



Where People and Possibilities Come Together

June, 2018

**Lamoille County
Mental Health
Services
Summer Newsletter**

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**“THE STRENGTH
OF THE PEOPLE
IN STOWE IS
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MAKE OUR
COMMUNITY
RISE.”**

Can We Do More For Our Neighbors?

By: Sarah Williams

I was moved to speak at our Town Meeting in Stowe when our neighbors were debating the comparatively large recreation budget versus the nearly nonexistent social services budget. I made the life choice to pursue a career in supporting our most vulnerable neighbors. I do it because if we don't care for those who are struggling, for those who are in crisis, for those who need a pathway up and out of their trouble, I feel that we all—as a community and as a society—are only as strong as our lowest common denominator. When kids don't have what they need to be successful in their early years, their chance of success as adults, community members and employees is greatly challenged. The success of our community is what we make of it. Recreational paths are nice, sure, but what makes a strong economy are the people who participate in it. The strength of the people in Stowe is what will make our community rise.

When the public thinks about mental health, often their mind goes straight to emergency rooms and the state hospital—a vision of a person being locked away under a guard of nurses. In reality, the mental health system is infinitely more nuanced. 90% of mental health is supporting people to live healthy, productive and self-directed lives. We do this a number of ways:

- After a tragedy in schools or at fire stations through grief support;
- Creating support systems with foster and adoptive families to ensure permanence for children;
- Helping people with developmental disabilities to build relationships and hold meaningful work;
- Providing support for someone to return to work after a decade of doubting that they are able to get and hold a job;
- Helping someone who is struggling with an issue with a family member or friend, who doesn't know what steps to take to next; we have a system in place that helps people figure out the steps to ease their troubles and to know that

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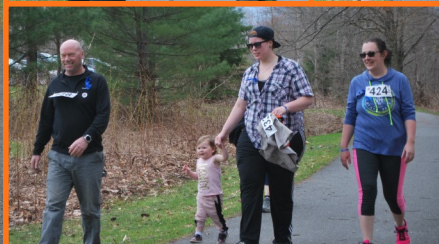
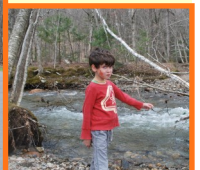
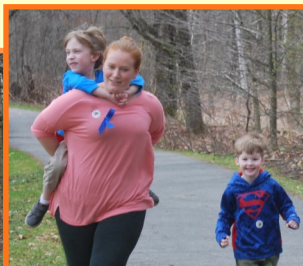
Get Out in the Garden

An article in the Journal of Health Psychology found that gardening leads to decreased cortisol levels and positive moods which can "promote relief from acute stress." (Huffington Post, 4/22/16)



Race for Sensory Drive was a Great Success!

95 people attended the Race for Sensory Drive on May 5 at Topnotch Resort. To date, we have raised over \$5,500 through individual donations and a grant from the **Green Mountain Fund** to build a community sensory room in Morrisville.



Can we do more? Continued from p.1
 ...they aren't alone in figuring out a solution.

The emergency response budget that we passed in Stowe on Town Meeting Day is going to continue to rise unless we start doing things differently. Reactionary response is both expensive and debilitating to the population who are struggling day to day.

Consider the economic impact of each of these individual lives:

- This winter, St. John's in the Mountains Episcopal Church in Stowe erected an emergency homeless shelter that welcomed over 100 people—many of them children from Stowe. How does the lack of stable housing affect the ability of the parents of these children to hold a job, and for their kids to excel in school?
- Consider the long-term, compounded costs of children going hungry over the summer due to lack of access to the free lunch program. How does this affect their long-term physical and mental health?
- When the police are responding to mental health calls instead of being available for emergencies, how does this affect both the safety of those calling the police, as well as the cost of the police budget? Wouldn't that money be better spent on social services that get at the root of the problem rather than on emergency services?
- Our elderly struggling to maintain their independence at home, while battling isolation, physical and mental health challenges. Don't we owe it to our community elders to support the home share program?

I am asking you to not only think of Stowe as a great place to vacation and to have fun, but as a great place to live, work and raise a family. To do this, we need to support the people who live here who are struggling silently. If you need to hear it will save us money, it will. If you need to hear that giving back is showing your gratitude that you are one of the lucky ones, it is. Our select board wants to hear that our town cares about what happens to those who cannot speak for themselves. Please contact your select board today and tell them that you support an increase in the social services budget in your town.

