



January, 2018

Lamoille County Mental Health Services Winter Newsletter

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Developmental Services Director Chosen to Represent Vermont at German International Disability Conference

The State of Vermont was invited by Germany's Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to present on best-practices on employment inclusion for people with developmental disabilities in December. The invitation follows Vermont's recent prestigious World Council Zero Project Award for its enduring and effective Supported Employment Program for people with developmental disabilities. Lamoille County Mental Health Services (LCMHS) Developmental Services Program Director Jennifer Stratton was chosen as one of the state's three representatives.

Germany's Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has been hosting Inclusion Days since 2013. The motto of this year's Conference was Inclusion. Participants presented on best-practice projects of developmental inclusion from across the world and shared ideas to support the implementation of the United Nations Disability Convention in Germany. The invitation read, "We'd like to invite best-practice inclusion projects from abroad to present their work. Your project was recommended because of its future oriented ideas. Best practices on inclusion from around the world will be presented, fostering international cooperation".

Stratton presented on day two of the conference and said, "It was an honour to be chosen to represent our state in such a high-profile way." Joining Stratton were Bryan Dague, of the University of Vermont and Jessalyn Gustin, of Upper Valley Services. All expenses were paid by Germany's federal government.

Stratton's presentation focused on how Vermont went about closing sheltered workshops and discussed current practices of the inclusion of people with developmental differences in our community and workplaces. "It was an eye-opening experience to see how the international community viewed inclusion in varying degrees." said Stratton. "Vermont is a leader in Supported Employment, and we set a progressive example of how we support everyone in our community to live self-directed, productive lives."

LCMHS Developmental Services Supported Employment program works with people to ensure that they are able to lead productive lives within their community. Of the 50 people currently enrolled in the LCMHS supported employment program, 44 of them are employed. In Fiscal Year 2017 the total wages of those enrolled in this program were \$202,000. This equates to a state savings in Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits of \$81,623.

For more information, visit: www.lamoille.org.

From left to right: Bryan Dague, UVM, Jennifer Stratton, LCMHS, and Jessalyn Gustin, of Upper Valley Services.



What we do

Program Spotlight:

Children, Youth and Family Services Enhanced Family Services Program

Kiah Palumbo, Program Manager

What do we do?

The goal of Enhanced Family Services is to support families and children who are at risk of being removed from our community and potentially being placed in a residential treatment program. Enhanced Family Services is designed to wrap around families, and give them the support and clinical guidance to meet success, while remaining in their home community. Our main goals are around community retention and include placement stability with a focus on the support of reunification with families. Enhanced Family Services works with the most complicated and high-needs mental health clients in the Lamoille area.

How is the program funded?

This program is funded through the Department for Children and Families' (DCF) Enhanced Family Treatment budget, which are often called Individual Service Budgets through contracts with DCF. Alternatively, these services can also be funded through Department of Mental Health (DMH) waivers.

How many clients are served?

Currently, Enhanced Family Services serves 28 clients. These clients all have school teams, therapeutic foster parents, respite providers, community skills works (sometimes more than one per client), child care teams, large mental health teams and family systems.

Clients in Enhanced Family Services can range from ages 3–22. The length of time in the program varies based on need.

How many employees?

This program has two full-time case managers, one service coordinator and one half-time case manager (shared with the Access Crisis Support Program).

Enhanced Family Services also holds the community skills workers program (shared with the children's outpatient division and Access Crisis Support), which has five full time positions.

Enhanced Family Services has a number of respite and therapeutic foster parents who are contracted with the agency.

What are the biggest challenges in Enhanced Family Services?

The program works with the most complicated families and children identified within our system. This in of itself brings incredible challenges. However, Enhanced Family Services struggles immensely with funding limitations and recruiting foster parents.

What do I want people to remember about Enhanced Family Services?

There is no other program like Enhanced Family Services in the entire county. We are able to wrap children and families in a complete way, provide them with out-of-home placements and support on a daily basis. We are often the "last stop", for clients before they may be removed from their home and school. Enhanced Family Services supports their clients and families 24/7, with the help of our Jumpstart pager, also staffed by the Enhanced Family Services Team. The goals of program are to increase family voice, competence and connection with their community, with the result of stability with in the family system for all involved and a reduction of the need for clinical services.



Zach Williams has been sworn in as the new President of the LCMHS Board of Directors.

