

UNITED COUNSELING SERVICE



BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY



Contact UCS

## August 2017 Newsletter

### Developmental Services Community Supports Program

by Dawn Danner, Director of Developmental Services



If you have ever seen DS consumers enjoying time in the community with staff members, you may have wondered what they were doing. Well, to put it simply, they were most likely participating in the Developmental Services Community Supports Program.

Not that many years ago, those with disabilities would congregate in one location – usually a large room of the agency where they received services – and they would do arts and crafts or watch TV for the hours they were receiving supports. Today, not only are we required to demonstrate full community integration for those with disabilities; we recognize that this approach is the right thing to do. When communities include and encourage those with disabilities to participate in activities and events in the same way that those without disabilities do, everyone wins. We now know that what the Vermont State System of Care Plan for Developmental Disabilities Services says is true; “When people with disabilities are segregated from community life, all Vermonters are diminished. Effective services and supports foster full community participation and personal relationships with other members of the community.” This is something we strive for every day in our program. Participants in our Community Supports Program are no longer found sitting around playing cards. Instead, they are out engaging and interacting in the community in many different ways. The program focuses on healthy activities and they enjoy things like working out at the gym, Zumba class, Yoga class, Tennis lessons, Bowling, hiking, and playing basketball. For those who prefer technological activities, a trip to the *Gamers Grotto* might be in store. Or for the outdoor type, our clients have the opportunity to go kayaking. Recently, we have begun working with the *Bart Adaptive Sports Center* who is teaching our clients how to ride bicycles especially made for those with disabilities. In fact, one DS consumer who suffered a stroke and now has mobility issues recently had the chance to ride one of these customized bikes. With a huge smile on his face he said,

“I never thought I would ride a bike again.” The Bart Center can even help our clients use adaptive equipment to go skiing in the winter time; something many clients are very excited about.

This program also allows clients the opportunity to volunteer in many ways. Whether it is playing with the animals at the shelter, collecting food for the needy, or making stuffed animal bears for residents of local nursing homes; the Community Support Program offers a variety of ways that our clients with disabilities can make a difference in our community. We even stop by the local *Home Depot* for project workshops and will soon be working with an inclusive theater group.

All of our activities are done with other non-disabled people from the community and many wonderful relationships have been initiated. Best of all, individuals have a choice over what activities they wish to engage in and we are constantly changing what we do to meet individual preferences. So, next time you see some DS clients out engaging in their community; ask to join them. At the very least, you will get to know a bit more about our program. But, most likely, you will make a new good friend.



Pictured: (L) Client participates in a building project at Home Depot, (R) Any day is a great day for a workout at

Anytime Fitness.



Pictured: Clients ride bikes at the Bart Adaptive Sports Center.

## IN THE NEWS:

### UCS welcomes Laurie Teal to Psychiatric Medical Team



United Counseling Service welcomes Laurie Teal, APRN, as the newest member of the Psychiatric Medical Team (PMT). The PMT supports all Divisions of UCS by providing medical treatments for psychiatric conditions and ensuring clinical standards of services are being maintained. The team also provides psychiatric consultation to Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC)...[Read more.](#)

United Counseling Service is proud to be part of the Vermont Care Network



United Counseling Service is a member of Vermont Care Partners. Vermont Care Network (VCN) is a statewide provider network of 16 non-profit community-based agencies that serve Vermonters affected by developmental disabilities, mental health conditions and substance use disorders. For more information visit [VermontCarePartners.org](http://VermontCarePartners.org).

## UCS Celebrates Staff Achievements and Contributions



By Cherise Madigan, Bennington Banner

The many branches of Bennington's United Counseling Services (UCS) provide innumerable services for children, adults, families, and seniors with the goal of helping community members improve their quality of life. On Wednesday, about 230 members of the organization came together to recognize the staff that turns this goal into reality through programs including Head Start, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, mental health services, and community rehabilitation among others. [Read more...](#)

Pictured is Lorna Mattern, Executive Director, and Celine Blair.