Sarah Williams, an LNA who works as a Medication Coordinator for Lamoille County Mental Health Services, lives in Stowe with her two teenage sons. She is a runner and garden enthusiast.



New Supported Employment Data

In the most recent data, from Quarter 2 of FY'18 (October-December), the employment rate for Community Rehabilitation & Treatment (CRT) is:

LCMHS: 29.4%
 (compared to)
CRT Statewide: 17.5%

Go LCMHS!

THANK YOU TO THE UNITED WAY OF LAMOILLE COUNTY!

LCMHS is the recipient of two **United Way Community Investment Grants:**

Zero Suicide Trainings, \$1350
 Children, Youth & Family Services Swing Set, \$2000



United Way of Lamoille County



Congratulations to LCMHS staff who rocked the 2018 Corporate Cup!

Pictured left to right:

Will Baker, Sara Pastina, Rebecca Brooklyn, Laura Walker, Frederic Gluck

Not pictured: Bethany Turnbaugh and Miranda Bevins

Way to go Team LCMHS!

It's almost time for Summer Camp!

The Redwood Summer Camp will be running July 2nd through August 10th. We will be engaging in activities throughout the community, focusing on social skills, and spending time maintaining current academics levels & school-specific routines.

Want to Know How to Help a Friend?

STUDENT GUIDE TO MENTAL HEALTH

KNOW THE 10 COMMON WARNING SIGNS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks | 6 Seeing, hearing or believing things that are not real |
| 2 Seriously trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so | 7 Repeatedly using drugs or alcohol |
| 3 Severe out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors | 8 Dramatic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits |
| 4 Sudden overreliance for no reason | 9 Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still |
| 5 Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or weight gain | 10 Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities |



START THE CONVERSATION



OFFER SUPPORT



BE A FRIEND

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| | | | | |
| Your friend may feel alone; check in regularly and include your friend in your plans | Learn more about mental health conditions | Avoid saying things like "you'll get over it" "toughen up" or "you're fine" | Tell your friend that having a mental health condition does not change the way you feel about them | Tell your friend it gets better; help and support are out there |

GET ADVICE

You may want to reach out to someone to talk to about how you're feeling or to get advice on how to help your friend. Consider talking to a:

- | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| FAMILY MEMBER | TRUSTED FRIEND | SCHOOL COUNSELOR OR ADVISOR | TEACHER OR COACH | FAITH LEADER |
| ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ |

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Wednesdays on WLVB

In honor of Mental Health Month, Roland LaJoie talked with staff on Wednesday mornings in May on WLVB radio.

Conversations have included an overview of Sensory Street with Ayla Landry and Sherry Marcelino; Mobile Crisis Team's Monique Reil talked about emergency services; Mary Leikert spoke about Copley House and the Johnson Group Home; Stephanie Beattie and Janet Lockyer discussed Children, Youth & Family Services; and the month closed with LCMHS board president Zach Williams and Developmental Services Director Jennifer Stratton. Check the LCMHS website to listen to the clips!

Thanks to all who made Vermont a little more beautiful on Green Up Day!



Let's Go Fishing: a day spent learning to teach

By Chris Hendon

Looking for ways to expand kids' summer programming in the LCMHS Redwood Program, Dan Gilbert and I attended a recent Lets Go Fishing clinic offered by Vermont Fish and Wildlife. We wanted to improve Redwood's free six week summer programming and offer kids a chance to get out and do some structured fishing as well as having ongoing access to fishing equipment for these kids' adventures. Every year a few kids, dreaming about those summer days on a river or lake, ask if fishing can be incorporated into the Redwood summer program. Due to a lack of equipment, every year we have had to say no. We heard about the Let's Go Fishing program at Vermont Fish & Wildlife and thought it would be an excellent chance to be able to include any kids who are interested, including—and perhaps especially—the kids who have never touched a fishing pole before. We hope to inspire excitement about getting outside and fishing. This is an activity they can share with friends and family. It creates a life-long skill that encourages patience and mindfulness, as well as an appreciation of our natural world.

