

YIT PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT

1. Grant Number: C-YIT-FY12-UCS
2. Grantee Name and Address: United Counseling Service,
100 Ledge Hill Dr, Bennington, VT 05201
3. Telephone Number: (802) 442-5491
4. Project Title: Youth Outreach Program
5. Period of Performance from July 1, 2011 through December 31, 2012
6. Approved Project Period from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012
7. Author's Name and Telephone number: Tom Campbell and Katrina Hollis, (802) 447-8270
8. Date of report: January 20, 2012
9. Comments (if any):

The federal Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) primarily focus on demonstrating accountability and achieving meaningful outcomes for all federally funded programs. Please make sure to include information on the outcomes of your project activities and the impact of your project on improving the lives of Youth in Transition and their families in the Program Progress Reports submitted.

Two Program Progress Reports must be submitted for this sub-grant:

1. one for the time period from July 1 – December 31, 2011 (due by January 31, 2012), and
2. One for the period from January 1 – June 30, 2012 (due by July 30, 2012).

Report Contents

1. Major Activities and Accomplishments During this Period

Report both quantifiable and non-quantifiable accomplishments for the General Expectations and Regional Goals listed in Attachment a (see pages 3-5 of the grant award):

- Quantifiable accomplishments include numbers of youth/families served, people trained, support groups established, etc.
- Non-quantifiable accomplishments should be listed in chronological order. Describe any draft/final products in this section.

Please report major activities and accomplishments for the following goals, outcomes, and indicators as relevant for the sub-grant.

The Youth Outreach Program (YOP) has connected with at least 38 youth in almost 2 years from the ages of 16-21 who are experiencing serious emotional disturbance. The goal is to direct and support Bennington’s young adults to be productive in the community and free from incarceration. The Youth Outreach Program staff actively seeks out connections within the community to help identify youth who need a positive connection.

	<p>1: Young adult (YA) leadership is developed in VT.</p> <p>Required activity: <i>Operate in accordance with continuing input from key stakeholders (including youth and family members) within the regional systems of care....</i></p> <p>Teens for Change (T4C) continues to meet weekly to discuss issues in the community to be addressed and plan positive youth activities. There are typically 18 youth who attend per week and currently 30 young people are participants' in the T4C group.</p> <p>The Youth Outreach Summer Youth Employment Program was able to successfully engage 5 youth participants for the entire 6 weeks program. A Youth Outreach participant (Justin Dickinson) was a co-facilitator under the direction of Katrina Hollis. Justin was able to co-facilitate through a WIA placement. The summer employment program was created in partnership with the D.O.L., Sunrise Family Resource Center, and the Youth Development Program as well as the Community High School of Vermont.</p> <p>As part of the Summer Youth Employment Program expectations the participants were to write about their experience in the program and how it affected them. One young woman, Stacey, gave permission to us to share her story in this report:</p> <p><i>Hi, my name is Stacey B, I'm 19 years old, and I'll be 20 next month on September 11th. 6 weeks ago I started the summer youth outreach program. I agreed to this program without knowing what the background was and what we would be doing. I heard UCS and I was game. I came into this program wanting to work in human services and I am positive I will be leaving wanting the same thing. I completely stepped out of my box by agreeing to participate, my first day walking into Sunrise and seeing everyone I was going to be spending the next 6 weeks with honestly kind of made me nervous. I didn't think any of these girls liked me let alone Katrina...I thought for sure I wasn't going to show up for the next day or any of the other days following after that. Although allowing my anxiety to rise was not worth it because I've actually become very comfortable and this turned out to be the best work experience that I've done. The girls were great, and Katrina was awesome. Oh yeah your cool too Justin. Lol</i></p> <p><i>We've done so much site visiting and things in the past 6 weeks. All agreeing to start, well attempting to start an emergency bed in Bennington County I think was still the best decision we all could have made. Throughout the program we have done two focus groups. Anyone knowing me would know I don't feel comfortable talking out in front of a crowd of people some of which I didn't know. The usual thing that would happen to me any other time would be, not only my face turning completely red making a fool of myself but I</i></p>
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will start to laugh and continue until the tears would slowly follow after. But...after working with these girls, Justin and Katrina, I allowed myself a chance and I went beyond my best judgment and I agreed to be first facilitator. Yes, my face got a little red and I was extremely nervous, but I did it...without laughing, crying or giving up.

