

UCS News Release

For Immediate Release:
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UCS Sponsors HighLow Project Exhibit

Bennington and Manchester, Vt. — A photo exhibit on homeless youth that is gaining national attention is coming to Bennington.

United Counseling Service's program for children and families is sponsoring a photo exhibit of the HighLow Project, which explores the experience of homeless youth in Vermont.

"The problem of homeless youth is mostly hidden from view," according to UCS Children and Families Director Lorna Mattern. "Even so, we have many young people here in our community and in Bennington County who need help getting a safe and stable place to live, finding a job or moving ahead successfully with their lives."

Vermont photographer Ned Castle collaborated with youth living in difficult circumstances across the state to re-enact and photograph high and low moments from their lives. The resulting large-scale photographs depict elaborate re-creations of these situations.

The project also features an audio portion with recorded narratives of the youth discussing both the high and low experiences in their lives.

United Counseling Service works with homeless and runaway youth in Bennington County to help them be safe, develop skills, get jobs and homes, and get them connected with their community.

"We see the courage and resourcefulness of youth in some very challenging situations," Mattern said. And we get to see the joy and self-esteem in their achievements."

The exhibit opens with a reception and open house on Thursday, February 9 from 3 to 6pm at the Bennington Station Restaurant at 150 Depot Street in Bennington. Donations of toiletry items for homeless youth in Bennington County will be gratefully accepted at the reception.

Over the past several months, the HighLow Project has had special appearances in Washington, DC, and in Oregon, informing thousands of visitors about the reality of homeless youth. The project has also toured in Vermont extensively.

The exhibit continues in Bennington until March 3 and will be open Thursday through Saturday from 1 to 4pm. Please call Jenn Pyne at 447-8270 x28 to schedule group times and requests. Audio and images from the exhibit can be previewed at www.highlowproject.org.

UCS works with The Vermont Coalition of Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs (VCRHYP), which commissioned this project.

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VCRHYP is a statewide coalition of 13 community agencies, including UCS, that ensures a statewide safety net for Vermont's runaway, homeless, and other youth at-risk.

Through the HIGHLOW Project, homeless youth have the chance to share their personal stories with communities across the state and bring greater awareness to the growing problem of homeless youth.

Visitors to the exhibit often feel humbled by the challenges the youth have faced, touched at their courage, and glad that they have been able to get help and get ahead.

Castle works uniquely with clients, including nonprofits, socially responsible businesses, and emerging artists, to help them share their stories through photography.

United Counseling Service serves children, adults, families, and seniors through nationally recognized counseling, early care and education, and clinical support. Visit www.ucsvt.org to find out more.

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