UCS wins gold!

United Counseling Service has won a Governor's Excellence in Workplace Wellness Gold Award from the Vermont Department of Health. Members of the UCS Wellness Committee attended the Worksite Wellness Conference held in Burlington on March 21st to receive the award. The Workplace Wellness Award Program recognizes Vermont organizations that have demonstrated an established wellness strategy promoting healthy environments and supporting the well-being of their employees.

“We deeply believe in the importance of staff maintaining a focus on their own physical and emotional wellness,” said Lorna Mattern, Executive Director of UCS. “The activities and initiatives our Wellness Committee develops for staff are creative, unique and dynamic and constantly evolve to meet the needs of our staff.”

This is the 6th consecutive year UCS has won the Worksite Wellness Award.

Let's Get Ready To Rumble! It's not too late to register.

Get your friends, family and coworkers together and put on your favorite team’s jersey, hats, shin guards, hockey helmet...whatever! The theme this year for our annual mentoring bowlathon is sports! Support Mentoring in our community. There is still some space available to participate in our bowlathon on Saturday, April 6th at Bennington Lanes.
Take an hour out of your day and support this fantastic program. Waves start at 10:30 and the last wave is at 4:30. The grand prize for the highest fundraiser is 2 TICKETS TO THE YANKEES, 2 TICKETS TO THE RED SOX AND 2 TICKETS TO THE GIANTS. (6 tickets and this includes transportation.) The day will also include awesome prizes every wave, wheel prizes, a silent auction running all day long, hot dogs, popcorn and a whole lot of fun! Register or donate at https://support.ucsvt.org/e.../ucs-mentoring-bowlathon/e22033 or call Sam at (802) 442-5491 ext 313.

Kristi Cross joins UCS Board

United Counseling Service (UCS) welcomes Kristi Cross to the Board of Directors. The board oversees the operations of the community mental health and developmental services for Bennington County.

“We are pleased to have Kristi join our board,” said Lorna Mattern, Executive Director of UCS. “Kristi is knowledgeable, energetic and a respected community leader. Her experience and leadership have been demonstrated in her continued care for this community and clearly supports our mission of building a stronger community by empowering individuals and families to live healthy and meaningful lives."

Cross is the Director of Bennington Blueprint for Health at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center. The Blueprint for health program is a statewide initiative that designs community-led strategies for improving the well-being of those effected by chronic illness in a primary care setting. A native of Bennington, Cross obtained her doctorate degree in nursing with a focus in rural population health and was recently named a Vermont Rising Star by Vermont Business Magazine.

“I have a deep commitment to this community and I am very much looking forward to serving as a Board Member of United Counseling Service,” said Cross. “Addressing the challenges involved in the growing mental health needs in our community is something I feel strongly about. I want to make sure that individuals and families are getting the best mental health care possible. UCS is very important to the health and welfare of this community.”

Spring Cleaning: The importance of a clean workplace

By JD Hebert, Director of Facilities and Safety

The workplace environment influences employees’ productivity, performance and well-being. No matter the industry, maintaining a clean workplace may help keep staff members safe, healthy and efficient.

Many employees consider their workplaces as a second home and as such, you need to focus your efforts on keeping it clean and tidy. By keeping the work environment well-maintained, you’re allowing your employees to be productive, efficient, and more importantly, happy. Considering that the average person spends around 8 hours a day in the workplace, you want to make sure that your workers are comfortable while doing their jobs.
Keeping a clean office isn’t just about tidying up common areas or making one’s desk look neater. It’s really a health and safety issue at heart. Yes, everyone will probably feel happier when the workplace looks better, but they’ll also feel and function better as well. By everyone working together keeping the workplace clean, employees won’t have to use as many sick days throughout the year and will likely be more productive in general. There will also be fewer hazards around that could lead to workplace accidents.

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Responding to stress with self care

Tiffany Tan - Bennington Banner

BENNINGTON - The temperature outdoors was freezing, so it wasn’t surprising summer was on Olivia Reed’s mind.

On a mini canvas that can be cradled in a person’s palm, the 21-year-old painted a lighthouse overlooking the ocean. The scene was something she imaged, Reed said, “somewhere warmer than here.”

