** Youth and young adults guide their own individualized plans of care. Also, the YIT regional plan calls for a Youth Advisory Council made up of a group of young people who are in the process of transitioning or who have transitioned to adulthood and who have worked or who are working with the mental health, substance abuse, and/or criminal justice systems. To bring this into existence, the YOWs created Teens For Change (T4C). T4C is an advisory council, support group, and events planning group whose mission is to "support the development of a positive youth culture in Bennington by building meaningful relationships, courage and, confidence". Bennington lacks a teen center. Typically up to 10 participants meet each week to discuss issues in the community and plan positive youth activities. The T4C group planned and coordinated 2 events before June 30, 2010.

The first event was a dance held in April at the Moose Family Center in Bennington. The event included free admission, food, a DJ with dance contests and giveaways, and it gave the opportunity to "recruit" more youth. The Moose donated the space, soda, and clean up. The event went so well, the Moose Family Center offered to continue to work with T4C for future events. Approximately 70 youth attended the dance. Several volunteers, including parents, chaperoned.

The second event was held in June at the Bennington Lanes (bowling). 53 youth attended the event and bowled, ate pizza, won prizes, and played in the pool tournament, Wii Dance, and Dance Revolution. T4C youth who planned the event successfully solicited more than 90 prize and food donations from businesses like Price Chopper, Stewarts, and local area businesses. Each young person who attended the event was given a T4C ID badge to be used at future events. T4C hopes to work with local businesses to recognize the badge and offer discounts to participating youth.



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The YOP, the Sunrise Family Center, and the Department of Labor collaborated to offer a 2010 Summer Youth Employment Program for four youth. Katrina and Crystal, along with their supervisors, developed a six-week "Community Action" curriculum which guided the youth to identify a community issue important to them. The youth had to facilitate a focus group about the topic, explore themselves and what they "stand for" as well as explore community resources in the process of creating an activity or response relevant to the issue. This is very much like the process Katrina and Crystal experienced as they worked with the YSC on the regional YIT plan in the summer, 2008. The participants of the "Community Action" Summer Youth Employment Program helped T4C plan a September 11, 2010 "End of summer bash" at Willow Park. The event included music and dancing, a BBQ, volleyball tournament, and a movie "on the big screen".

Katrina and Tom were interviewed at the local radio station about the YOP program and its intent to increase youth voice in the community. After the radio interview, there was a discussion with T4C regarding the lack of teen voice and programming at the local station. Several youth thought it would be great to be able to work with the station to program a Teen Radio Hour for after-school. The YOP staff will explore this with the local radio station.

**Public Education and Social Marketing:** The youth outreach workers and young people marched in the May Fest parade as well as developing brochures to promote the Youth Outreach Program (YOP) and Teens for Change (T4C). The program staff created the YOP brochure as a way to promote the program and recruit youth. The Youth Outreach Workers (YOWs) created the T4C brochure in order to promote the group and increase donations from local businesses.

Program staff and the agency (UCS) were featured in local newspaper articles regarding the purpose of the program and activities. The local paper ran a story about the bowling event, discussed the goals of the activities, and how youth who are interested in participating can get in touch with the T4C group.

Every other week, the Department of Mental Health publishes an electronic Bi-Weekly Update. This region provided an article for the Bi-weekly Update to inform legislators and other key policy-makers and stakeholders about the start-up of its YIT program.

The YOWs led workshops at the last annual statewide Collaboration Conference in Killington, VT (October, 2009) and at the first statewide conference for youth and young adults (the Young Adult Voice Movement conference in Bolton, VT, May, 2008). At both workshops the YOWs spoke about the importance of youth voice, presenting their points of view in a very engaging and creative manner.

The Youth Outreach Coordinator will plan and facilitate summits on youth during the grant period. The summits will work to identify and deal with larger community issues affecting successful transition to adulthood. The summits will enhance a community system of care and work toward identifying situations that impact youth. The focus will be to develop a collaborative method of addressing the identified issues.

**Evaluation:** The region agreed in its strategic plan and sub-grant from the Department of Mental Health to cooperate with the YIT Evaluation Team to meet the national and state evaluation requirements. An Evaluation Liaison has been assigned to facilitate the timely submission of regional data to the Evaluation Team.

## SUMMARY OF YOUTH IN TRANSITION PLAN AND PROGRESS FOR Caledonia/Southern Essex

**System of Care Planning:** This region completed a strategic plan in accordance with the Youth In Transition (YIT) “Invitation to Communities” issued in February, 2009. The plan was approved by the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team before a sub-grant for implementation was issued by the Department of Mental Health to a fiscal agent (Northeast Kingdom Youth Services - NKYS) on behalf of the region.

**System of Care Structure:** The Caledonia/Southern Essex Local Interagency Team (CSE LIT) guides this regional plan, meeting monthly with the Transition Facilitator and quarterly with the young adult advisory board. NKYS, the employer and the fiscal agent for this plan, is a member of the CSE LIT.

**Fiscal Management:** The fiscal agent manages the budget in accordance with the regional plan with input from the CSE LIT, the regional YIT Steering Committee.

**System of Care Services and Supports:** The evidence-supported Transition to Independence Process (TIP) System is used to guide the work of the CSE LIT to accomplish two general objectives:

- To reduce the number of young adults entering the criminal justice system in conjunction with the Sequential Intercept Model’s (SIM) 5 Intercepts; and
- To increase the number of young adults who successfully gain skills, knowledge, and the ability to live successful, independent lives through an Independent Life Plan designed by them with help from a Transition Facilitator.

The Transition Facilitator, Tammy Knight, (hired in March, 2010) works out of the NKYS Living Room on Bagley Street in St. Johnsbury (Caledonia County). Free to all youth age 15 through 21, NEKYS Living Room provides a safe place for youth to meet, talk and participate in positive and healthy recreational activities. Youth/young adults who frequent the Living Room serve as recruiters for others. The Living Room provides a peer to peer environment that allows both the youth/young adults and the Transition Facilitator to develop their relationships slowly and at the comfort level of the youth/young adults. The Transition Facilitator will not be limited to this one center. In time he or she will travel to the Lunenburg and Gilman areas to further develop a location there to serve youth/young adults from Southern Essex County.

- **Good news:** The YIT Facilitator met with 7 area agencies and community partners including Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation, JOBS, Community College of Vermont, Economic Services, Northeast Kingdom Community Action, and Probation and Parole. Additional agencies including Umbrella, Department of Children and Families and Churches have been contacted through weekly community partner meetings. YIT provided training and education to 5 schools including Lyndon Institute, Caledonia School, Danville School, Blue Mountain Union School, and Concord School.
- **Barriers:** The Transition Facilitator has encountered the following barriers within the system of care for individual youth/young adults:

Barrier #1: Health Insurance - If youth live at home and are under 21, they have to count their parents’ income. Sometimes youth do live at home but do not receive any money from their parents. Having to count their parents’ income can either make them ineligible or pay a premium that is unreasonable.

Barrier #2: 3Squares VT - If an individual is living in a home with his/her parents and is under the age of 23, he/she cannot receive 3Squares VT (food stamps). These youth are living with their parents but are not necessarily receiving any money or access to the food in the home.

Barrier #3: Housing and accessibility to benefits - The waitlists for Sections 8 vouchers and subsidized housing are very long. Therefore, many youth who are over 18 stay at their parents' home, but this leads to an inability to receive benefits such as 3SquaresVT and affordable health insurance.

Barrier #4: Transportation - Many youth do not have private means of transportation, and youth who live in towns such as Concord, Sheffield, or Groton cannot get to employment or appointments due to lack of public transportation.

Barrier #5: Reach Up – The Transition Facilitator encountered barriers in helping a 16 year-old mother receive a Reach-Up grant (support provided by Economic Services for TANF clients). The teen mom wanted to live with her boyfriend, age 18, but Economic Services said that she could not then receive the grant because he is not the father of the baby and/or aged 25 or older. The frustrated mom stated, “So if I was living with a 25 year-old man, they consider that an approved living situation?!” Thankfully, after some hard work by the Transition Facilitator and a team meeting, the mom was approved to live with her boyfriend. However, the stress of the initial barrier caused a lot of turmoil.

Youth receiving YIT case management or serving on the Youth Advisory Board have commented about certain barriers in the system of care that make successful transition difficult or impossible:

Quote #1: “I feel like I am judged by the community based on my appearance and my age when I apply for employment. I feel that I do not have an equal opportunity to be hired and given a chance to show what I can do.”

Quote #2: “The school environments in the Northeast Kingdom (NEK) do not provide a challenging environment so I don't want to go to school. I'd rather drop out. I do not feel as though I have a voice in the classroom. The teacher's opinion is the only one that matters and you are not allowed to add in your own opinion.”

- **Number served through end of August, 2010:** 15 reported through Study Inclusion Criteria Checklist (SICC) for the YIT Evaluation Team. 7 of the 15 are participants in the regional post-charge Diversion program. The Transition Facilitator helps to motivate them to meet their contractual requirements to avoid returning to court. She also supports them in not committing further crimes by connecting them – and the other youth and young adults – with services:
  1. 5 youth - Economic Services for health insurance and 3 squares VT.
  2. 3 youth - Department of Labor to find employment.
  3. 2 youth - housing applications.
  4. 1 pregnant youth - Parent Education offered through NEKYS.
  5. 1 youth - NEK Human Services for evaluation for mental health services.
  6. 1 youth - Social Security application for SSI/SSDI.

**Cultural and Linguistic Competence:** This region has focused on responding to youth culture, especially the culture of youth with low socio-economic status.

**Family Driven Care:** The region understands that family driven care is important for children and adolescents. The YIT staff and agencies represented on the CSE LIT do all in their power to ensure that the young adults being served are supported by their families and/or other adult allies. Some of the young adults are pregnant or parenting teens; they receive mentoring and other support from the agencies on the CSE LIT to strengthen their capacities as parents.

**Youth Guided Care:** Youth and young adults guide their own individualized plans of care.

The YIT facilitator transported and supported youth to attend two different conferences: the Youth Development Conference for foster care youth at Castleton State College on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010 and the (YIT) Young Adult Voice Movement in Bolton, VT on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

The CSE LIT has created an advisory group comprised of youth/young adults who have successfully navigated the system, are familiar with services offered in the community, and/or who have had experience with educational programs. The first meeting of the Youth Advisory Board took place on May 13, 2010 with 2 youth; 3 youth participated in the second meeting on June 23, 2010. The group will, with technical assistance, develop its own guidelines and structure. The advisory group will be asked by the LIT to assist with advocating for system development, expansion, and evaluation -- and for reform of funding and policy to support a responsive, effective service system for young people in transition and their families. These activities will inform service providers and other community resources, also build leadership and a sense of community investment in youth/young adults.

**Public Education and Social Marketing:** The CSE LIT will supplement the technical assistance and training provided at the State level about the Sequential Intercept and TIP Models. Some trainings being considered are about the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets and the Circle of Courage Model.