I have done a lot of things in my past that have put me on hold with my future for a long time. But I am ready to change that...I am a troubled, lost, scared and nervous teenager who has been a part of department of corrections since I was 16 years old, I've been in and out of rehab 3 times, graduating twice...but it wasn't rehab that kept me clean, it was myself and the supports around me. I no longer want to look at myself in a negative way. I want to further my life, doing the things that I enjoy not what everyone else wants me to do, my so called family and friends. I'm going to use this summer program as my first step to changing, not for anyone else but myself. All I want to do in life is help others, I've been there, I needed the help but growing up I didn't have it, I was alone...If I can change that for another young teen I would and I am determined to see things change around this town for the better.

I want to thank everyone revolving the summer program, the girls I got to work with, Mr. Justin but especially Katrina for allowing me to join them this summer. I absolutely loved this group and I hope to continue being a volunteer working with Katrina threw the Teens for Change Program.

Not only did Stacey read her story in front of a group of people at the Annual Sunrise picnic, she presented her story at the 2nd annual Day of Sharing in September. This was an amazing accomplishment for Stacey. Stacey is now working full time at Price Chopper.

In October, 13 youth went to the Comstock Prison Facility for an educational tour. The Youth Assistance Program through Comstock is aimed at helping today's at risk youth become tomorrow's responsible adults. In contrast with "Scared Straight" The Youth Assistance Program emphasizes education as opposed to intimidation. The programs main objective is to disclose the harsh realities of incarceration and to challenge the youth attitudes, ideas, and rationale which often lead to unacceptable behavior. The van ride home was alive with discussions about their experience, fears, and ways to engage other community youth in order to change or disrupt their possibly destructive path.

The Teens For Change members were mentors to more than 30 young kids who attended our annual children's Halloween party. T4C facilitated activities such as bobbing for apples and pumpkin carving/painting. They all had a great time and T4C identified that mentoring the younger kids was one of their favorite activities.

2: Family/adult allies support young adults....

The Teens For Change Young Adult Advisory Board has seen a steady increase in participation over the past 6 months. Transportation to and from the group has become an issue as several trips to and from the same school needs to occur in order to pick up all the youth. Two dedicated parents of T4C participants now volunteer every week to transport youth to and from the group. This shows how our family/adult allies are engaging to support our area youth.

	<p>The Hemmings Motor News Apple Orchard was a huge support to the youth this Fall by donating apple picking and apples for our Halloween event. For some youth, this was the first time they ever went apple picking. The managers of the orchard wanted to give to our Teens For Change Board because of their son who received services in the past from UCS. The managers felt that youth and young adults need to have adult supports in the community in order to accomplish their goals.</p>
	<p>3: Workers use caring practices known to be helpful for young adults and families.</p> <p>Required activity: <i>Provide cross-system case management and individualized service plan development, ensuring that young adults are engaged in planning for their own futures....</i></p> <p>The Department of Labor assisted youths with W.I.A. experiences for on the job training. The Youth Outreach Program advocated with DOL to bond a youth man with felony charges for 6 thousand dollars in order to make him more employable. He is currently working regular hours at a local restaurant. YOP have continued to engage in a cross system approach with community partners in order to assist young adult with planning their future goals. Vocational Rehabilitation, Center For Restorative Justice (CRJ) and YOP are working together to assist young adults in completing their Probation Rep Board contract successfully. The collaboration helps bring youth into the system of care and decreasing the possibility of getting entrenched in the probation system.</p> <p>All young adults are offered case management and assistance in developing and reaching their short term and long range goals. The JOBS Program and T.L.P. are housed in the same building with YOP and T4C to continue to offer a seamless transition. .</p>
	<p>4: System of Care partners gains cultural & linguistic competence (CLC)....</p> <p>Mercedes Avila CLC coordinator came to UCS in December and presented the Cultural and Linguistic Competency training on 4 different occasions. Staff from our transition services, to outpatient to the business office and human resources attended the training. The training was well received and was a fodder for many discussions. Mercedes is an excellent trainer and we are hoping to have her return to Bennington to provide the training to our T4C group in the Spring.</p>
	<p>5: Local communities (including young adults) change their perceptions of young adults and of mental health issues, reducing stigma....</p> <p>During the summer T4C gave back to the community by offering to wash the windows of the local businesses that have donated to our Teens For Change events. During our window washing give back, businesses built stronger relationships with Bennington youth and saw them in a different light and reduced the stigma and the negative perception the adult usually have of our youth. Many of the businesses brought out drinks and snacks out to the youth while they washed windows as a way to say thanks.</p> <p>The youth also named October 20th as Civil Servants Day and washed Bennington Police cars and BBQ'd hamburgers and hotdogs for the</p>