Beside her, Ashley Hutton, 25, had turned her canvas into a purple-and-yellow world of a dandelion basking in the sun.

The women, employees of United Counseling Service, were participating Tuesday in the nonprofit organization’s Self Care Day for staff and their clients. The event, which was back for a second year, offered about 20 activities aimed at showing people how to take better care of their minds, bodies and spirits.

Reducing stress is particularly helpful to the nearly 300 employees of UCS, an organization that provides Bennington County residents with support and guidance to improve their lives. Its services include infant care, youth education, support for people with developmental disabilities, substance abuse treatment and emergency assistance.

The organization, established in 1958, serves some 3,000 people across 16 offices in the county.

“If staff can take care of themselves, they can take care of clients better,” Sarah Church, UCS worksite wellness coordinator, explained the reason behind Self Care Day.

Reed and her colleagues at the nonprofit’s Developmental Services program, for instance, assist their clients with everyday affairs such as going to medical appointments and accomplishing household chores like cooking and doing laundry...Read more.
Remembering David Sagi - An advocate for our clients
by Jo-Anne Larsen

Betty Kenyon, Tom Madison and I were deeply saddened to hear of David Sagi’s passing on Tuesday, February 26. David had served for several years as the Regional Manager of Vocational Rehabilitation for Bennington and Rutland Counties. Since his retirement from VR he had been the DAIL ADA Program Manager, a perfect “retirement job” for this man who waged a valiant battle against the stigma that is attached to persons with disabilities. Over the years the programs David managed have helped countless UCS Clients find their abilities. Much of his work was done behind the scenes, and I know most of our clients probably never heard his name, but his work was essential to their success.

My personal memories of David are a treasure, as he supported our Vocational Program with kindness and good direction. I remember feeling a sense of comfort and trust when David would join us at a meeting. Tom Madison said “equanimity is the word for David – he was always a peaceful presence.” Betty Kenyon, who had worked for VR during David’s time as RM, remembered him as a kind and generous man, and an exceptional manager.

Read Rutland Herald Article; Rutland remembers David Sagi

UCS PRESENTS Series continues educating the community.

United Counseling Service (UCS) and the Bennington Free Library will present the film Resilience; The Biology of Stress & The Science of Hope, followed by a presentation of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on Tuesday, April 23, 2019 at the Bennington Free Library at 100 Silver Street in Bennington. Refreshments will be served at 5pm and the film and presentation will begin at 6pm.

The one-hour documentary delves into the science of ACEs and the
The birth of a new movement to treat and prevent Toxic Stress. Extremely stressful experiences in childhood are now understood to be one of the leading causes of everything from heart disease and cancer to substance abuse and depression. These experiences can alter brain development and have lifelong effects on health and behavior.

The film will be followed by a discussion led by Katie Aiken of United Counseling Service. Aiken is a certified trainer in ACEs and will discuss tips and tools for building resilience and supporting those who have experienced trauma or toxic stress.

“We are thrilled that we can bring this film and discussion to the community,” said Lorna Mattern, Executive Director of United Counseling Service. “Communities can work to improve outcomes for our children and families by better understanding ACEs, what they are and how they can manifest themselves years later.”

How can you help kids?

By Kasia Sosnow

Rutland Herald, March 9, 2019

“You’re an interesting species. An interesting mix. You’re capable of such beautiful dreams, and such horrible nightmares. You feel so lost, so cut off, so alone, only you’re not. See, in all our searching, the only thing we’ve found that makes the emptiness bearable, is each other.” — Carl Sagan’s “Contact”

It is the human condition to feel lonely at times, for some more than others. This quote from “Contact” has always struck a chord. The antithesis of feeling alone is knowing you aren’t. As adults, we are hard pressed to remember exactly how we experienced life as children, but we know for sure that we grew up in a different time. One could argue that there is significantly more negativity, uncertainty and fear than we’ve ever personally experienced in the overall climate of our country — and we can’t imagine growing up developmentally healthy in such a place. What can you do?

Mentor. Just be there. Be present. Provide validation and hope for a young life, who will simultaneously return this to you, tenfold... Read full article.