Every other week, the Department of Mental Health publishes an electronic Bi-Weekly Update. This region provided an article for the Bi-weekly Update to inform legislators and other key policy-makers and stakeholders about the start-up of its YIT program.

**Evaluation:** The region agreed in its strategic plan and sub-grant from the Department of Mental Health to cooperate with the YIT Evaluation Team to meet the national and state evaluation requirements. An Evaluation Liaison has been assigned to facilitate the timely submission of regional data to the Evaluation Team.

## SUMMARY OF YOUTH IN TRANSITION PLAN AND PROGRESS FOR Chittenden

**System of Care Planning:** This region completed a strategic plan in accordance with the Youth In Transition (YIT) “Invitation to Communities” issued in February, 2009. The plan was approved by the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team before a sub-grant for implementation was issued by the Department of Mental Health to a fiscal agent (The HowardCenter) on behalf of the region.

**System of Care Structure:** The Local Interagency Team (LIT) in Chittenden County appointed its ACCESS Team to create the strategic YIT plan for Chittenden County. The ACCESS Team is in the process of being expanded to a regional YIT Leadership Team with more - and more diverse - young adults, parents, service providers, school personnel, and community members to oversee and manage the plan.

**Fiscal Management:** The fiscal agent manages the budget in accordance with the regional plan with input from the regional YIT Leadership Team (e.g., Steering Committee).

**System of Care Services and Supports:** While following and improving their agencies’ use of Dr. Rusty Clark’s Transition to Independence Process (TIP), the regional YIT Leadership Team will:

1. Increase the capacity of the JOBS (Jump On Board for Success) Program, so more JOBS staff can be hired and more young adults can be served.
  2. Improve collaboration with existing housing and housing support programs to increase housing options for transition-age young adults.
  3. Hire Young Adult Navigators to provide assistance to young adults ages 16 to 21, within the target population, to secure information and connect to existing community services and resources, to ensure an informed and successful transition to adulthood.
  4. Create a Parent Navigator position to provide assistance to parents/caregivers of transition-age young adults within the target population, to secure information and connect to existing community resources and services for the parents to ensure their child’s informed and successful transition to adulthood.
  5. Provide a Transition Plan for all young people, ages 15 and older, who meet the criteria for an Act 264 or AHS-DOE Coordinated Services Plan.
- **Good news:** YIT Leadership Team members explored collaborative relationships with the following partners:
    - Burlington Food Shelf – for participation in “Community Kitchen”, a culinary training program.
    - Burlington Housing Authority – for housing options.
    - Burlington High School.

Two new YIT JOBS Case Managers were hired on April 12, 2010. Full time Case Manager Chris Vaughn is working with youth within rural areas of Chittenden County, while part-time Case Manager Hina Rizvi is working with young adults from the multi-cultural community as well as on cultural competence in community systems.

Chris Vaughn’s activities included the following:

- Established relationships with school social workers at Milton High School, Colchester High School’s Alternative Program, Champlain Valley Union High School, and Jean Garvin School. These relationships resulted in 10 referrals; 8 of these referrals have been consistently engaged with Chris. Of them, by June 30

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5 young adults were enrolled in the YIT Evaluation “Common Study” and 3 more were waiting for signed parental consent.

- Connected 2 young adults to mental health counseling services at Spectrum.
- Met with representatives from Vermont Adult Learning, Community Action, Chittenden Emergency Food Shelter, Salvation Army, CCTA and Bike Recycle Vermont in regards to available services and volunteer/community service/job skills training resources.
- Established connections with many businesses (food service, retail, pet grooming) in Milton, Vermont and Pine Computers in South Burlington (re: apprenticeship for a career in computer/tech support).
- Maintained a job board featuring applicable help wanted ads.

Hina Rizvi’s activities included the following:

- Met with Association of Africans Living in VT (AALA), O’Brien Community (Teen) Center for multi-cultural youth, VT Refugee Resettlement Program, “Skills for Life” Case Manager at Franklin Square transitional housing site, Burlington High School staff (guidance, English as Second Language), “Neighbor Keepers”, and various Spectrum staff [Youth Development Program, Outreach Program, Drop-In Center, youth shelter, SRO (Transitional Living Program), COOP (residential setting for young males in DCF custody)] to share information about YIT/JOBS, learn about resources, and discuss referrals.
- Consulted with Director of the Behavior Therapy and Psychotherapy Center at the University of Vermont about outreach efforts to the refugee/immigrant population, especially minority youth.
- Met with 7 youth and provided individual assistance as needed: with immigration issues, with probation officer, with creating a resume and finding a job.
- Formed a support group for minority youth struggling to find employment.
- Began planning to teach a class at the O’Brien Teen Center using Spectrum’s current “jobs skills” class curriculum but modified for the refugee population.
- Assisted with development of a support group for multi-cultural youth in collaboration with other regions to create a safe space for them to meet and discuss issues they face being in the minority. The group will meet once a month, rotating around the regions.

Gloria Mahoney was hired as the Parent Transition Resource Consultant. She began working at the Vermont Family Network (VFN) in June, researching Chittenden County resources she will need to know about when offering support to families, including through the online transition resource center. She planned to meet with the CenterPoint Parent Advisory Group to survey what parents want and need from support groups and where there may be gaps. However, being the parent of a child with special needs, she found she needed to resign. Beginning in October, Bob DiMasi started employment as the new Parent Transition Resource Consultant.

Two part-time Young Adult Navigators, Annie Wohland and Michelle Paquette, were hired by Spectrum on June 29, 2010. They immediately met with Spectrum Peer Outreach Workers and Drop-in Center and Shelter staff to learn about program operations. They also met with the following organizations to learn about and discuss the services offered: Bike Recycle, Outright Vermont, Vermont Adult Learning, Chittenden County Community Action, the Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS), Burlington Emergency Shelter, Burlington Housing Authority, Restore Vermont, the HowardCenter school clinicians, and Women Helping Battered Women. They created a referral form and are distributing it to these and other organizations in the community to establish a “client base”. They have connected with several youth and begun the process of enrolling them in YIT services and evaluation.

- **Barriers:** According to the YIT regional plan, the new JOBS clinicians are to follow the existing JOBS management structure and enrollment requirements. However, it's been extremely difficult to find minority youth who fulfill the enrollment criteria, which includes documenting a disability and qualifying for services from Vocational Rehabilitation. Some of the reasons for this difficulty are:
  - When language is a barrier in determining eligibility for special education services, the process of assessment tends to end without an IEP being developed.
  - Families/youth have not been in the country long enough to have documentation about their mental health and behavioral struggles.
  - Stereotypes and stigma related to mental health problems.
  - No understanding of or acknowledgement of Depression or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).
  - Too traumatized to trust/open up.

Refugee families are pressured to be self-sufficient within three months of their arrival into their new country. It has become very clear in the short time of meeting with young adults from other cultures that - for the most part - it does not seem culturally appropriate to disclose/acknowledge that there are any struggles at home, in school, or in the community. Most of these young adults report that things are "fine" even if/when they are impacted negatively and feel obliged to give up studies in order to find employment to support their family or to leave school in order to stay home with young siblings so their parents can work. The Refugee Resettlement Program will not provide employment counseling to minority youth who are under 18 yrs of age.

Since lack of effective outreach by providers in this community may also be a factor in finding minority youth who qualify for JOBS, Hina plans to continue to make presentations to multicultural organizations and youth, including through the Sara Holbrook Center and the Imani Center. She will refer youth in need of mental health care to counselors who are cross-trained in youth culture and the struggles specific to immigrant youth.

Another barrier is that job opportunities in the Milton and Hinesburg areas are limited. Chris has found it difficult to identify available and viable jobs in those communities. Significant related challenges are lack of transportation and money. Although there now is a CCTA charter bus making limited runs to Milton, individuals cannot access it with a Medicaid bus pass. This affects a young adult's ability to not only get employment but also to get to services outside the Milton area. Chris plans to address this by exploring more comprehensive working/living opportunities like Job Corps and Youth Build for young adults from rural areas.

- **Number served through end of August, 2010:** 31 reported through Study Inclusion Criteria Checklist (SICC) for the YIT Evaluation Team.

**Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC):** This region has focused on responding to youth culture, especially the culture of youth with low socio-economic status. Additional measures are being taken to engage youth and young adults of minority backgrounds, especially those with refugee status. This has included hiring a .5 FTE JOBS Case Manager (Hina Rizvi) from Pakistan specifically to reach out to minority and/or refugee/immigrant families and youth. Hina has joined the statewide YIT CLC Advisory Group called "Hands of Friendship". The statewide CLC Coordinator Mercedes Avila is a member of this region's YIT Leadership Team. She has been very active with its strategic planning, has delivered several CLC training events for the HowardCenter, and is planning training for other agencies in the region.

**Family Driven Care:** The region understands that family driven care is important for children and adolescents. The YIT staff and agencies represented on the regional YIT Leadership Team do all in their power to ensure that the young adults being served are supported by their families and/or other adult allies. Some of the young adults are pregnant or parenting teens; they receive mentoring and other support from the agencies on the YIT Leadership Team to strengthen their capacities as parents.

**Youth Guided Care:** Youth and young adults guide their own individualized plans of care. Young adults helped to research and write the regional system of care plan; one (Annie) was later hired to be a Young Adult Navigator. Also, youth and young adults from this region who are refugees or from minority populations have attended the Chittenden YIT Leadership Team Committee and CLC Hands of Friendship meetings to share their perspectives. A Young Adult Navigator and the DCF Youth Development Coordinator are collaborating to start a Youth Advisory Board with current and former foster care youth meeting once a month.

**Public Education and Social Marketing:** To improve knowledge of, access to, and collaboration among, community resources for young adults, parents/caregivers, and providers, the YIT Leadership Team will develop an On-line Resource Center. It will be user-friendly and accessible to people regardless of their ability to access transportation. It will assist young adults aged 16 to 21 years old, caregivers/parents, and community service providers to find out what existing community services and resources are available and how to access them. Part of it will offer minority youth information pertaining to refugee and immigrant work permits, personal rights, and important links such as to ESL classes or to organizations with mentoring or employment training. The YIT staff will meet with people at the Essex Technical High School to discuss developing the Online Resource Center.

Every other week, the Department of Mental Health publishes an electronic Bi-Weekly Update. This region provided an article for the Bi-weekly Update to inform legislators and other key policy-makers and stakeholders about the start-up of its YIT program.

**Evaluation:** The region agreed in its strategic plan and sub-grant from the Department of Mental Health to cooperate with the YIT Evaluation Team to meet the national and state evaluation requirements. An Evaluation Liaison has been assigned to facilitate the timely submission of regional data to the Evaluation Team.



## SUMMARY OF YOUTH IN TRANSITION PLAN AND PROGRESS FOR Franklin-Grand Isle

**System of Care Planning:** This region completed a strategic plan in accordance with the Youth In Transition (YIT) “Invitation to Communities” issued in February, 2009. The plan was approved by the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team before a sub-grant for implementation was issued by the Department of Mental Health to a fiscal agent (Northwest Counseling and Support Services - NCSS) on behalf of the region.