officers. Following is the press release written by the police department and posted on their Facebook page:

**Bennington Police in the News
Teens for Change**

October 20, 2011

On Thursday, October 20, 2011 the Bennington chapter of "Teens for Change" came to the Bennington Police Department to give back to the community and they washed our police cars. While outside, police interacted with the teenagers.

Tom Campbell, who has been a teen advocate for many years, said that the Teens for Change wanted to give back to the community and to break down barriers between teens and law enforcement. The coordinator for the Y.O.P. Bennington region, Katrina Hollis, said Teens for Change was created from the Youth Outreach Program, a 5 year grant, to work with "at risk children, ages 16-21. But there was a stigma attached to the "at risk teens," so while waiting for the grant, and to remove the stigma of "at risk teens," the Teens for Change was created, and is available for all kids. The program gives kids a place to go, on equal ground. Any issues are left at the door, and they are all teenagers. They come together and create events. They have skateboarded, bowling, met at the Moose Lodge and Willow Park. Some events have been as large as 50-60 kids with 12 to 15 chaperones. All with less than \$300. of donated monies. The kids solicit donations from area business. They are taught how to write donation letters, contacting business owners, telling them about the program. It also teaches them leadership and public speaking skills. The whole premise is to break down the barriers on how teenagers are looked at from the business owners, law enforcement, and adults.

They have had 4 successful events and now are giving back to the community. They have washed windows for local business, police cars for the Sheriff's department and police department

For more information on "Teens for Change" call United Counseling Service at (802) 442-5491, or visit [Teens for Change on Facebook](#).

Lt. Lloyd Dean The Bennington Police Department

During the holidays the T4C group decorated an empty store window on main street, wishing the town of Bennington a happy holiday. Most of the T4C advisory board signed a giant holiday card, displayed lights, and hung a T4C t-shirt in the window. Information on how to contact the YOP and T4C advisory board was also displayed. This was just another easy and free way to get the T4C name out there and to show the community that the youth are doing positive things.