Zach is the Chief Financial Officer of Bourne's Energy in Morrisville. He began his accounting career with PricewaterhouseCoopers in Minneapolis, Minnesota performing and supervising audits of companies ranging in revenue from \$50M to \$2B.

Zach moved home to Vermont in 2014 and began working for Aon, where he oversaw the accounting, financial reporting, and regulatory compliance of a portfolio of Captive Insurance Companies. Zach transitioned from Aon to Bourne's in January 2016, following his desire to work for a smaller, private company.

Zach has bachelor's degrees in Accountancy and Aviation Systems Management from the University of North Dakota. He is a licensed Pilot and Aircraft Mechanic. He is a Certified Public Accountant in the State of Vermont.

Zach lives in Georgia, Vermont with his wife Dayanelis, son Benjamin (7), and daughter Sophia (2).

Newly elected LCMHS Board President Zach Williams.

BOARD UPDATES

The LCMHS Board of Directors will be changing its meeting schedule in 2018.

Beginning in January, the board will meet regularly at 12:00 PM on the first Thursday of each month at 72 Harrel Street in Morrisville.

Due to a retreat, the Board will not meet at the scheduled time in February.



LCMHS IN THE NEWS:

The mental health crisis is escalating in Vermont with demand for more services across the state. A heightening debate considers whether there is a lack of mental health resources, or the courts need to crack down more.

Whichever side of the argument the community lands on, Lamoille County officials are frustrated with the problem and have established a new type of first-responder program – Lamoille OutReach Alliance – teaming up two mental health outreach workers with local police to tackle the problem at its source.

Mental health problems can manifest in assaults on residents, family members or police officers, and the county can wind up with a backlog of patients in hospital emergency rooms awaiting space at an inpatient facility.

Police and mental-health workers are hoping that by providing residents with early intervention before they reach that crisis point, they can keep at least some cases out of the criminal system and out of the emergency department.

Local police “are the typical first responders when someone is experiencing a mental health crisis,” said Detective Ryan Bjerke of the Morristown Police Department. “Sometimes we bring them to Oasis House, other times to ASAP (Alcohol and Substance Awareness Program). We are the gatekeepers.”

But, the gatekeepers to what? Recidivism?

The Oasis House is a crisis stabilization program in a residential setting in Hyde Park designed to offer short-term therapeutic supports to people experiencing a psychiatric crisis.

ASAP offers short-term detox as an alternative to jail for people who are picked up by police for intoxication or those who self-admit to the program to sober up and cool off before a domestic conflict is exacerbated.

Neither program offers a long-term solution, and once the immediate need has been met, patients are released, often holding onto the same underlying problems that landed them in the program to begin with. Those folks can become repeat visitors to the police department.

Bjerke admits that the police aren’t aware of every service that is offered in Lamoille County surrounding mental health, and that’s where the Lamoille OutReach Alliance comes into play.

“We are able to meet people where they are, and lead them to the right services,” Leslie Chilton, director of ASAP and one of the two mental-health workers in the Lamoille OutReach Alliance, said.

“And if it works right, we will only have a brief encounter with individuals before handing them off to another agency for ongoing services,” said Allison Hayes, the second half of the team.

About a year ago, the Alliance was formed to increase and expand Lamoille County Mental Health’s work with police in Stowe, Morristown and the Lamoille County Sheriff’s Department,

Lamoille County Mental Health teams up with local police to form the Lamoille Outreach Alliance

By Kayla Collier | News & Citizen
Dec 28, 2017

connecting folks with their own agency’s services, as well as cross referencing with the Central Vermont Council on Aging, Behavioral Health and Wellness, Clarina Howard Nichols Center, North Central Vermont Recovery Center and others in the community.

“Last year, we helped the Vermont State Police with a local woman who had ongoing substance-abuse and domestic-violence issues. The police had been called to her address a number of times. We were able to partner with Copley Hospital and Lamoille County Mental Health to get her and her family ongoing treatment,” Hayes said.

By the end of the year, the Vermont State Police had stopped receiving calls to the woman’s home.

Sometimes all it takes to help someone is a 15-minute phone call letting him or her know that they’re not alone, Chilton added.

“Since we started working more closely with Lamoille County Mental Health, I think we can provide better services to the community,” Bjerke said. “We can get more to the root of what happened in an incident and work together on what happens after to avoid further conflicts.”

Officers are taking more time to talk to people before a situation becomes hands-on as well.