**System of Care Structure:** The Regional YIT Steering Committee envisions this grant as the beginning of a long-term collaboration between several local agencies to support youth in transition. The Committee will work with professionals and community members to form high functioning interdisciplinary teams and coordinated plans to meet youth in transitions’ needs and achieve better outcomes. In addition, the Committee will address three priority problems:

- a) lack of knowledge of services (consumers and professionals didn’t know about many existing resources),
- b) inadequate transportation to reach transitional activities, and
- c) lack of housing for transition aged youth.

a) Knowledge of Services

Goal: Youth in transition will have knowledge of and understand the mental health services available to them in Franklin and Grand Isle counties. In addition, they will know how to access these services and will make referrals to their peers. An indicator for this outcome will be an increased number of referrals, and ultimately case loads, at the mental health agencies.

The YIT Steering Committee will explore creating a drop-in center by forging agreements with the various public agencies and private businesses/citizens for in-kind donations of equipment, space, etc. Youth from across the region frequent downtown St. Albans, making it the most strategic place to establish a drop- in center. A drop-in center would allow the Youth in Transition Manager (see below) and J.O.B.S. Case Managers to reach youth who congregate in the downtown vicinity. The drop-in center will be a friendly environment where youth can come to talk, have a snack, and establish a connection with NCSS Adolescent Services staff. The center will serve as a place to inform possible clients about the available services. The drop-in center will be a site where professionals from various agencies can connect with youth.

b) Transportation

Goal: Youth in transition will have access to reliable, safe, accessible, and affordable transportation in all areas of Franklin and Grand Isle counties. Indicators for this outcome will be evidence that youth are missing fewer appointments at local service agencies and are able to retain jobs for longer periods of time.

The YIT Steering Committee will work with Green Mountain Transit Agency (GMTA), Champlain Islanders Developing Essential Resources (CIDER), Department of Labor, and the United Way to explore establishing a new system of transportation for this population or increasing accessibility to existing resources. Options may include the purchase and staffing of a van to transport YIT to and from scheduled appointments and jobs, improved use of a volunteer driver system, or providing vouchers for and increasing access to existing bus services.

c) Housing

Goal: Youth in transition are better able to access temporary shelter on short notice or to secure and maintain permanent housing. An indicator that this is happening will be fewer calls to crisis hotlines, fewer youth sleeping in

cars, fewer young people at Samaritan House shelter (staying for shorter periods of time) and possibly a reduced crime rate in this population.

The YIT Steering Committee will work with the Franklin and Grand Isle Housing Solutions/Continuum of Care to explore a more comprehensive approach to solving the housing gap. Ideally, transitional housing will be available for participants to learn necessary skills and receive stabilization services so they become ready for a more permanent living situation.

**Fiscal Management:** The fiscal agent manages the budget in accordance with the regional plan with input from the regional YIT Steering Committee.

1. **System of Care Services and Supports:** A YIT Manager (1 FTE) has been hired to carry out the decisions of the YIT Steering Committee. Her work is overseen and managed by the existing Steering Committee to:
  - reach out to youth and young adults, disseminating information to them about services and opportunities throughout the community.
  - spearhead the creation of the Youth and Young Adult Advisory Network.
  - provide cross system case management for some young adults and refer others to the J.O.B.S. Case Managers.
  - serve as liaison to and provide data for the required YIT Evaluation.
  - make greater connections and collaborate with agencies, businesses and citizens.
  - write a white paper about the resources allocated to transportation and housing for transition aged youth in the region.

- **Good news:** Ebony Vernice Nyoni became the full-time YIT Grant Manager for Franklin and Grand Isle Counties starting on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Ebony focused first on learning about the Franklin and Grand Isle Communities, the current services offered to transition age youth, and the visions put forth through this grant process. Once oriented to Franklin and Grand Isle Counties, Ebony's focused shifted to outreach efforts and identifying youth interested in participating in the process (see the Public Education and Social Marketing section). 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.

When Ebony engages a young person in YIT case management, she uses the GAIN-Short Screener (Version: GSS 2.0.1) to quickly identify issues the youth may be facing - including mental health, emotional/behavioral, and/or substance abuse problems. When warranted, the GAIN-Short Screener can be followed by a GAIN-I Assessment or the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA). These assessment tools, in addition to face-to-face meetings, help Ebony and other NCSS staff to identify the barriers, strengths, and service needs of each youth entering the YIT program.

- **Barriers:** The difficulties encountered during this grant period were mainly reaching and recruiting youth. The rural nature of our communities and the fact that there are no centralized youth facilities in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties makes it difficult to find and engage youth. In addition, a lack of public and private transportation options is a barrier to youth who live in rural settings and want to attend events. During the next period, Ebony plans on addressing the transportation problem by developing outreach strategies that

involve set-ups at multiple sites. She will reach youth through “Eat and Blog” events which bring a mobile internet café to the surrounding communities.

- **Number served through end of August, 2010:** 9 reported through Study Inclusion Criteria Checklist (SICC) for the YIT Evaluation Team.

**Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC):** This region has focused on responding to youth culture, especially the culture of youth with low socio-economic status. Additional attention is being given to reaching out to the youth, young adults, and families of Abenaki (Native American) origin, especially in the Swanton area. The YIT Grant Manager is a Black woman experienced with international education and community development; she has joined the statewide YIT CLC Advisory Group called “Hands of Friendship”.

**Family Driven Care:** The region understands that family driven care is important for children and adolescents. The YIT staff and agencies represented on the YIT Steering Committee do all in their power to ensure that the young adults being served are supported by their families and/or other adult allies. Some of the young adults are pregnant or parenting teens; they receive mentoring and other support from the agencies on the YIT Steering Committee to strengthen their capacities as parents.

**Youth Guided Care:** Youth and young adults guide their own individualized plans of care. Also, the YIT Steering Committee is establishing a network of youth and young adults throughout the region to inform the Committee what is and is not working. The Steering Committee is tapping into the established Youth Council at Project Soar (a local alternative school) and speaking with the staffs of teen centers, service providers and community members to recruit youth who would make strong advocates. Special attention is being paid to building a Network with the full range of diversity in the Franklin-Grand Island region, including participants from the Abenaki and Champlain Island communities. Youth and young adults receive incentives and/or stipends for participating on the YIT Steering Committee. As part of the process of engaging youth in the Network, on May 7, 2010 Ebony and NCSS Adolescent Services Staff brought 4 youth to the first annual statewide (YIT) Youth Voice Movement Conference. This inspired the region to plan its own Youth Summit, scheduled for November 12.

**Public Education and Social Marketing:** The YIT Steering Committee is holding meetings at various locations and forums in the region to present pertinent information to youth in need of support and knowledge about services or connections to services. To do this, the Committee is interfacing with the J.O.B.S. program, NFI, Court Diversion, alternative schools, DCF, Franklin County Sheriff’s Department, teen centers, Northwestern Medical Center, health care facilities, social service agencies, and alternative school programs. By June 30, 2010, the following meetings were held:

- **YIT/Juvenile Justice Community Meetings:** 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 were involved in the planning process for this grant and introduce herself to the community. Subsequently, on June 7, 2010, the State Department for Children and Families (DCF) held a fair for youth on juvenile probation. Ebony distributed YIT materials there and spoke with youth interested in YIT.
- **Community Outreach, Meetings with Abenaki Community:** Ebony attended several meetings with leaders of the Abenaki community to learn about their culture and discuss outreach efforts to their youth. Then she staffed a table at the Abenaki Heritage Celebration, an annual event held in Swanton, VT during the Memorial Day weekend.

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- **YIT BBQ/ Community Meeting:** On June 4<sup>th</sup> 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 New York City. The event was attended by approximately 10 youth, who enjoyed the artistic style of the presenter and her focus on real world issues. Many of the youth expressed interest in joining the youth network.
- **Community Outreach, Taylor Park (Lemonade Stand):** With the assistance of a peer youth outreach worker, Ebony distributed brochures and lemonade in the park to recruit youth and increase community exposure for the grant.

Every other week, the Department of Mental Health publishes an electronic Bi-Weekly Update. This region provided an article for the Bi-weekly Update to inform legislators and other key policy-makers and stakeholders about the start-up of its YIT program.

**Evaluation:** The region agreed in its strategic plan and sub-grant from the Department of Mental Health to cooperate with the YIT Evaluation Team to meet the national and state evaluation requirements. An Evaluation Liaison has been assigned to facilitate the timely submission of regional data to the Evaluation Team.

## SUMMARY OF YOUTH IN TRANSITION PLAN AND PROGRESS FOR Lamoille

**System of Care Planning:** This region completed a strategic plan in accordance with the Youth In Transition (YIT) “Invitation to Communities” issued in February, 2009. The plan was approved by the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team before a sub-grant for implementation was issued by the Department of Mental Health to a fiscal agent (Lamoille Community Connections - LCC) on behalf of the region.

**System of Care Structure:** While the Local Interagency Team (LIT) maintains general oversight for the YIT Plan, a Steering Committee ensures that collaborative activities occur as planned to progress toward the desired outcomes.

**Fiscal Management:** The fiscal agent manages the budget in accordance with the regional plan with input from the regional YIT Steering Committee. In March, the LCC Director of the Children, Youth and Family Services Division - who had been active in developing the regional YIT strategic plan - left the LCC. Responsibility for LCC oversight of YIT implementation shifted to Carolyn Aronson, a member of the LCC Children’s Leadership Team who had not been involved with the regional planning. LCC contracted with the writer of the YIT plan to be the Grant Manager (GM). The GM drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was used as the basis for a contract between LCC and Community Health Services of the Lamoille Valley (CHSLV), which employs the Criminal Justice Social Worker (CJSW).

### **System of Care Services and Supports:**

1. **Grant Manager (GM):** The Lamoille Valley YIT Steering Committee is supported by a 1-day per week GM who organizes and facilitates committee meetings, implements systems strategies and manages reporting and evaluation requirements. The GM ensures that social marketing materials and training opportunities are culturally and linguistically competent and create an overall message about – and for - youth and young adults in transition. The GM is the LIT’s liaison with the State YIT Operations Team and ensures local efforts follow the best State strategies as they emerge over the life of the grant. The GM facilitates dialogue among LIT and Steering Committee members about how efficiently the Lamoille area is using existing funds to prevent duplication of services and generate ways to sustain the strategies of the YIT Plan beyond the grant period.
2. **Criminal Justice Social Worker (CJSW):** A 3-day per week CJSW has been hired to manage a caseload of youth/young adults who intersect with the criminal justice system and are at risk for going deeper into the system. The overall responsibilities of the CJSW – who is on the Steering Committee - are to:
  - intervene at any sequential intercept point with an emphasis on prevention and intercepts #1 and #2 (law enforcement intercept and arraignment/initial hearings), and
  - provide wrap-around case management services that help to divert the individual from going deeper into the criminal justice system. These case management services will:
    - coordinate interdisciplinary services and supports already being provided,
    - develop one coordinated services plan,
    - ensure that screening and assessment utilize current best practice,
    - implement a holistic approach to care, and
    - on average, last for six months.