6: Effectiveness of the Vermont System of Care for young adults with SED is

	<p>evaluated.....</p> <p>UCS and YOP are active participants in the Vermont Study and the National Study. YOP is dedicated to helping young adults fill out forms and complete the follow up forms for the Common Study. YOP wants services and supports for the young adults and their families to improve. Tom Campbell was one of two YOP coordinators recognized by the state team for having their paper work on time for the Vermont study with the most YA participants. He was recognized with a huge bar of chocolate!</p> <p>I'm sorry to say that our Youth Service Board has not met much during this reporting time. Much of the reason it has not met is due to time constraints. The LIT has increased its focus on transition services and issues related as a way to compensate for a lack of meeting by the YSB. Several members of the LIT were actively involved with developing the grant and continue to have a commitment to the process. The LIT will continue to act as an oversight committee to the YIT until or if other options are identified.</p> <p>7: The State supports and sustains regional services for young adults....</p> <p>The YOP and T4C group meets with Matt Wolff, young adult coordinator and Courtney Bridges, social networking for YA as needed. Matt and Courtney are both willing to meet and are helpful to the local YIT.</p> <p>The Day of Sharing is another way the state supports regional efforts to engage young people. Staff and several young people attended the day and were able to share about their regions accomplishments.</p>
<p>Desired outcomes for young adults of transition-age</p>	<p>1. Decreased number of young adults involved in the corrections system (including an increase in the number who are free of incarceration).</p> <p>Required activity: <i>Reach out to young adults with SED who are out-of-school at least through teen centers, recovery centers, homeless youth programs, and by intercepting them at critical intervention points with the juvenile and criminal justice systems....</i></p> <p>The Youth Outreach Program continues to make a strong collaboration with the department of Probation and Parole who continue to refer first time offenders and YA with deferred sentences. 2 young adults working with YOP completed their deferred sentences successfully. One goal for YOP is to work with more YA on deferred sentences to increase over-all completion rates. In addition to the successful completions of their deferred sentences, 4 YA completed their probation conditions with the support of YOP and other adult allies. We will continue to strive to increase the number of youth who complete their conditions successful in order to not get further entrenched in the probation and parole system</p> <p>Tom Campbell, coordinator, is now participating on the CRJ Diversion Board as another way to support and connect with YA who are 1st time offenders.</p> <p>YOP is receiving referrals for what is called "probation call ins". YOP connects with YA that are "calling in" with updates on conditions, which are sometimes court ordered, to their probation officer. Some of the YA are 1st</p>

	<p>time offenders and YOP can speed up the process with the YA by explaining how important it is to complete conditions as soon as possible and not put these on the back burner. When conditions are not completed by the date set in court this can result in the YA probation period end date being extended. “Staying connected with the Department of Probation makes a difference with young adults transitioning into adulthood and moving on with their life”, states a Probation Officer.</p> <p>YOP has increased its collaboration with the Public Defender’s Office as a source for youth referrals. YOP is present in the adult criminal court and intercepts YA that want to engage in the YOP at time of court. YOP is starting to make a presence in Juvenile Court as well.</p>
	<p>2. Increased number of young adults who are employed....</p> <p>The youth outreach coordinator almost always makes a referral to the Bennington JOBS Program once a young person connects with YOP. Several young people have been assisted in improving their interviewing skills and resume building, for instance and finding employment.</p>
	<p>3. Increased number young adults participating in (or who completed) educational programs....</p> <p>During this period 4 YA are engaging in post secondary education, Three YA attend the Community High School of Vermont, and one YA is at the tutorial Center. These youth were not attending school regularly prior to connecting with YOP. The YOP supports the YA so that their chances of receiving a high school diploma are increased. YOP goes to the Community High School of Vermont on weekly basis as a way to connect with and encourage the youth to continue attending.</p>
	<p>4. Increased number of young adults who have access to, and are using, a medical home....</p> <p>YOP has connected 2 YA to a medical home and now have a PCP. The youth no longer use the emergency room when they need medical care. It is very challenging for YA to find a PCP. Most of the PCP’s in Bennington County are not currently taking Medicaid or VHAP. YOP provides assistance with obtaining health insurance through economic services. We also direct young people to the Bennington Free Clinic until they get a PCP.</p>
	<p>5. Increased number of young adults living in safe and stable housing....</p> <p>Many YOP participants are referred to the Transitional Living Program. TLP works on budgeting skills, apartment hunting, community resources and basic life skills. TLP can also provide financial assistance as well. Three youth were able to secure stable housing with ongoing supports through YOP and TLP.</p>
	<p>6. Increased number of young adults who have caring & supportive relationships....</p> <p>YOP consistently connects young adults with parents, grandparents, and other caring adults throughout their work with YOP. YA connect with peers through the TLP skills classes and as a result can start supportive relationships with peers. Many young people are able to connect with community members through their fund raising efforts or events. Several young people have developed new relationships through this process and are starting to feel a better connection to their community.</p>

