

**Youth in Transition (YIT) Grant Report  
July 1, 2010 to December 30, 2010**

**Youth in Transition Vision**

Young adult in Vermont are empowered, healthy, valued, and engaged in their communities

**Mission**

Young adults, families/adult allies and community partners collaborate to develop a system of care to support transition to adulthood. The system builds upon the strengths of young adults and creates an array of specialized mental health and related services to meet their unique and changing needs. The system also fosters young adult leadership.

**Vermont Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health (VFFCMH)  
YIT Staff**

Kathy Holsopple, Executive Director VFFCMH  
Cindy Marshall, Assistant Director VFFCMH & Lead Family Contact (LFC)  
Courtney Bridges, Social Marketing & Communications Manager (SMC)  
Vanessa Lang left in August, 2010; Matt Wolf began in January, 2011; Young Adult Coordinator (YAC)

**Major Activities and Accomplishments**

**Cindy Marshall – Lead Family Contact (LFC)**

- Supported and organized the YIT grant to send 5 young adults to the national system of care Training Institutes in Washington D.C. in July. These young adults were inspired and walked away with skills plus outcomes they want to achieve personally and professionally, all involving a special focus on improving systemic issues around Cultural and Linguistic Competence (CLC) and reducing mental health stigma.
- The VFFCMH (primarily the LFC and a non-YIT Training Coordinator) took the lead in organizing a day of family and individual leadership training for September 16, 2010. About 80 people attended and heard Sandra Spencer, Executive Director of the national Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health (FFCMH), give the keynote speech. The VFFCMH also organized a family panel consisting of three families; it was well received and provoked many questions. Planning for the day was part of a collaborative training effort with the University of Vermont (UVM) Center for Disability and Community Inclusion and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). This planning and training partnership across family leadership and self-advocacy organizations fostered new-found respect for each other’s points of view. Specifically, self advocates saw that families want the skills and knowledge to support and empower their young adults to self-advocacy.

- The LFC took the primary role in organizing with the State YIT Operations and Outreach Team the regional Sharing and Learning Day for September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Nearly 100 people from across the 12 regions and the statewide level attended this event. People had an opportunity to hear about other regions' plans and how they are being implemented. The discussion groups were targeted toward systems transformation and the focus areas of the grant. Feedback from the regions was that the event was well planned and informative.
- The former Training and Technical Assistance and Young Adult Coordinator resigned in August. This transition gave the VFFCMH and the State YIT Operations Team the opportunity to rethink the work of involving young adults in the system of care. Through a collaborative process led by the LFC, a decision was made to re-align the functions of training and technical assistance, young adult coordination, and social marketing. As a result, the Social Marketing Coordinator reduced her time for young adult coordination from 50% to 25% and picked up an equivalent amount of time (25%) for training and technical assistance functions. This allowed the vacant position of Young Adult Coordinator (YAC) to be more focused on young adult involvement (at 75% time, with 25% time still devoted to training and technical assistance). This change should make it possible for the new YAC to spend more time building relationships and youth leadership activities with the YIT Peer Outreach Workers recently hired around the state.
- Led and organized the recruitment and panel interview process for the YAC position, leading to the hiring of Matt Wolf, who began work on January 26, 2011.
- The VFFCMH has a contract with Washington County Mental Health Services to support the Washington County YIT regional plan's development of family and young adult leadership. The LFC continues to supervise the System of Care Team Leader (SOCTL) position hired by the VFFCMH to carry out this work.
- All VFFCMH staff plus the YIT CLC Coordinator attended the national FFCMH annual conference in Atlanta, GA in November. This year's focus was on diversity and resiliency. Each person brought back tools and information for developing more parent and family advocacy along with young adult leadership.
- Started planning for the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Young Adult Voice Movement (YAVM) Conference. This year the planning committee consists primarily of young adults, some of whom participated in last year's event. They requested changes to the Conference, which this time will include an overnight.
- During this reporting period the VFFCMH entered into a new contract with Dr. Jody Kamon to deliver regional training and technical assistance related to clinical practice and use of evidence-based practices. The LFC participated in the

first such T/TA event organized by Dr. Kamon, a statewide meeting for reflective conversation with the supervisors of the YIT Peer Outreach Workers.