The CJSW is actively engaged with the court and the local police and sheriff’s offices. Key referral sources are the Public Defender, State’s Attorney, the Judge, Probation & Parole, AHS, Lamoille Family Center, Court Diversion,

Copley Hospital, Copley Behavioral Health & Wellness (CBH&W), and LCC. Local law enforcement (including Morristown PD and the Lamoille County Sheriff) have integrated this position into their operations, including participating in staff meetings, conducting trainings, and going out on calls when clients being served by the CJSW are requiring law enforcement interventions. The CJSW is trained in restorative justice practices and facilitates restorative processes when appropriate to assist the youth/young adult with taking responsibility for his/her actions while avoiding further criminal charges.

3. **Youth/Peer Outreach Worker:** A 1-day per week YIT Peer Outreach Worker will be hired to reach out to youth/young adults who intersect with the criminal justice system and are at risk of going deeper into the system. The peer outreach worker will provide information, referral and assistance to those seeking to access services. He/she will offer support and advocacy for youth/young adults at coordinated care meetings. Finally, the peer outreach worker will be an active member of the YIT steering committee, representing youth interests and reporting issues, barriers, and gaps for youth in transition to the committee.
- **Good news:** Annie Paumgarten was hired as the Grant Manager (GM); she first focused on five key tasks:
  - 1) Write a job description for the 'Criminal Justice Social Worker' (CJSW) position so that roles and expectations were clearly articulated and planned.
  - 2) build an intake process for the local YIT project by working with the Steering Committee to choose tools and forms as needed: intake forms, Case Services Plan, an assessment tool (a Self-sufficiency Matrix).
  - 3) Create and distribute public relations materials to the community.
  - 4) Support the CJSW, Steering Committee and Evaluation team with grant-related administrative tasks (including: general planning, hiring of the Youth Outreach Worker, meeting summaries, local resource guide, evaluation forms, progress reports, state T/TA needs assessment, MACRO-SOC assessment).
  - 5) Implement systems strategies as outlined in the proposal.

The CJSW position was filled by Carl Stewart, who also works part-time for the Diversion program. Carl adopted a three-fold focus for his first months with YIT:

- 1) Familiarize himself with all of the existing resources available to YIT in the local community.  
This was done by collaborating with the GM to create a local YIT resource guide.
  - 2) Build an informal network of professionals throughout the community who touch the lives of local YIT; this group consists of those who could become members of a care coordination team for YIT individuals and who would also be a good source of case referrals to the program. Carl held individual meetings with the local network of YIT providers and handed out a 1-pg description of the program.
  - 3) Begin to take referrals and build relationships with local YIT and their families; the goal was to enroll them in the YIT program and encourage them to participate in the evaluation. By the end of June, nine YIT were enrolled in the program with varying degrees of participation. The average age was 18 with a range of 16-21. All nine clients were male and all were Caucasian except one who was of Asian descent.
- **Barriers:** For the Steering Committee, the GM and CJSW visit with existing local groups to brainstorm solutions to the systemic obstacles YIT face in their work (e.g. transportation, housing, access to medical care).

One of the key challenges the Steering Committee has faced is incorporating parent and youth feedback into the grant governance structure. For example, some members of the Committee feel that having one parent as part the governance structure is not a meaningful way to incorporate feedback into the process. The Committee decided that visiting existing parent groups quarterly and bringing specific program obstacles or issues for their

feedback would be a more meaningful and relevant approach. Since this has not yet happened, the group will re-visit the issue and either begin quarterly visitation to parent groups or locate and stipend a parent to join the Steering Committee.

Hiring a Youth Outreach Worker has also been very difficult for the Steering Committee. Despite advertising multiple times in all of the local papers and circulating a job description to professionals who interact with or work with local YIT, the Committee was not able to find an appropriate match for the position. One person was interviewed and chosen but backed out at the last minute before an offer was officially made. The GM plans to convene a group of professionals who work with YIT in the region to brainstorm ways to find an appropriate Youth Outreach Worker and to discuss potential roles and responsibilities.

- **Number served through end of August, 2010:** 11 reported through Study Inclusion Criteria Checklist (SICC) for the YIT Evaluation Team.

**Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC):** This region has focused on responding to youth culture, especially the culture of youth with low socio-economic status.

**Family Driven Care:** The region understands that family driven care is important for children and adolescents. The staff and agencies represented on the YIT Steering Committee do all in their power to ensure that the young adults being served are supported by their families and/or other adult allies. Some of the young adults are pregnant or parenting teens; they receive mentoring and other support from the agencies on the YIT Steering Committee to strengthen their capacities as parents.

**Youth Guided Care:** Youth and young adults guide their own individualized plans of care. Also, once the Youth/Peer Outreach Worker is hired, s/he will be a liaison to engage other youth/young adults interested in having voice and involvement in the system of care.

**Public Education and Social Marketing:** The CJSW visited local agencies to introduce himself, meet staff involved with transition-aged youth and talk about the program. A press release was drafted, and articles appeared in all of the local papers. The GM is working on pamphlets for distribution to YIT and their families outlining health benefits, local housing options and alternative pathways to education options in the Lamoille Valley.

Every other week, the Department of Mental Health publishes an electronic Bi-Weekly Update. This region provided an article for the Bi-weekly Update to inform legislators and other key policy-makers and stakeholders about the start-up of its YIT program.

**Evaluation:** The region agreed in its strategic plan and sub-grant from the Department of Mental Health to cooperate with the YIT Evaluation Team to meet the national and state evaluation requirements. An Evaluation Liaison has been assigned to facilitate the timely submission of regional data to the Evaluation Team.

Getting YIT clients enrolled in the evaluation has also been a real challenge. Per the CJSW, much of this local population shows a marked fear of systems-related paperwork and tasks and most of the YIT clients declined to participate in the VCHIP evaluation. Also, there was a misunderstanding related to the forms changing and the need to replace those forms immediately rather than just with new clients. Therefore, the 2 clients that enrolled in the evaluation were

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disqualified because of using dated forms. The CJSW and the Evaluation Team are working on the process of introducing and signing up YIT clients; the goal is to enroll all of the cases that enter the program.

To help the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team meet its grant obligations, the Lamoille region volunteered to be the local site required by MACRO for a multi-year assessment of “systemness”. The first assessment visit was in August.



## SUMMARY OF YOUTH IN TRANSITION PLAN AND PROGRESS FOR Orange/No.Windsor

**System of Care Planning:** This region completed a strategic plan in accordance with the Youth In Transition (YIT) “Invitation to Communities” issued in February, 2009. The plan was approved by the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team before a sub-grant for implementation was issued by the Department of Mental Health to a fiscal agent (the Clara Martin Center - CMC) on behalf of the region.

### **System of Care Structure:**

- **Administration:** The program is being administered under the aegis of the Clara Martin Center’s (CMC’s) Transition Age Youth Services (TAY) program, whose applied best practices and philosophical approach are based on the JOBS model (which is close in ideology to the TIP model) and Bonnie Benard’s Resiliency Model. The TAY Program oversees and supervises the Young Adult Services Navigator and the Peer Mentors, including their:
  - a. training,
  - b. collection of data for the required evaluation,
  - c. outreach to the public, and
  - d. collaboration with service providers and community organizations, including representatives of the criminal and juvenile justice systems.
- **Steering Committee Activities:** The CMC and the regional YIT Steering Committee are geared to working on both a micro and a macro level for this project. The Steering Committee recognizes that it serves a pivotal role in the regional plan through its collective resource-sharing, networking, and coordination of services. The Steering Committee:
  - a. assists the CMC in fostering collaboration and networking with the other regional agencies and resources (with *families* treated as essential “resources” as well) to promote the goals of the regional plan;
  - b. functions as an *activist* body that reviews individual cases (similar to what the LIT does) with the intent of seeking to remove barriers to needed services and providing problem-solving and resource-sharing, also to review progress and share information;
  - c. meets at least once a month with CMC representatives to go over data as it is gathered, as well as data-gathering outcomes for state and federal program evaluations.
  - d. continues to act as a *team* to keep watch over the needs of the region’s young adults and to assertively use its collective voice to advocate for filling in the various identified gaps in services that limit the welfare, growth, and future of these young adults.
  - e. recruits young adults and their parents, as well as other members of the community (such as cultural organizations) - besides representatives from social services, mental health, and the schools - for committee membership to help steer the plan.

**Fiscal Management:** The fiscal agent manages the budget in accordance with the regional plan with input from the regional YIT Steering Committee.

- System of Care Services and Supports:** A full-time Young Adult Services Navigator/Case Manager:
- a. identifies young adults and or/receives referrals from regional youth-serving facilities and professionals;
  - b. helps the young adults identify their individual needs;
  - c. guides them so they are able to effectively access needed services;
  - d. functions as a mentor, an emotional support, a role model, a skills trainer, and an advocate;

- e. networks and collaborates with the service providers in the region;
- f. is well-informed regarding all current and potential regional resources and resource persons (including families) for young adults of transition-age.

The Young Adult Services Navigator will be assisted by three part-time Peer Mentors:

- a. One Peer Mentor position will be created for each of the three service hubs: Randolph, Bradford, and White River Junction.
  - b. Each Peer Mentor will work approximately 4 hours per week.
  - c. They will provide peer support, mentoring, and related functions to individuals who attend alternative and/or public schools and/or receive Transitional Age Youth (TAY) or Jump or Board for Success (JOBS) services.
  - d. They and the Young Adult Services Navigator will meet as much as possible where the young adults are located: in their homes, at the schools, at The Junction Teen Center, etc.
- **Good news:** Mark Mitchell was hired to be the Young Adult Services Navigator. His first month on the job was spent networking with the following providers and stakeholders: Probation & Parole, Community Action, Adult Basic Education, Restorative Justice, Area Schools (including alternative educational programs), the Junction Teen Center, Bradford Teen Association, HCRS, Court Diversion, local medical providers, local law enforcement, Upper Valley Haven, Job Corps, private therapists, 2<sup>nd</sup> Growth, Turning Point, community members, Green Mountain Rock Climbing, Prevention Partnership, Randolph Area Core Transition Team, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, White River Craft Center, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Department of Labor, Randolph Area Job Developers' Group, Department for Children and Families' Youth Development Coordinators, Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth projects, Gifford Medical Center.

These contacts resulted in referral or identification of a caseload of transition aged youth with needs for education, housing, employment, mental health and/or substance abuse treatment, and caring relationships. Mark has been meeting youth "where they are at" with a focus on individual strengths, interests, and goals in order to promote their engagement and motivation. He has been able to link the youth to needed services in the community to address their needs and collect data from youth willing to participate in the Evaluation's Common Study.

Unused space at the CMC office in Wilder was renovated to more appropriately welcome and accommodate the transition age youth population. A lounge/meeting area was created where youth can meet with the transition age youth staff in a comfortable and inviting atmosphere to work toward their transition goals.