	<p>7. Increase in young adults' strengths and protective factors.... Everything T4C does is connected to increasing strengths and protective factors. Young people in T4C have acted as mentors, fundraisers, organizers, leaders, and role models. They have been directly affected by their positive actions by seeing events that are successfully attended by 50 or more youth, they have witnessed their community coming together for youth either through volunteering or donating, and they have experienced the power of a mentoring relationship. Protective factors that build resiliency that the group targets are relationships, service, life skills, independence, positive view of their future, competence, and creativity, for example. Staff foster resiliency by expressing to the youth that they matter and that they are capable.</p> <p>8. Improved mental health for young adults. Required activity: <i>Improve access to mental health services for the young adults most at risk for poor outcomes and use the power of the courts to increase their likelihood of use of those services....</i> YOP receives referrals from the Department of Probation and during this reporting period 6 YA had court ordered drug and alcohol assessments. YOP directed and supported the youth in a way that they often feel more like it is their choice and at the end of the day the YA makes the right choice. The youth get connected regarding substance abuse issues and then it often leads to ongoing counseling for mental health related issues.</p>
<p>System of Care Infrastructure Indicators (for federal TRAC):</p>	<p><u>Workforce Development:</u> Organizations or communities implementing mental health-related training programs as a result of the grant. Please enter the number of organizations or communities and briefly describe the training programs.... The Youth Outreach Summer Program had 5 YA participate in a leadership skill building work experience. The collaboration among The Sunrise Family Resource Center, D.O.L., Community High School of Vermont UCS, and many other agencies that were willing to open their doors taught youth about community resources and how to connect to them. Part of their experience was to identify the community resources to explore, develop questions, set up the experience and then write about it. Through their experience and facilitating a focus group they identified a gap in community service, which was emergency housing and then researched the problem. They shared their research and recommendations with the Bennington Housing Authority.</p> <p><u>Organizational Change:</u> Organizational changes made to support improvement of mental health-related practices/activities that are consistent with the goals of the grant. Please enter the number of changes and briefly describe them....</p> <p><u>Partnership/Collaboration:</u> Organizations that entered into formal written inter/intra-organizational agreements (e.g., MOUs/MOAs) to improve mental health-related practices/activities that is consistent with the goals of the grant. Please enter the number of organizations and briefly describe the agreements.... During the summer a group of Sunrise Summer Opportunities students under</p>

	<p>the leadership of Katrina Hollis worked on a project to research emergency housing options in our community. Katrina, an Opportunities graduate herself, currently works for the Youth in Transition program at United Counseling and coordinates the Teens for Change Advisory Council. Justin Dickinson was a co-facilitator in the summer program and a participant in the Teens for Change and still engages in the YOP for the past 18 months in some capacity. This was an informal collaboration.</p>
	<p><u>Types/Targets of Practice:</u> Programs/organizations/communities that implemented evidence-based mental health-related practices/activities as a result of the grant. Please enter the number of programs/organizations/communities and briefly describe the evidence-based practices....</p> <p>The Transition program staff participated in a training and Maria Mercedes Avila (cultural and Linguistic Competence Coordinator) that taught our staff that people and health care providers need education on cultural and linguistic issues to break down barriers in our community. So that YA have access to effective interactions in a cross-cultural community.</p>

2. Problems

Describe any deviations or departures from the original project plan including actual/anticipated slippage in task completion dates, and special problems encountered or expected. Use this section to describe barriers to accomplishment, actions taken to overcome difficulties, and to advise DMH of any needs for assistance.

During this reporting period our transportation issues for our Teens for Change Advisory Board continuing to grow. There are approximately 18 youth who attend weekly and the numbers continue to grow. Parents have assisted with transporting YA to T4C and we have use of a 15 passenger van fairly regularly, but we are at capacity and growing.