## Renovations around UCS

United Counseling Service Facilities and Safety Division have been very busy with projects throughout many of our locations. The Northshire Office has undergone extensive renovations, Ledge Hill Drive has had a sidewalk project recently completed, our Burgess Road location has had extensive remodeling, Autumn House had a kitchen remodel and soon we will have a new Head Start facility on River Road in North Bennington.

Stay tuned for further updates and special thanks to Shawn Thibodeau and the entire facilities team for their hard work. Pictured below are newly renovated Northshire UCS waiting room and the sidewalk in front of our Ledge Hill Drive location.



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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS:



**Rocking Horse Circle of Support  
Starting its Fall Session  
September 11 - November 20  
Mondays from 9:30am to 11:30am  
United Counseling Service  
100 Ledge Drive, Bennington, Vermont 05250**

The program offers assistance to pregnant and parenting women who are seeking to reduce the effects of substance abuse in their lives, acquire improved lifeskills, and learn more about safe, nurturing parenting. Transportation, childcare and breakfast, including coffee will be provided. There is no charge for participants. The Rocking Horse Program is funded through a grant from the Vermont Department of Health, Office of Drug and Alcohol Programs.

Space is limited. To learn more please contact  
Christine Oulette or Amy Breese at 802.442.5491.

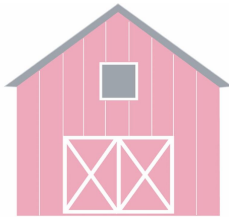


**Youth Mental Health First Aid  
September 12 and 13 from 12:30 to 4:30pm**

United Counseling Service/CRES Building  
316 Dewey Street, Bennington, Vermont

This is a public education program which introduces participants to the unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems in adolescents, builds understanding of the importance of early intervention, and teaches individuals how to help an adolescent in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge.

For more information or to sign up contact Amie Niles at [aniles@ucsvt.org](mailto:aniles@ucsvt.org) or call 802.445.7443. There is no charge for YMHFA, however, seating is limited.



**THE BARN SALE**  
**Shop early at the Evening Preview Party**  
September 14 from 5-7:00pm/ \$25 per person  
**Barn Sale**  
September 16 and 17 from 9-1:00pm  
**Riley Rink, Manchester, Vermont**

The Best Tag Sale in Vermont to benefit United Counseling Service will be held again this year, rain or shine thanks to the Barn Sale committee, a group of dedicated women who devote countless hours of time and energy to hold this fabulous event.

They are now collecting stuff for the sale so keep us in mind when you are spring cleaning.

**Questions? Or to schedule a pickup, Call**

Martha Brown (802) 379-1556 [marthab1333@icloud.com](mailto:marthab1333@icloud.com)  
Kaye Manly (802) 867-2412 or (802) 417-7338 [kmhcrna@aol.com](mailto:kmhcrna@aol.com)  
Beth Alden (802) 681-3133 [bethalden@vermontel.net](mailto:bethalden@vermontel.net)

**Adult Mental Health First Aid**  
**October 17 and 18 from 12:30 to 4:30pm**  
United Counseling Service/CRES Building  
316 Dewey Street, Bennington, Vermont

You are more likely to encounter someone in an emotional or mental crisis than someone having a heart attack. MHFA teaches



participants an action plan to assess a situation, select and implement interventions and secure appropriate care for the individual.

For more information or to sign up contact Amie Niles at [aniles@ucsvt.org](mailto:aniles@ucsvt.org) or call 802.445.7443. Cost is \$40 Seating is limited. Reserve spot early.

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United Counseling Service provides Bennington County with nationally recognized community-based mental health and human social services for children, adults, families, and seniors with the mission of "Building a stronger community by empowering individuals and families to live healthy and meaningful lives." Visit [www.ucsvt.org](http://www.ucsvt.org) to find out more.

**Are you interested in a career with a great organization?**

Check out current openings  
with United Counseling Service at [UCS Careers](#).

Donate Now

Visit our website