- **Barriers:**  
*Identified barriers/needs for individual youth and young adults:*
  1. Youth emergency shelter(s)
  2. Assisted employment opportunities (job coaching). Though this is typically available for people who meet the criteria for support by Developmental Services, Community Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT), or Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), it is not available to many young people who could benefit from the service.
  3. Transportation
  4. Summer programs providing academic credit recovery for those struggling in school.

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*CMC delay in hiring YIT Peer Mentors:* The first experience CMC had with hiring a YIT peer mentor did not end successfully due to role confusion and boundary issues that came up. CMC is reviewing and reflecting on that experience to ensure that success with this important component of the regional plan.

- **Number served through end of August, 2010:** 14 reported through Study Inclusion Criteria Checklist (SICC) for the YIT Evaluation Team.

**Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC):** This region has focused on responding to youth culture, especially the culture of youth with low socio-economic status. The Young Adult Services Navigator, Mark Mitchell, an Abenaki who formerly chaired the Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs, has joined the YIT CLC statewide advisory group called "Hands of Friendship".

**Family Driven Care:** The region understands that family driven care is important for children and adolescents. The staff and agencies represented on the YIT Steering Committee do all in their power to ensure that the young adults being served are supported by their families and/or other adult allies. Some of the young adults are pregnant or parenting teens; they receive mentoring and other support from the agencies on the YIT Steering Committee to strengthen their capacities as parents.

**Youth Guided Care:** Youth and young adults guide their own individualized plans of care.

**Public Education and Social Marketing:** Every other week, the Department of Mental Health publishes an electronic Bi-Weekly Update. This region provided an article for the Bi-weekly Update to inform legislators and other key policy-makers and stakeholders about the start-up of its YIT program.

**Evaluation:** The region agreed in its strategic plan and sub-grant from the Department of Mental Health to cooperate with the YIT Evaluation Team to meet the national and state evaluation requirements. An Evaluation Liaison has been assigned to facilitate the timely submission of regional data to the Evaluation Team.

## SUMMARY OF YOUTH IN TRANSITION PLAN AND PROGRESS FOR Orleans/No.Essex

**System of Care Planning:** This region completed a strategic plan in accordance with the Youth In Transition (YIT) “Invitation to Communities” issued in February, 2009. The plan was approved by the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team before a sub-grant for implementation was issued by the Department of Mental Health to a fiscal agent (Northeast Kingdom Community Action - NEKCA) on behalf of the region.

### **System of Care Structure: LIT Oversight**

The Orleans Northeast (ONE) Local Interagency Team (LIT) has expanded its membership to include the transition facilitator, who will represent the youth/young adult advisory board. The ONE LIT receives monthly reports from the transition facilitator and provide oversight to this project. The ONE LIT has added an 11<sup>th</sup> Principle to its Procedures and Protocols to guide its actions and encourage the creation of Individual Life Plans (ILPs) for youth/young adults served through this initiative.

**Fiscal Management:** The fiscal agent manages the budget in accordance with the regional plan with input from the ONE LIT.

### **System of Care Services and Supports:**

#### **1. Transition Facilitator**

Youth and young adults will be engaged by a Transition Facilitator who works out of the Northeast Kingdom Community Action’s (NEKCA’s) Teen Drop-in-Center on Main Street in Newport. The Teen Center provides a safe place for youth to meet, talk and participate in positive and healthy recreational activities. Youth and young adults who frequent the Newport Teen Center serve as recruiters for others. The Teen Center provides a peer-to-peer environment allowing both the young adult and the transition facilitator to develop their relationship slowly and at the comfort level of the young adult. The Transition Facilitator also offers support to the NEKCA teen center in Canaan VT and other places in Orleans and Northern Essex Counties. The transition facilitator is not a mental health employee or mental health licensed but is a liaison assuring that the youth/young adult has access to all needed services.

#### **2. Individual Life Plan (ILP)**

For the ONE LIT, when responding to the needs of a youth or young adult, his or her most critical need determines the lead case manager. With the LIT’s Act 264 Coordinated Services Plan (CSP), the lead agency is the agency with the assigned case manager who assures that the plan is regularly reviewed and who serves as the agreed upon contact person if the CSP needs to be adjusted. The lead case manager helps to identify other service team members who can help the youth/ young adult access all needed services. With this initiative, for CSPs, the lead agency will maintain this status but will also have the Transition Facilitator to help build positive life experiences for youth/young adults that will help sustain outcomes from the services provided.

Youth/young adults who are not in need of a CSP may want to develop an Individual Life Plan (ILP), which will address similar domains. As youth/young adults are identified for services, they will receive information and be asked to sign a basic contract in which they agree to actively participate in the program and create their ILP. He/she will then work to design and complete the ILP with the assistance of the Transition Facilitator. The parent/guardian and/or other family members or adult allies will be asked to participate in the process if a youth/young adult agrees. Service providers who might be helpful will also be invited to participate in this process.

### 3. Behavioral Health Specialist

The ONE LIT will imbed a behavioral health specialist at the Newport Teen Center a minimum of 4 hours per week for the purpose of building relationships with the young adults. There would be an additional 2 hours per week for supervision meetings and reports for the ONE LIT. The objective of this service is two-fold: first to combat the assumption young adults often make that “counseling” or “therapy” is not going to help, and second to guide youth through the health care application process to get them the services they may need. *(This strategy is being funded through the Global Commitment – Medicaid - of Northeast Kingdom Mental Health Services, not through this sub-grant, but is a part of the ONE regional plan. It has not yet been implemented.)*

### 4. Peer Outreach Worker

A peer support person will work 10 hours per week reaching out to peers and under-served youth, also building caring relationships and bringing them to the transition facilitator.

### 5. Regional Training

The ONE LIT works toward strengthening relationships for all students, families, and participating partners or collaborators through the development of a common language of trust, respect, responsibility, and support. To do this more explicitly, monthly or more frequent focus group style gatherings will be conducted throughout the community to continue hearing and validating the voices of youth and young adults. Also, the ONE LIT will provide trainings in the Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets, the Communities that Care Model, and the Circle of Courage Model. These trainings will supplement technical assistance and trainings provided at the State level about the Sequential Intercept and TIP Models. The evidence-supported Transition to Independence Process (TIP) System will be used to guide the work of the Transition Facilitator and as a checklist for the LIT. A more seamless, coordinated, comprehensive system of care will emerge as each provider is trained in TIP.

- **Good news:** The ONE LIT Team through host agency NEKCA posted the Youth in Transition Facilitator position in February of 2010. After the first round of Interviews the position was posted again and NEKCA was able to hire Brooke Everton as the Youth in Transition Facilitator starting May 3<sup>rd</sup>. She attended the Youth Voice Movement Conference on May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010 with 3 youth from the area and attended her first ONE LIT meeting on May 11, 2010.
- **Barriers:** The hiring Process for the YIT Facilitator took longer than planned, which pushed back original plans of being able to hire a Peer Outreach Worker before June 30. However, the Peer Outreach Worker Position was filled before the end of September.
- **Number served through end of August, 2010:** 0 reported through Study Inclusion Criteria Checklist (SICC) for the YIT Evaluation Team.

**Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC):** This region has focused on responding to youth culture, especially the culture of youth with low socio-economic status.

**Family Driven Care:** The region understands that family driven care is important for children and adolescents. The staff and agencies represented on the YIT Steering Committee do all in their power to ensure that the young adults being served are supported by their families and/or other adult allies. Some of the young adults are pregnant or parenting teens; they receive mentoring and other support from the agencies on the YIT Steering Committee to strengthen their capacities as parents.

**Youth Guided Care:** Youth and young adults guide their own individualized plans of care. Also, the ONE LIT will create an advisory group comprised of youth/young adults who have some experience navigating the system and, if possible, some post-secondary education. Encouragement will be given to teen or recent teen parents to participate. Parents/families identified by youth as caring, families working with reunification, and parents working through the Runaway Program may be asked to participate if/as the youth direct.

The purpose of this committee is for youth/young adults to be given opportunities to develop leadership roles and to become skilled collaborators, team players and advocates for transition-aged youth and the system of care. Youth/young adult members on the board will be trained to help themselves and others design and receive the services needed for Individual Life Plans (ILP) for success. Members will be offered leadership training that will include conflict resolution and communication skills-building.

With guidance from the Transition Facilitator, the advisory board will develop meeting protocols to determine structure, voting procedures and frequency and times of meetings. They will be asked to suggest strategies for improving relationships between young adults and all service providers, also to advise agencies about programs that meet the needs of the young adults in the community. The youth/young adult advisory board will play an important role in ensuring that services and supports are accessible, appealing and developmentally appropriate.

**Public Education and Social Marketing:**

Every other week, the Department of Mental Health publishes an electronic Bi-Weekly Update. This region provided an article for the Bi-weekly Update to inform legislators and other key policy-makers and stakeholders about the start-up of its YIT program. The region also created a brochure and checklist with the criteria for eligibility to inform young adults, families, and referral sources.

**Evaluation:** The region agreed in its strategic plan and sub-grant from the Department of Mental Health to cooperate with the YIT Evaluation Team to meet the national and state evaluation requirements. An Evaluation Liaison has been assigned to facilitate the timely submission of regional data to the Evaluation Team.

## SUMMARY OF YOUTH IN TRANSITION PLAN AND PROGRESS FOR Rutland

**System of Care Planning:** This region completed a strategic plan in accordance with the Youth In Transition (YIT) “Invitation to Communities” issued in February, 2009. The plan was approved by the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team before a sub-grant for implementation was issued by the Department of Mental Health to a fiscal agent (the Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County - BGCRC) on behalf of the region.

**System of Care Structure:** Ongoing collaboration and consistent communication with community partners through the Local Interagency Team (LIT) facilitates referrals to educational and job training resources for out of school youth, referrals to Medicaid and other health insurance programs for eligible youth, housing and shelter programs for youth without stable housing, and employment services for youth able to seek and sustain employment. It also facilitates knowledge - and maximize use - of available and appropriate funding for education and training, which includes Next Generation funds, financial aid, work study programs, scholarships, as well as of Drug Treatment Court services and other resources to minimize the amount of YIT funds needed to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment services, and to ensure the sustainability of the Rutland County YIT Project.

In addition to working closely with the LIT, the Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County has established and expanded its relationships in the local system of care through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) for the YIT project. These MOUs are with the following partner organizations:

- Rutland Mental Health to provide mental and behavioral health services to participants in the project and to maximize available funding (i.e., through Medicaid and other sources) to sustain these services.
- Evergreen and Turning Point to engage youth with substance abuse issues in treatment and support services.
- Rutland Free Clinic to facilitate youth receiving regular health care and track their usage.
- The JOBS program to provide supportive employment and case management services.
- Vermont Achievement Center’s “Cooking for Life” classes to educate young adults about cooking, nutrition, budgeting and shopping to encourage independence and healthy lifestyle choices.