The Youth Advisory Council has not met very often during this reporting period. Much of the reason for this is time constraints. We are looking to re-work the group to be more results oriented in its purpose. For instance, we would bring the group together to create a youth workshop/conference with youth for next Fall.

3. Significant Findings and Events

For special notice to Principal Investigator, State Outreach Team for Youth in Transition, Federal Project Officer, etc. This should include any changes in staffing, including of persons, time spent, and/or responsibilities. Attach resumes and qualifications of new staff.

Katrina Hollis received a distinguished Service Award from the Sunrise Family Resource Center. Sunrise was pleased to present this award to Katrina because of her significant contributions to the children and families in the community.

YOP and transitional services programs attended the 2011 Hope and Connections Community Lunch. The purpose of this lunch was to inform the community and partners the

array of services available in the community. We were able to use the opportunity to inform others of the Transitional Living Program, Bennington JOBS Program, YOP, T4C and Mental Health and Substance Abuse services. The plan is to have this community lunch 2 or 3 times each year. There was a good turnout of YA from surrounding counties. The lunch also connected us with a new PCP in the area who is taking Medicaid.

The T4C group and YOP, along with JOBS and TLP, hosted its annual "Thanks for Giving" lunch and prepared a Thanksgiving Lunch for community partners, parents and some of our aging community members. T4C and YOP wanted to bridge the gap between the aging community members and our young adults. Two community residents both over 90 years old, were honored at the luncheon and the youth made them feel very special.

United Counseling Service Health and Safety Fair were attended by young adults again this year. Katrina Hollis went with YA to the fair so they can have a better understanding on how to develop healthy eating habits, health and wellness, and quit smoking services, to name a few.

4. Dissemination activities

Briefly describe project related inquiries and information dissemination activities carried out over the reporting period. Itemize and include a copy of any newspaper, newsletter, and magazine articles or other published materials considered relevant to project activities, or used for project information or public relations purposes.

The T4C group has a facebook page to promote activities and inform the community of the new events that are coming up. T4C events are also promoted on the UCS website and Facebook page. The YOP and T4C group continues to promote activities with flyers and ads in the newspaper and the Penny Saver Press. The local newspaper is made aware of all of the activities or events that are planned by T4C. Sometimes it makes the paper and sometimes it doesn't.

The Youth Outreach Coordinator and Teens for Change Coordinator continue to work with the local radio station to promote the program and events.

5. Other Activities

Briefly describe other activities undertaken during the reporting period.

YOP staff and T4C participants are still providing other regions input on how to grow their youth involvement. During this reporting period 2 regions came down to Bennington to check us out. One region was able to participate in our Thanks for Giving dinner for community partners. Our T4C participants are willing to continue to give their input and have YA from other regions join in on our community work.

6. Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period

Briefly describe the project activities planned for the next reporting period.

The T4C is having a McDonalds fundraising night. The Teens for Change group is hosting this night to raise funds for their program. This goal is to encourage YA to create change within the community. The funds that are raised will help T4C create additional substance free events for youth in their community.

The T4C Advisory Board is hosting another dance event at the Moose Family Lodge. T4C is collaborating with another region's youth worker, Cadoux Dzingou to bring his free style rap group called Mic Criminals to the event to perform during the dance. The T4C group are going into the community and spreading the word about the event and asking for donations. The event will have free prizes, food and community partners and parents chaperoning. The Moose Lodge again donated the space, warming trays for the food, and an employee who will serve free soda.

The YOP and T4C group plan on going to Comstock Prison once again as a way to educate our YA about the harsh realities of prison life. This is not a scared straight program. There is a inmate panel that are near the ages of our YA serving time for substance abuse and anger issues that can result in violent crimes.

T4C will be applying for a mini grant this year to use the funds to increase cultural awareness. More to come!

We are also toying with the idea of creating a local youth conference. The T4C group and community partners would work together to create it, plan it, get donations and speakers, etc with the possibility of hosting it in the fall. More to come on this too!

DMH only:

Date received: _____

Approved by: _____

Date approved: _____

Approved by: _____

Date approved: _____