Some people will continue to make mistakes, Bjerke said, but at least now they know their options where they maybe didn’t before.

As the only two employees of the program, much like local police, Chilton and Hayes are on call 24/7 regardless of holidays or family events. During the day, the team works together, and they divvy up the night responsibilities.

So far, the project has remained very low-key with a small Morrisville office, but they’d like to eventually expand with more access points.

“We want to be busy, and use all the time we can seeing people and getting them the services they need,” Chilton said. “If we don’t have enough time, it’s a good problem to have.”

The OutReach Alliance is constantly learning about the community and updating the list of available services through agencies in the area.

“We really want to catch people before they reach a crisis and suffer unnecessarily,” Hayes said.

Anyone in need of mental health services can contact Hayes and Chilton at 888-3103.

Bright Spots



Program Bright Spots

- * The Redwood Program has a number of students who are expected to be graduating from the program by the end of the school year.
- * The two Behavior Technicians through Valley Applied Behavior Analysis have passed their exams. They are now both Registered Behavior Technicians.
- * We have continued partnering with Children's Integrated Services to perform early childhood and family mental health services. We continue to receive more and more referrals and despite being down one staff have been able to support clients and families across environments including: schools, child care programs, in the community, homes and here at the agency.
- * We completed a successful third round of the Resource Parent Curriculum Plus (RPC+) with local foster parents.
- * School employees are asking for more training for working with children experiencing mental health issues. School Based Clinicians are referring them to Youth Mental Health First Aid training and U Matter Trainings.
- * Peer Support for Community Social Work has been a success.
- * We have two new babies in our Developmental Services family! We supported two consumers through their pregnancies, through the births of their babies and now are able to support them as new parents.

Administrative Bright Spots

- * Successful contract negotiation with the union
- * Launched a new payroll software
- * Strong financial audit with no negative opinion

At right: Lt. Governor David Zuckerman visits with CEO Savi Van Sluytman and Board Member Dot Reeve at LCMHS during our Thanksgiving lunch in November.





Suicide Risk Factors & Warning Signs

Source: www.Mental Health First Aid.org

Something to look out for when concerned that a person may be suicidal is a change in behavior or the presence of entirely new behaviors. This is of sharpest concern if the new or changed behavior is related to a painful event, loss, or change. Most people who take their lives exhibit one or more warning signs, either through what they say or what they do.



Talk

If a person talks about:

- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain



Behavior

Behaviors that may signal risk, especially if related to a painful event, loss or change:

- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Looking for a way to end their lives, such as searching online for materials or means
- Withdrawing from activities
- Isolating from family and friends
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- Giving away prized possessions
- Aggression
- Fatigue



Mood

People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Irritability
- Humiliation
- Agitation
- Rage

If you are concerned about someone you know, contact LCMHS for help today.

Join us for the 3rd Annual
Zumbathon!
Saturday, March 31

Registration opens at 1:30, dancing from 2:00-3:30
Johnson State College SHAPE Gym



Come out and shake off winter!

Come as a team or as an individual. Raffle prizes for the biggest fundraisers !

All proceeds to benefit the Lamoille Outreach Alliance:

A partnership between Lamoille County Mental Health Services and local police for early interventions with people who are moving toward crisis.

Never done Zumba? We will teach you! All are welcome to this fun and energizing event.

Bring the kids! We will have organized kids activities while parents are grooving. Donations for kids are suggested but not mandatory.

To register or to become a sponsor, contact Luciana Swenson at 802-888-5026 or donate@Lamoille.org

Do you or a family member use services at LCMHS? If so, we want to hear from you!

LCMHS, one of Vermont's ten designated mental health agencies, is in the final stages of a regular re-designation review by the Vermont Department of Mental Health (DMH) for approval of the continuing operation of both our children and adult mental health program services.

The Department of Mental Health will be joining us at 72 Harrel Street on February 8, 2018 and would like to speak with consumers of our services and their family members.

Representatives from the following groups are invited to join the conversation:

- * Leadership and the Board of Directors**
- * Non-management staff**
- * Consumers of services and their family members**
- * Community stakeholders and local mental health organizations**
- * Child and adult local program standing committee members**



**From all of us at LCMHS who have the opportunity to serve you,
thank you for your voice!**

To join the conversation, please RSVP at the LCMHS reception desk or contact Rebecca Copans at 888-5023 or Rebecca.Copans@Lamoille.org



Lamoille County Mental Health Services