In the future the Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County may also collaborate with organizations like the Vermont Achievement Center and the Rutland County Parent Child Center to address the need for transitional housing in Rutland.

**Fiscal Management:** The fiscal agent manages the budget in accordance with the regional plan with input from the regional LIT.

### **System of Care Services and Supports:**

- A. *Street Outreach Team – to improve outreach to youth and young adults in transition:* The Street Outreach Team consists of two professionals and one trained youth outreach worker. The involvement of a peer-aged outreach worker is critical in attracting and engaging youth in transition by providing a “bridge” from the street to the Center, in providing a positive and relevant role-model, and in the creation of a “success story” where a youth in transition is employed and on his/her own path to becoming a productive member of society. The two adult outreach workers are responsible for data collection for all aspects of the grant on a monthly basis, as well as case management, daily outreach responsibilities, and the daily running of the Life Skills Center.

The Street Outreach Team members work in collaboration with Rutland Mental Health and the other mental health providers in the community to identify youth with serious emotional disturbance and provide ongoing case management and follow-up to assist the youth in committing to and following a treatment plan.

The Team focuses on the areas, organizations and outlets where the target population naturally gathers in order to engage and relate to them. Once a relationship is formed, the targeted youth are invited to the Life Skills Center. Each targeted youth is encouraged to form relationships with the caring adults who are a part of the project as well as with other trained peer mentors.

B. *Life Skills Center – to increase access to resources, coordinated care/case management and other services, and caring relationships:* The Life Skills Center - a youth-centered site with food, multiple activities, services and opportunities to form positive peer relationships - operates out of the Boys & Girls Club of Rutland County. To build credibility, resources and collaborative relationships, the initial emphasis is on engaging youth in a positive, attractive environment that creates a comfort level so the Center becomes known as a gathering place that provides safety, healthy choices and coordinated services. It is staffed by the Street Outreach Team, which brings youth and young adults into the Center and work with them to develop short and long term goals and objectives to support them in securing a path to a stable and productive adulthood. With each young person, the Team maps out and documents strategies to achieve the young person's goals.

- **Good news:** Staff was hired and trained including:
  - Director of the Street Outreach Team and the Life Skills Center – Brooke Nuckles
  - Coordinator- Alisha Keel (also Jump On Board for Success- JOBS- case manager for Rutland Mental Health
  - Peer Outreach Worker- Sarah Schreiber
  - Cooking for Life Kitchen Coordinator- Teresa Felix
  - Rotating kitchen staff- Ryan, Stacy
  - Volunteers- Jeff Durkee (Vermont Achievement Center, PRIME family resources and VCRHYP- Vermont coalition of runaway and homeless youth program), Adam Sancic (Department of Economic Services and former Spectrum [Burlington] outreach coordinator), and ever growing!!

The Rutland Region opened “The Center,” a life skills center located centrally in downtown Rutland open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 11 A.M. – 2 P.M. The grand opening of “the Center” was Monday, June 7<sup>th</sup> from 11 AM – 2 PM. Attendance of youth and young adults increases daily as word spreads about the Center and street outreach program.

From June 7<sup>th</sup> until June 30<sup>th</sup>, there were:

- 85 visits to the Center
- 42 lunches served
- 70 contacts made doing street outreach.

During open hours, street outreach occurs, lunch is served, and staff is available to provide and build caring relationships and make referrals to community resources and opportunities. In addition, youth visiting the Center are offered career development, employment help, volunteer and service learning opportunities and other life skills coaching. Referrals have already been made to the JOBS program, Economic Services, Vermont Department of Labor, BROCC, Rutland Housing Coalition, Neighborworks, the Community Cupboard, Vocational Rehabilitation, CareNet, the Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter, and the Open Door Mission.

The Peer Outreach Worker wrote a BIC Do Something grant application for the center (\$5000). [The Director nominated her for a “Mario Savio Young Activist Award” (\$5000).] The Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County is writing more grant applications to enhance and expand the program.



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- **Barriers:** None reported.
- **Number served through end of August, 2010:** 7 reported through Study Inclusion Criteria Checklist (SICC) for the YIT Evaluation Team.

**Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC):** This region has focused on responding to youth culture, especially the culture of youth with low socio-economic status.

**Family Driven Care:** The region understands that family driven care is important for children and adolescents. The staff and agencies represented on the LIT do all in their power to ensure that the young adults being served are supported by their families and/or other adult allies. Some of the young adults are pregnant or parenting teens; they receive mentoring and other support from the agencies on the LIT to strengthen their capacities as parents.

**Youth Guided Care:** Youth and young adults guide their own individualized plans of care. Also, a gathering of Rutland County youth is being planned for October 22 to build a network of youth leaders. Some may form or join the YIT Youth and Young Adult Development Committee. The Committee will review the results of formal and informal surveys of young people using the Life Skills Center. The Committee will provide input about day-to-day activities in the Life Skills Center as well as about special events and field trips for YIT. The Committee will establish Life Skills Center rules and recommend which agencies and organizations make visits to the Center (e.g., VSAC, the Thresholds decision making program, career exploration, money matters, and other guest speakers and workshop facilitators). Committee meetings will include discussions of progress and barriers to achieving Plan goals and objectives and strategizing ways to overcome these barriers.

**Public Education and Social Marketing:**

The *Rutland Herald* newspaper reported about the opening of the life skills center. Brochures and posters have been and continue to be distributed throughout Rutland. Community outreach has included visits to and attending meetings with: Rutland Regional Partnership for Family Services, Local Interagency Team, Rutland High School, Success School, Rutland Mental Health Services, Restorative Justice and Diversion, Rutland Police Department, Drug Court, Vocational Rehabilitation, Economic Services, Citizens on Patrol, Rutland County Foster Parents Association, Rutland County Parent Child Center, CareNet, Eckerd Youth and Family Services, Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter, The Open Door Mission, Vermont Adult Learning, BROCC, etc.

Every other week, the Department of Mental Health publishes an electronic Bi-Weekly Update. This region provided an article for the Bi-weekly Update to inform legislators and other key policy-makers and stakeholders about the start-up of its YIT program.

**Evaluation:** The region agreed in its strategic plan and sub-grant from the Department of Mental Health to cooperate with the YIT Evaluation Team to meet the national and state evaluation requirements. An Evaluation Liaison has been assigned to facilitate the timely submission of regional data to the Evaluation Team.

## SUMMARY OF YOUTH IN TRANSITION PLAN AND PROGRESS FOR So.Windham

**System of Care Planning:** This region completed a strategic plan in accordance with the Youth In Transition (YIT) “Invitation to Communities” issued in February, 2009. The plan was approved by the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team before a sub-grant for implementation was issued by the Department of Mental Health to a fiscal agent (Youth Services, Inc.) on behalf of the region.

**System of Care Structure:** The Southern Windham County CORE Transition Team is a cooperative group including schools and agencies who all work with transition-age youth. This Team has expanded its membership to oversee implementation of the Youth in Transition (YIT) regional plan.

The Team’s **Oversight Committee** accepts and screens referrals to the YIT Transitional Housing Toward Independence (THTI) Program. This Oversight Committee has over-lapping membership with the Local Interagency Team (LIT), the CORE Team, and the Homeless Outreach Team.

The strategies of the regional plan being implemented but not funded through this sub-grant include goals and activities of the expanded Southern Windham County CORE Transition Team to address the following needs of young adults in transition:

1. Post Secondary Education – Help getting diploma, GED, skills development.
2. Youth Employment – Connecting youth in community: jobs, housing, and training. One person assigned to each youth who helps them connect.
3. Caring Relationships – Collaborating with and involving family members and/or caregivers in the development of decisions and plans.

**Fiscal Management:** The fiscal agent manages the budget in accordance with the regional plan with input from the regional Oversight Committee of the Southern Windham County CORE Transition Team.

**System of Care Services and Supports:** The strategy funded through this sub-grant is a **housing coordinator/case manager** for the Transitional Housing Towards Independence (THTI) Program for youth and young adults. This position provides case management and individualized planning to 8-10 young adults at a time to support their learning the independent living skills necessary to acquire and maintain an apartment or room. The position also oversees the 6-bed transitional housing program: admissions, coordinating development of the case plans, data collection for the required evaluation for the YIT grant, periodic case reviews, and discharge planning.

The THTI Program serves young people who are out of school and those at risk of dropping out of school due to homelessness or who are precariously housed. Participants range in age from 16-21 and are experiencing or at risk for experiencing serious emotional disturbance. (*Minors may participate in the program with parental consent.*)

The obstacles to securing an apartment or room of one’s own vary by individual. In some cases, the main obstacle is absence of a rental history and absence of a rental deposit. For others, deficits in interpersonal skills, lack of employment, probation status, or unstable mental status may be the major obstacles. Participants might require help negotiating living with others, with budgeting and career planning, finding a job, or satisfying probation conditions.

Participants must help develop a plan for independence and work collaboratively with service providers to implement, revise and achieve the goals of the plan. Plans address job, career, education, interpersonal skills, emotional and mental

health needs, and other issues, depending on the individual. Continuation in the program depends on compliance with the individualized case plan; “slips” are anticipated and will not necessarily lead to immediate expulsion from the program. The emphasis of the program is on transition to self-sufficiency in housing. Full independence means that the young person will be able to support him or herself, afford an apartment or a room of his or her own, and possess the skills to manage life with minimal agency support.

The program provides housing for a period of 6 – 9 months. The participants reside in a single room occupancy building. The program is intended to duplicate, as much as possible, the kind of shared-housing that is common to young renters and college students. Though participants must abide by house rules, the rules are modeled after the kinds of rules routinely imposed on young people living together in off-campus housing – e.g., respecting housemates, neighbors, and the property itself. There are no “house parents” or mandatory group meetings. A building manager lives on-site to provide supervision. (*The building manager position is not funded through this sub-grant.*)

Each resident admitted to the program is co-case-managed by the referring agency and by the YIT Housing Coordinator. The YIT Housing Coordinator is a member of the participant’s planning team, as are the young person’s workers from other service agencies. The emphasis of the individualized planning team is on integrated, seamless service. In most cases, the agencies supporting the youth continue to help the participants as they move into their own apartments, thus assuring that gains made are preserved. In cases where the referring agency is able to provide only minimal case management, the YIT Housing Coordinator is the primary case manager and the referring case manager is secondary. The YIT Housing Coordinator is guided by Dr. Rusty Clark’s Transition to Independence (TIP) model and interfaces with the other unfunded sections of this regional plan as needed for particular young adults in the housing program.

A variety of agencies subsidize the rent for individual young adults, depending on their affiliation. (Some are aligned with Probation and Parole, others with Health Care and Rehabilitation Services, Youth Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, or Northeastern Family Institutes).