Kasia Sosnow was recently named the 2019 Vermont Mentor of the Year by Comcast and MENTOR Vermont. Sosnow is a public school teacher and 10-year resident of Manchester, and has volunteered as a mentor with the same mentee through the Mentoring at United Counseling Services program for three years.

Celebrating Dr. Seuss

To celebrate Theodore Geisel’s birthday, this week Head Start children in the West building created Seuss-themed crafts. Featured here: Thing 1 and Thing 2 shape pictures, The Cat in the Hat hats, and One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish water colors.
Bennington County Head Start and Early Head Start gives children and their families the right building blocks for learning, parenting, and life. The program provides early education classes promoting school readiness and family opportunities to strengthen families to Bennington County residents with sites in the following towns: Bennington, Pownal & Manchester.

For more information or to enroll, contact:
Head Start/Early Head Start
2 Park Street
North Bennington, VT 05257
Phone: 802-442-3686
Fax: 802-447-3423

A film you don't want to miss.

On Thursday April 4, 2019 at 7:00pm, Vermont PBS will host the premiere broadcast of the feature documentary Wretches & Jabberers. This inspiring documentary chronicles the world travels of Vermont disability rights advocates, Tracy Thresher and Larry Bissonnette, in a bold quest to change attitudes about the intelligence and abilities of people with autism.

The film is produced by Douglas Biklen with producer and director Academy Award® filmmaker, Geraldine Wurzburg.

The show will be available to stream at https://www.vermontpbs.org/madehere

Web Site: www.wretchesandjabberers.org

Facebook: facebook.com/wretchesandjabberers

Trailer: https://trailers.apple.com/trailers/independent/wretchesandjabberers/
WRETCHES & JABBERERS
A FILM BY GERARDINE WURZBURG

Thursday  April 4, 2019
7:00pm on Vermont PBS

Rebroadcast:
- 04/07/19, 2:00 pm Vermont PBS
- 04/16/19, 9:30 pm Vermont PBS Plus
- 04/25/19, 8:00 pm Vermont PBS Plus

Stream at:
Made Here  https://www.vermontpbs.org/madehere/

Thanks to the Howard Center & Washington County Mental Health Services.

www.wretchesandjabberers.org  facebook.com/wretchesandjabberers  twitter.com/wretchesjabber

Save the Date
Mentoring Bowlathon  
Saturday, April 6, 2019  
Bennington Lanes  
For more information visit [Mentoring Bowlathon](#).

UCS Presents: Resilience  
April 23, 2019  
Bennington Free Library  
For more information visit [here](#).

UCS Presents: Rachel Lindsay  
Wednesday, May 29, 2019  
at 7PM  
138 Cemetery Avenue  
Manchester Center, VT  
For more information visit [here](#).

Adult Mental Health First Aid  
June 12-13, 2019  
Bennington, VT  
[Visit UCS MHFA](#).

The Barn Sale  
September 21-22, 2019  
Northshire Civic Center,  
Manchester, VT  
[Visit The Barn Sale](#)  
[Facebook Page](#).

UCS Superhero 5K  
Saturday, November 2, 2019  
Bennington, VT  
More information coming soon.
Do you have a story to tell?

We would love to hear from you. Has UCS impacted your life? If you have a story you would like to share please contact Heidi French at hfrench@ucsvt.org or call (802) 442-5491 ext. 281.
Support from donors is vital

This year support from our donors is vital in ensuring that we continue to meet the growing needs of our community. Please consider making a donation. Your donation makes a difference and with your help we can build a stronger community.

Donations can be mailed to:
United Counseling Service
PO Box 588
Bennington, VT 05201

DONATE NOW

Proud to be a Center of Excellence

United Counseling Service (UCS) has been designated a Center of Excellence by Vermont Care Partners. UCS is a private, non-profit community mental health center serving Bennington County since 1958. UCS promotes healthy lifestyles through all its programs and offers care at 16 different facilities, including two primary outpatient facilities in Bennington and Manchester. UCS provides comprehensive, community-based behavioral and developmental services for children, adults, families, and seniors. UCS employs 300 people and annually serves nearly 3,000 Bennington County residents.

Are you interested in a career with a great organization?

Check out current openings with United Counseling Service at UCS CAREERS.