- LFC supervises the functions of and positions and contracts devoted to YIT training and technical assistance, social marketing, and young adult involvement. This is genuinely a full time effort!

### **Courtney Bridges – Social Marketing & Communications Manager (SMC)**

- Because Vanessa Lang - one of the two half-time Young Adult Coordinators - left her position in August, Courtney Bridges, the other (formerly) half-time Young Adult Coordinator fulfilled that role as best she could throughout the rest of this reporting period. Her position has been re-defined; Matt Wolf will now assume most of the youth involvement work.
- Helped support the planning of two regional youth summits modeled after the 1<sup>st</sup> annual statewide Young Adult Voice Movement (YAVM) Conference. The summit planned for the Rutland region did not take place, but the one for St. Albans did in November and was attended by over 80 youth and young adults.
- The SMC was selected by Leah Holmes-Bonilla of Vanguard to be a member of the Campaign Resource Group (CRG). She traveled to Washington D.C. for CRG orientation and the annual meeting, where she received recognition for having served as a judge for the ECCO awards presented during the summer Training Institutes.
- When the YIT State Operations Team attended the Georgetown Training Institutes in Washington D.C., the SMC helped to support the five young adults who went with the Team. Two were Peer Outreach Workers and three were young adult emerging leaders. One of the young adults had been a guest speaker at the 1<sup>st</sup> annual YAVM Conference; the other two were attendees.
- Helped plan and executed the marketing efforts for the September 23<sup>rd</sup> YIT Learning and Sharing Day, an opportunity for all of the twelve regions to come together and discuss their plans and projects.
- Participated in the four-day Year 2 Federal Site Visit to the Vermont System of Care. During the visit, the SMC set the stage for discussion of each required topic by walking the site visitors through the relevant YIT website pages. For the social marketing discussion, she unveiled the first complete version of the working draft of the YIT Social Marketing Plan.
- The SMC conceptualized four sets of activities for the YIT Social Marketing Plan:
  - Children’s Mental Health Day  
The 2010 celebration consisted of a statewide event – the YAVM

Conference - on May 7 that drew 219 people (about 160 young adults—half of whom were youth from minority backgrounds—plus their case managers and community mentors). For 2011, the celebration will be another YAVM Conference - still during Children's Mental Health Month - on May 27-28 at UVM.

- WEST – We Eliminate Stigma Together  
Adapted from the STARS model developed in Minnesota, this campaign is intended to encourage students to inform their high/alternative school and their community about the importance of positive mental health. Mini-grants are being awarded to groups of students to plan (*often over pizza*) and lead their own events. During this reporting period, WEST was launched in the Washington region.
  - BringChange2Mind  
A national anti-stigma campaign that will be supplemented in Vermont by bringing together the statewide counterparts of the national partners (e.g., The National Alliance on Mental Health-VT, VFFCMH, The Vermont Association for Mental Health, SAMHSA grantees for youth suicide or substance abuse prevention) to consider what they can do together to promote mental health.
  - Your Voice Matters  
A campaign for the Vermont Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (VFFCMH) to help families and young adults become leaders in the system of care.
- The SMC wrote an article about Vermont's social marketing strategies. The article was published in the national TA Partnership December, 2010 – January, 2011 newsletter and can be found at [http://www.tapartnership.org/newsletter/archives/201012\\_hf.php?id=topic5](http://www.tapartnership.org/newsletter/archives/201012_hf.php?id=topic5) .
  - The SMC prepared a booklet about the first YAVM Conference planning to facilitate planning the second conference.
  - The SMC has reached out to the Youth Development Program (YDP) staff and contractors of the Department for Children and Families (DCF) to create a strong relationship between YIT and YDP. This collaboration led to the YDP leaders being willing to facilitate discussion of young adult involvement at the September 23<sup>rd</sup> Learning and Sharing Day, also to the YDP leaders subsequently inviting YIT regional workers and youth to attend training jointly with YDP workers and youth. The training was about how to organize youth advisory groups. This training event involved creation of regional plans for joint YDP-YIT youth groups. Thus, young adults invested in either or both programs can work together to better the system of care for their age group. [*Matt Wolf is a former YDP worker from the So. Windsor-No. Windham region.*]
  - The SMC represented the YIT grant on the following boards and groups:
    - Suicide Prevention Grant Advisory Board:

- Youth in Transition Leadership Committee
  - Young Adult Advisory Team (Prevention and Recovery focus)
- The SMC checks the 2 YIT Facebook accounts up to 5 days a week. These visits to Facebook offer weekly updates, sharing of materials, and make connections with other state programs. YIT Grant = 155 ‘friends’; Young Adult Voice Movement Conference = 67 ‘members’

**Problems / Challenges:**

**Cindy Marshall – Lead Family Contact**

- 10 out of the 12 regions do not have family leadership on the radar of their YIT grant work, and some are struggling with how to build young adult leadership into the services they offer. Both Chittenden and Washington Counties have partnered with family organizations and are talking about what families need to help support their children’s healthy transition to adulthood. The VFFCMH will support other regions to think about family leadership along with the young adult leadership efforts they will be planning in the future.
- The concept of “family driven” in the context of this grant is a bit challenging. The VFFCMH is developing training on what “family driven’ is and will offer it to all regions to help support communities in fostering leadership for all service consumers, young and old.
- LFC has not been able to participate fully in the monthly LFC webinars offered by the TA Partnership as they are held on the very same time slot as our VT YIT Operations Team meetings.

**Courtney Bridges – Social Marketing & Young Adult Coordinator**

- In many ways we have done and will continue to do outreach to involve more youth/young adults and their voice in this system of care work. While we have regions with a strong core of youth/young adults involved in the project, finding transition aged youth who are interested has been a challenge for some regions and at the state level. We continue to rethink how to engage young adults and create and sustain partnerships with them.
- Expectations for young people should be realistic and based on their interests. While an advisory group may seem to adults to be an essential strategy for implementing a grant, the idea of an advisory group does not always seem to interest youth/young adults. Many youth/young adult’s experiences with advisory groups have not been positive in the past, which does not make them want to try this avenue of advocacy.

- Regional YIT Peer Outreach Workers were hired during this reporting period, most for only a few hours per week. Connection with them is an important strategy for enhancing youth involvement in the YIT grant statewide, but doing so has been a challenge. With the re-definition of the YAC position and with Matt Wolf's hiring, this problem will be addressed.

### **Significant Findings and Events**

#### **Courtney Bridges – Social Marketing & Young Adult Coordinator**

- Young adult involvement and dedication to the project is growing.

### **Dissemination Activities**

#### **Cindy Marshall – Lead Family Contact**

- Redesigned the Family Leadership page of the YIT grant.

#### **Courtney Bridges – Social Marketing & Young Adult Coordinator**

- WEST program packets to Washington County, Newport and St. Johnsbury.

### **Other Activities**

- Attended Vermont Adult Mental Health (VAMH) Conference October 21, 2010
- Attended the Federal Site Visit, October 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010
- The SMC participated in monthly webinars/affinity conference calls on Social Marketing, Young Adult Leadership, and Children's Mental Health Day.

### **Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period**

- Planning and Preparing for 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual young Adult Voice Movement Conference
- Planning and Preparing for the TIPS Fidelity Training
- Planning and Preparing for sending young adults leaders to the System of Care Community Training in Chicago, IL
- Developing a young adult leadership workshop on "How to plan a YA Driven Conference" for the System of Care Community Training in Chicago, IL
- Visiting all the regions to help support and foster their outcomes, especially helping them create young adult leadership opportunities and linking them together to build a statewide young adult leadership network.
- Orientating our newly hired YAC, Matt Wolf.
- VFFCMH Board and Staff will participate in the 3-hour CLC training created and facilitated by YIT CLC Coordinator Mercedes Avila.