• **Good news:**

- YIT Housing Coordinator Michelle Bos-Lun began work at Youth Services on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010 and provided case management services to ten youth from February through the end of June.
- A trial partnership between Youth Services and the Windham Housing Trust was established in March, 2010. In April three youth moved into the Cobblestone SRO (Single Room Occupancy) building operated by the Windham Housing Trust. A fourth youth moved in after April and a fifth moved in during July. This is a pilot phase of the housing project. After a six month trial period (by October 2010), the Windham Housing Trust will decide if it is willing to dedicate the whole Cobblestone building to occupancy by youth and young adults (instead of it being shared with older adults, as during the trial period).
- The YIT Housing Coordinator joined the HELP Fund, a multi-agency board which allocates emergency funds for housing for Windham County.
- On April 18, 2010 Youth Services hosted a concert to raise awareness and funds about youth homelessness. Folk singer /activist Mark Erelli was the main act for the show. Executive Director Allyson Villars and YIT Housing Coordinator Michelle Bos-Lun both spoke at the event.
- Youth Services has hosted the monthly CORE Team Oversight Committee meetings focused on housing (and the bi-monthly CORE Team meetings on employment, education, and caring relationships as well) throughout the grant period.
- Planning teams have been meeting at least every two months to address issues related to housing and employment for individual youth and young adults.

- On June 15, 2010 the YIT Housing Coordinator testified at a southeastern Vermont regional meeting of legislators about gaps in mental health care services that affect young adults with mental health needs
- **Barriers:**
  - One *significant finding* is that it is a challenge to run the “pilot” phase of the program with Windham Housing Trust in a mixed-age facility. Some youth don’t want to live with older residents. Also, as long as older adults occupy some of the rooms, the housing program cannot operate according to youth-specific guidelines or have all-house youth activities or a youth-affiliated resident manager. After the pilot phase of the program is completed with 3-5 youth living in the house, the Oversight Committee hopes to expand the program by having at least 8 youth residing in the building. This may be accomplished by allowing the minimum age for admission to be 16 instead of 18.
  - One youth lost his job while in the SRO and has had a hard time finding a new source of income. The YIT Housing Coordinator arranged a short-term solution to keep him housed but it is not a long term solution.
- **Number served through end of August, 2010:** 9 reported through Study Inclusion Criteria Checklist (SICC) for the YIT Evaluation Team. (One young adult was served before the University of Vermont IRB completed its approval process for the YIT Evaluation plan.)

**Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC):** This region has focused on responding to youth culture, especially the culture of youth with low socio-economic status. YIT Housing Coordinator Michelle Bos-Lun does engage with minority youth who need housing and enlist the active involvement of agencies serving minority youth. She has experience with international education and is a member of the statewide CLC Advisory Group called “Hands of Friendship”.

**Family Driven Care:** The region understands that family driven care is important for children and adolescents. The staff and agencies represented on the CORE Team’s Oversight Committee do all in their power to ensure that the young adults being served are supported by their families and/or other adult allies. Some of the young adults are pregnant or parenting teens; they receive mentoring and other support from the agencies on the CORE Team and Oversight Committee to strengthen their capacities as parents.

As a family, YIT Housing Coordinator Michelle Bos-Lun and her husband are deeply involved with advocacy for the seriously mentally ill. Both teach National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) family education classes. Ron Bos-Lun serves on the State of Vermont Act 264 Advisory Group and on the advisory group for the statewide SAMHSA Suicide Prevention Grant. Michelle is being trained as a Youth Suicide Prevention trainer through that grant. The family’s experiences and perspectives inform and enrich Michelle’s work as YIT Housing Coordinator.

**Youth Guided Care:** Youth and young adults guide their own individualized plans of care. Once the trial period with the Windham Housing Trust is over and Cobblestone house is fully dedicated for youth and young adults, they will be encouraged to join committees to revise the house guidelines.

**Public Education and Social Marketing:** News of the Youth Services housing work and the work of the YIT Housing Coordinator appeared in the Brattleboro Reformer (March, 2010), in a cover story in the weekly Commons (May, 2010), front page coverage in the Commons (June, 2010), and the spring 2010 issue of the statewide Counterpoint newsletter published by Psychiatric Survivors.

Youth Services has a Street Outreach Program which consists of 2 Outreach Coordinators (one in Brattleboro, one in Bellows Falls) and 7 Peer Outreach Workers. They disseminate information about the housing program on the street and at weekly drop-in nights for youth in the community. Case managers who attend multi-agency meetings also share YIT information about housing and other issues.

Every other week, the Department of Mental Health publishes an electronic Bi-Weekly Update. This region provided an article for the Bi-weekly Update to inform legislators and other key policy-makers and stakeholders about the start-up of its YIT program.

**Evaluation:** The region agreed in its strategic plan and sub-grant from the Department of Mental Health to cooperate with the YIT Evaluation Team to meet the national and state evaluation requirements. An Evaluation Liaison has been assigned to facilitate the timely submission of regional data to the Evaluation Team.

## SUMMARY OF YOUTH IN TRANSITION PLAN AND PROGRESS FOR So.Windsor/No.Windham

**System of Care Planning:** This region completed a strategic plan in accordance with the Youth In Transition (YIT) “Invitation to Communities” issued in February, 2009. The plan was approved by the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team before a sub-grant for implementation was issued by the Department of Mental Health to a fiscal agent (Health Care and Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont - HCRS) on behalf of the region.

**System of Care Structure:** Project Board:

- a) HCRS worked with the membership of the Springfield LIT and the YIT Steering (e.g. Planning) Committee to establish an ongoing Project Board to monitor and advise both the JOBS program and the YIT program.
- b) This Project Board is briefed on the progress and outcomes of these two young adult transition assistance programs.
- c) Many members of the YIT Steering Committee continue to provide on-going program advice to ensure that the original intent of the program is adhered to as outlined in the plan.
- d) The Project Board does not have any specific case review functions, though they do have access to data and de-identified situations that illustrate what is happening.
- e) Membership of the Project Board includes young adults, parents and adult allies, LIT and CORE members, and business and community leaders.

After meeting on a monthly basis for the first three months to oversee the start up of the regional plan, the Project Board decided to meet on a quarterly basis. Beginning with the September, 2010 meeting, an elected young adult from the Youth Advisory Board began attending the meetings to provide a youth perspective in overseeing the grant.

A Youth in Transition (YIT) Team: A group of 5-10 local young adult service providers [representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation, the Jobs Program, the DCF Youth Development Program, the Department of Labor, Department of Corrections, Windsor County Youth Services, and HCRS (the clinician who has completed any clinical assessment)] meet once a month with the YIT Transition Facilitator to discuss and coordinate referrals and appropriate services to meet the needs of each young adult referred. This Team focuses on young adults who are out of the school system, have a severe emotional disturbance and/or are displaying high risk behavior, and are clearly in need of intervention in order to be able to complete their education, gain employment, and live safely in their communities. The Team has allowed local providers to discuss tough cases and receive feedback from those best qualified to give it and many underserved young adults to be matched with appropriate transition services. The Team’s procedures are:

- a) Identified cases are reviewed by members of the Team (or individuals who represent an agency or group) only when a signed release from the parent or young adult is in place.
- b) For such referrals, the YIT Team strategizes how best to provide the supports and services the young adults need to be educated, employed, healthy, and free from incarceration.
- c) The Team determines which programs meet the needs of the young adult and for which programs the young adult meets the eligibility requirements.
- d) This collaborative approach allows all providers to coordinate services between systems, pool resources and information, and avoid duplication, including in their communications with the young adult.
- e) Besides handling new referrals, the YIT Team reviews existing cases to determine whether their plans are effective. *(YIT cases can be brought to the Local Interagency Team [LIT] if needed. Members of the Youth in Transition Team who are members of the LIT will serve as liaisons between the two oversight bodies.)*

Outreach: Together, the Youth in Transition Team members will conduct a comprehensive outreach strategy which includes informing the community, young adults, their families, and adult allies regarding the role of the Team and the referral process.

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- a) Included in these outreach efforts will be a young adult who can serve as a bridge between the 'system' and the world of the youth.
- b) The 45 individuals and organizations involved in the YIT planning process, as well as local schools, the restorative justice program, and the courts, will be the target of the first outreach efforts by the YIT Team.
- c) Outreach to the Springfield and Bellows Falls Police will be done in collaboration with the Transition Facilitator and the Police Social Worker, both HCRS employees.
- d) In addition, the YIT Team will develop a brochure and distribute it throughout the community to organizations and businesses (including the medical community) that intersect with youth.
- e) These efforts will be coupled with a more global outreach effort that will include articles placed in local newspapers.

### TIP Model Training and Plan:

- a) Soon after the Transition Facilitator is hired, the Youth in Transition Team will participate in TIP training so that there is a shared approach to working with youth in a strength-based manner.
- b) The Team, in turn, will provide training to schools, organizations who work with youth, and the community at large on using a strength-based approach to working with youth.
- c) The JOBS, Springfield School Alternative, and Transition programs have all agreed to create plans with young adults using the Transition to Independence Process (TIP) system.
- d) The young adult will have one plan that will be used across systems and programs.

**Fiscal Management:** The fiscal agent manages the budget in accordance with the regional plan with input from the regional YIT Team.

**System of Care Services and Supports:** A Transition Facilitator facilitates referrals of young adults and serves as a recruiter and bridge from the community and young adults to the Youth in Transition Team. This is done through networking with young adults as well as by regularly being in contact with organizations that have contact with them, such as the Department of Corrections, the police, supportive housing, Court Diversion, the Restorative Justice Center, a newly- opened music venue for youth, etc..

- a) The Transition Facilitator works with all grades in the high school and with the young adults at risk for involvement in the criminal justice system.
- b) He/she engages young adults in pre-contemplative and contemplative stages of readiness to change.
- c) For those who do not meet the criteria for other programs, such as JOBS, the Transition Facilitator provides case management and service planning and coordination.
- d) He/she is likely to have a caseload of 15-20 young adults, aged 16 to 22, with emotional and behavioral difficulties.
- e) The Transition Facilitator will "do what has to be done" including conduct a needs assessment, develop a TIP plan, and provide direct services wherever the young adult is most comfortable and willing to receive services.

- **Good news:** On March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 Bob Lauro began work as the Project Coordinator/Transition Facilitator. After meeting with the YIT Steering Committee, he began immediately to create project systems that would establish a structured way to publicize the project, identify referral sources, and create intake procedures that would allow the case management/youth outreach to begin as quickly as possible. This included designing a streamlined referral process to be used across the local young adults system of care. Acting as a central intake point for young adults, the YIT coordinator can now work closely with other providers in the young adult system to make sure timely and appropriate referrals are being made. As a result of the YIT grant and the

implementation of the referral system, a local group of professionals (the YIT Team) who either directly provide transition services or sit on the periphery meet monthly to discuss referrals and appropriate services. The YIT Team has already decided to begin monthly skill building groups held in conjunction with the local high schools.

The Transition Facilitator established a bi-weekly Friday hiking/ exercise group. Every other Friday a group of young adults gets together in the morning to do a short 1-2 hour hike or some other therapeutic outdoor exercise. At its largest, by June 30 the turnout was 8; normally 2-3 young adults show up.