As the training day started rolling, we realized this is about much more than simply fishing. It's about learning about our water ecosystems, about different types of fish in Vermont, and teaching basic skills to build upon such as knot tying and proper casting techniques. Most importantly, it is about getting children and adults outside and engaged in conservation and fishing in a day and age where people are spending less and less time outdoors. The structure of this program teaches skills and knowledge that kids can carry with them for the rest of their lives. Learning about fishing rules and regulations gives insight into breeding habits and the availability of the fish in certain bodies of water. The Department of Vermont Fish & Wildlife simply wants people to get out on the water, know what fishing is all about, and most importantly, to have some fun!

The volunteer training itself certified us as Vermont Fish & Wildlife Lets Go Fishing Instructors. This certification will offer many opportunities to expand our knowledge and training above and beyond the summer programming at Redwood. In addition to a typical "fishing" clinic, Vermont Fish & Wildlife offers ice fishing and fly fishing clinics as long as there is a certified instructor available who is experienced in those areas. They offer dozens of clinics every year, and we can now easily organize clinics for the kids in LCMHS programs. Let's Go Fishing provides attendees with an educational tote and all the fishing equipment that we will need, as well as ongoing support. I encourage anyone who is interested in expanding their children's programming to become an instructor. It's a free, day-long course, and it is well worth it. If you are just interested in learning about fishing or would like to enhance your experience, I recommend taking part in one (or many!) of these clinics. It is all free, and enrolling in the clinic gives you the ability to fish even if you don't have a license I can't recommend this fantastic program enough. If you want to know more you can ask Dan or myself, or reach out directly Corey Hart, a program manager at Vermont Fish and Wildlife, Corey.Hart@vermont.gov.

An avid ice fisherman, Chris is a Redwood Service Coordinator at LCMHS and a clinical mental health graduate student at Northern Vermont University.

▼ Chris enjoys a beautiful winter day fishing on a frozen lake.





Bright Spots

Bright Spots

- We have been receiving incredible feedback from staff and families regarding the work being done by the Community Skills Work staff.
- We recently had several Developmental Services consumers attend the Voice and Choice conference. We lead two workshops: on nutritional concerns with soda, and dog behavior.
- Children's Wellness Day on May 25!
- A great thing in our School Based Clinician world: Lamoille Union High School and LCMHS teamed up to present a professional development training on March 23 for direct care school staff on working with students who have experienced trauma.
- Plans for a fantastic Redwood summer camp are underway.
- It has been great to have been able to fill a few Behavior Interventionist positions.
- We have a group of Developmental Services consumers attending a national conference in Alabama in June!

- It was so cool to see the organically evolving collaboration from every department of the agency on the Sensory Street Race! There was a steering team member from Developmental Services, Behavioral Health, Children's and Admin. Way to go, team!
- We had a fun block party celebrating the homeless shelter in Hyde Park!

Challenges:

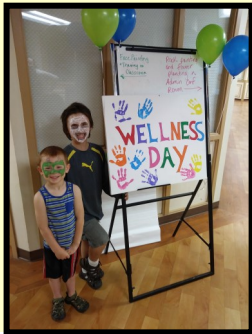
- It has been a challenge to figure out how to anticipate funding for school-based programs as we work to meet the high level of mental health needs in the education system. A bright spot within this challenge is that we have an excellent working relationship with the schools and we are negotiating our way through the problem as a cohesive team.
- There is a wait list for Valley Applied Behavior Analysis.
- We have been struggling to hire staff for new school-based contracts.
- Policy makers' decision to weigh developmental services staff differently than behavioral health staff is discouraging.



Children, Youth & Family Services staff show a little flair on Wacky Tacky Day. ▲

Children's Wellness Day

In celebration of Mental Health Month, the Children, Youth & Family Services (CYFS) Program hosted the annual **Children's Wellness Day** on May 25th. The event was well-attended with over twenty five youth and one-on-one support from staff members. Children enjoyed activities such as face painting, sunflower planting, rock painting, basketball, bubbles, sidewalk chalk and more. The afternoon concluded with an ice cream sundae party and a scavenger hunt, with several client families joining in the fun. Participants went home with Wellness goody bags and a Vermont State Parks punch pass was raffled off to one lucky winner. This year's event was a great success, with a wide variety of activities offered and the most participants we have had in attendance for Wellness Day. The CYFS Program looks forward to recruiting more families to join in the festivities next year, as family wellness is a major facet of our program. Thanks to the **Vermont Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health** for their grant support to make this event a success.



◀ Kiah Palumbo enjoys a sundae with kids on Wellness Day.



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