Shortly after the initial publicity tour, the influx of referrals revealed that the YIT program is a needed resource for young adults in Southern Windsor/Northern Windham Counties. **Table 1** illustrates referrals that met the enrollment criteria (REF); local enrollment of young adults who are receiving intensive case management through the YIT grant (LE); young adults connected to health care (HC), linked to post-secondary education (PSE), employment (EMP), Housing (HS), caring relationships (CR), enrollment into high school program or equivalent (HSD) and enrollment into UVM Study(UVM). **Note: *connected to services does not mean that the young adult was enrolled in grant funded intensive case management with our Transition Facilitator. Most referrals were not enrolled; however, they were all followed up with and connected to appropriate services.***

REF	LE	HC	PSE	EMP	HS	HSD	CR	UVM
39	17	8	1	7	3	8	20	9

- **Barriers:** The only issue is capacity to accommodate the large number of referrals for intensive case management (ICM). As shown by the chart, of the 39 appropriate referrals, only 17 could be enrolled in ICM. It was the hope of the Transition Facilitator and the YIT Steering Committee to keep the ICM case load to 15. As a result many young adults in need of ICM were placed on a waiting list and/or referred to less intensive, more specific transition services.

A startling and significant finding is the large number of young adults graduated from high school with little or no ability to do basic math problems or read at a level consistent with federal high school graduation standards. This is a significant barrier to finding employment that would be monetarily sufficient to leading an independent life. Steps will be taken to work with local high schools to create remedial study groups to get young adults to a minimum reading level.

- **Number served through end of August, 2010:** 8 reported through Study Inclusion Criteria Checklist (SICC) for the YIT Evaluation Team.

**Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC):** This region has focused on responding to youth culture, especially the culture of youth with low socio-economic status.

**Family Driven Care:** The region understands that family driven care is important for children and adolescents. The staff and agencies represented on the YIT Project Board do all in their power to ensure that the young adults being served are supported by their families and/or other adult allies. Some of the young adults are pregnant or parenting teens; they receive mentoring and other support from the agencies on the YIT Project Board to strengthen their capacities as parents.



**Youth Guided Care:** Youth and young adults guide their own individualized plans of care. Also, in accordance with the vision of the Project Board that a broad-based group of young adults with a diversity of cultures, ages, lifestyles and opinions advise the YIT grant, the Project Coordinator/Transition Facilitator began to recruit young adults. As of July 31<sup>st</sup> the greater Springfield Youth Advisory Project (as named by its members) had met twice. Turn out has exceeded expectation with no less than 13 young adults showing up at each meeting. So far the members have given the board a name, a mission and a vision, and have begun to plan for future field trips and service projects. Some ideas are field trips to Six Flags, overnight camping, Hampton Beach, and Boston/New York City. The group is planning winter sports ski outings and cultural enrichment activities. Service project ideas include adopting a local park, painting a local downtown building, and volunteering at a senior center. The board will continue to meet on a bi-weekly basis. Next steps include electing officers, engaging local officials to the end of providing a youth voice to the local select-board, and fundraising for upcoming field trips. The Youth Advisory Board will elect a representative to sit on the YIT Project Board to help shape the direction of grant services. This will include encouraging the YIT Project Board to partner with local elected boards, which will contribute to long-term sustainability.

**Public Education and Social Marketing:** A brochure was created to outline the services and eligibility requirements. The Project Coordinator met with all key stakeholders to introduce the program and begin soliciting referrals. In addition, a press release was written and disseminated to all local newspapers and similar publishers. Several of the local newspapers ran a story.

Every other week, the Department of Mental Health publishes an electronic Bi-Weekly Update. This region provided an article for the Bi-weekly Update to inform legislators and other key policy-makers and stakeholders about the start-up of its YIT program.

**Evaluation:** The region agreed in its strategic plan and sub-grant from the Department of Mental Health to cooperate with the YIT Evaluation Team to meet the national and state evaluation requirements. An Evaluation Liaison has been assigned to facilitate the timely submission of regional data to the Evaluation Team.

## SUMMARY OF YOUTH IN TRANSITION PLAN AND PROGRESS FOR Washington

**System of Care Planning:** This region completed a strategic plan in accordance with the Youth In Transition (YIT) “Invitation to Communities” issued in February, 2009. The plan was approved by the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team before a sub-grant for implementation was issued by the Department of Mental Health to a fiscal agent (Washington County Mental Health Services - WCMHS) on behalf of the region.

**System of Care Structure:** This region has a Local Interagency Team (LIT) and an expanded System of Care Team with a small Management Team, all of which acted as a Steering Committee for the YIT regional planning. A pre-existing Youth in Transition Team, a sub-set of LIT, is implementing the regional plan with guidance from the Management Team. The Management Team consists of the regional Director of Children’s Mental Health, the regional AHS Field Services Director, and one local Director of Special Education.

The [*now called*] YIT Intake Team (with representatives from Washington County Mental Health, Washington County Youth Service Bureau, and JOBS Program staff involved in housing for youth in transition) meets monthly and serves as the gateway/screening for intake to supervised apartments. All young adults without housing or a plan for obtaining it are staffed through this Team.

- a) Staff are skilled in engaging young adults in a competent, safe and respectful manner.
- b) The young adults who are referred are involved in making their own plans.
- c) The individualized plans for the young adults include but are not limited to:
  - o A contract with the youth
  - o Individual paid mentors or other appropriate support such as existing case managers
  - o High school completion
  - o Training and employment
  - o Transportation
  - o Recreation and pro-social activities
  - o Child care
  - o Mental health services
  - o Housing.

A System of Care Team Leader/Evaluation Liaison is hired to:

- a) Create and manage youth and family advisory group(s)
- b) Provide staff support to the Youth in Transition management and intake teams
- c) Inform the Youth in Transition Management Team (e.g., for the System of Care Team) about the progress of this project and receive input from the team on a monthly basis.
- d) Manage the Youth in Transition funds respecting the rules and limits provided by the state team and as outlined in the federal grant
- e) Exercise expenditure authority for local Youth in Transition Intake team to disburse Youth in Transition Support Funds
- f) Pursue further development of the local system of care to increase the engagement and integration of Youth in Transition.
- g) Liaison with State Evaluation Team and local organizations involved in the individual youth evaluation component.
- h) Serve as lead in any process or program evaluation requested by key stakeholders.

**Fiscal Management:** The fiscal agent manages the budget in accordance with the regional plan with input from the regional System of Care (SOC) Management Team, YIT Intake Team, and SOC Team Leader. The fiscal agent contracted with the Vermont Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (VFFCMH) to hire the SOC Team Leader.

### **System of Care Services and Supports:**

*Supported Housing Opportunities for Transition Aged Youth:* Work with a System of Care consultant to lead collaboration in Washington County around development by January, 2011 of 10-12 additional transitional apartments for young adults ages 18-22 (which may include families with young adults aged 18-22 who are heads of household) who will receive mental health treatment as part of the residential program:

- a) 5 to 6 scattered site apartments with private landlords
- b) 5-6 transitional apartments within one or more buildings as part of a group housing model of no more than 10 beds.

*A Youth in Transition Support Fund:* is in place and Distributing funding.

- **Good news:** In March, System of Care Team Leader Amy Lincoln-Moore was hired by the VFFCMH. The YIT Intake Team discussed several young adults in potential need of assistance but by the end of June only one had completed the evaluation process and was getting flex funds for mentorship to help them with independent living skills. This young adult kept summer employment and continued to work toward finishing a high school diploma through alternative education.

The Intake Team set up a pilot program using flexible funds to purchase track phone /minutes to give to qualifying young adults to have a contact number for potential employers and landlords.

- **Barriers:** Those young adults who are not enrolled in school (generally 18+), homeless, couch surfing, unemployed and needing mental health services, are difficult to contact. Many of these youth and young adults who are currently getting mental health services have no contact information or way to be contacted by potential employers and/or landlords. The Intake team implemented a pilot program where 5 track phones and 5 (1000 minutes/1000 texts) cards were purchased. To qualify for a phone/card the young adult must be currently seeking employment and give living arrangement details with landlord information. After the first month of employment, the young adult will be expected to furnish more minutes on their own or return the phone to their caseworker. All young adults are expected to complete all intake paperwork with the System of Care Team Leader and their current case-manager prior to getting the track phone. Though the Intake Team discussed several young adults as potentially receiving services through the YIT Grant with this pilot program, the young adults did not show up for their appointments despite knowing there might be money/phones and eventually housing to help them.
- **Number served through end of August, 2010:** 4 reported through Study Inclusion Criteria Checklist (SICC) for the YIT Evaluation Team.

**Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC):** This region has focused on responding to youth culture, especially the culture of youth with low socio-economic status.

**Family Driven Care:** The region understands that family driven care is important for children and adolescents. The staff and agencies represented on the YIT Intake Team do all in their power to ensure that the young adults being served are supported by their families and/or other adult allies. Some of the young adults are pregnant or parenting teens; they receive mentoring and other support from the agencies on the YIT Intake Team to strengthen their capacities as parents. Also, the YIT Intake Team and SOC Team Leader are planning an event called “Family Round Tables”. The event will help to engage parents and family members with the intention of developing a Family Advisory group for the region.

**Youth Guided Care:** Youth and young adults guide their own individualized plans of care. Also, the YIT Intake Team and System of Care Team Leader plan to contract with a Young Adult Advisor to promote and provide authentic youth voice. Assistance could include but is not limited to developing a youth advisory capacity and evaluation documentation. A Youth and Family Advisory/Leadership Team could be created, especially to help with public education and social marketing.

**Public Education and Social Marketing:** The YIT Intake Team and System of Care Team Leader will design an Interagency Professional Development Plan which is in place and used by the youth-serving agencies. The Team will:

- a) Develop training outcomes.
- b) Offer youth/adult training.
- c) Support travel to training and professional development activities.

One training event has already been delivered through the regional plan. “Youth in Transition-Building on Our Strengths” training occurred on April 20, 2010. The System of Care Team Leader helped plan the event and facilitate the day’s activities and panels. The turnout was approximately 50 people as expected. The panels were well received and the evaluation surveys came back with an overall positive reaction to the events and topics.

The System of Care Team Leader is working with Courtney Bridges, Social Marketing Coordinator for the statewide YIT Grant, to design a pilot program for Washington County high schools. It will be called WEST(We Erase Stigma Together). The focus is erasing the stigma of mental illness and disabilities among our youth. The long-term goal is for WEST groups in high schools to raise youth leaders from which a regional youth advisory board could be formed.

Every other week, the Department of Mental Health publishes an electronic Bi-Weekly Update. This region provided an article for the Bi-weekly Update to inform legislators and other key policy-makers and stakeholders about the start-up of its YIT program.

**Evaluation:** The region agreed in its strategic plan and sub-grant from the Department of Mental Health to cooperate with the YIT Evaluation Team to meet the national and state evaluation requirements. An Evaluation Liaison has been assigned to facilitate the timely submission of regional data to the Evaluation Team.