UCS Recognized for Worksite Wellness

United Counseling Service (UCS) was recognized by MVP Health Care for its exceptional worksite wellness program. MVP recognized 20 companies and organizations that demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the health and well-being of their employees through workplace wellness programs at the first annual MVP Workplace Well-Being Awards and Summit held in Verona, NY in September.

Agencies submitted applications by detailing their well-being programs in categories such as effectiveness, innovation, workplace environment, leadership support and employee feedback methods. UCS was awarded both the Diamond Level Workplace Well-Being Award and MVP’s Excellence in Workplace Well-Being Award which is given to the employer with the highest overall score. UCS has a robust worksite wellness program that consists of such activities as an annual self-care day, guided meditation, on site CSA program, meetings on the move and so much more. UCS has demonstrated that the program has proven to be effective, sustainable and successful.

“These employers are redefining how the workplace can provide opportunities and successfully implement a strategy that encourages employees to live a healthy lifestyle and make healthy choices,” said MVP Health Care’s Chief Executive Officer and President, Christopher Del Vecchio. “We are so proud to provide this recognition of excellence to employers who demonstrate not only a commitment to support the holistic wellness of their staff, but to their entire community.”

“We are honored to have been recognized for the work the Wellness Committee does,” said Lorna Mattern, Executive Director of UCS. “The activities and initiatives the Wellness Committee develops for staff are creative, unique and dynamic and constantly evolve to meet the needs of our staff.”

UCS serves children, adults, families, and seniors through nationally recognized counseling, early care
UCS Superheroes on Display

By Tiffany Tan, Bennington Banner

Superheroes descended on the town on Saturday: The Incredibles, the Incredible Hulk, the Ninja Turtles, a tiny Spiderman, as well as several Wonder Women, a small Batman and other colorful masked and caped characters.

They gathered outside the Rec Center, ran 3 miles around town starting at 9 a.m. and returned to the Recreation Center parking lot to eat some snacks, take photos and hear the award winners. This is the second year in a row United Counseling Service organized the “Superhero 5K,” a race that the nonprofit organization designed to bring members of the community together. And about 130 of them showed up this year, both in and out of costume.

Rachel Darby, a UCS employee who was channeling Wonder Woman, pushed a stroller through the finish line as her 5-year-old daughter Nora, dressed as Supergirl, ran beside her.

Ed Doucette, 89, completed the course shortly before 10 a.m. Dressed in black sweatpants and a blue windbreaker, the Bennington resident said he participated in the event as a way to stay healthy.

Doucette apparently began running marathons after he turned 60, including the Boston Marathon twice. He is now prepping for Arlington’s “Running of the Turkeys,” the town’s traditional 5K held on Thanksgiving Day. Read more.

United Counseling Service Superhero 5K results
UCS Presented Downstream: The Effects of Parental Incarceration

On Friday, October 25th, UCS along with Lamoille Restorative Center and Bennington Center for Restorative Justice presented the documentary Downstream: The Effects of Parental Incarceration at the Oldcastle Theatre in Bennington, VT.

Despite the prevalence of parental incarceration in Vermont the issue is largely unseen and less often addressed. The trauma of separation and the social stigma associated with imprisonment can have life-long consequences for children.

Following the screening panelists from the film discussed their lives since making the film and steps that can be taken to help children whose parents have been incarcerated.

To learn more and to find upcoming screenings visit Downstreamfilm.com

UCS presented screening of Suicide: The Ripple Effect

On Wednesday, September 25, UCS presented a screening of the documentary about suicide prevention at the Mack Performing Arts Center at Arlington Memorial High School.

The film chronicles the story of Kevin Hines who at age 19 attempted to take his life by jumping off the Golden Gate Bridge. Since then Kevin has been on a mission to use his story to help others stay alive and find recovery. Following the film, a discussion was lead by Rachel Darby, Mental Health Nurse Practitioner and Katie Aiken.
Gov. Scott helps break ground

Bennington Banner

Gov. Phil Scott, local dignitaries and representatives of Vermont's congressional delegation broke ground Wednesday for an early childhood center that will provide much needed daycare for infants, toddlers and preschool children.

The center, to be constructed as an addition to the Bennington Recreation Center on Gage Street, is a joint project of the town, United Counseling Service, Bennington County Head Start and Early Head Start, and the Rec Center. In addition to childcare space, it will feature a multipurpose room, a community cafe, a new entrance with a lobby and elevator. It also includes the creation of 25 parking spaces and the installation of a sprinkler system throughout the building.

The 13,500-square-foot, $3.7 million addition is funded through grants to the local UCS Head Start program.

"We were thrilled that over 100 people came out to celebrate this exciting project. This expansion will improve the lives of so many in Bennington County," said Lorna Mattern, executive director of UCS. "Our partnership with the Town of Bennington allows us to bring quality, early childhood care and education to so many in the Bennington area."

Among those in attendance Wednesday were representatives from the offices of Senator Patrick Leahy and U.S. Rep. Peter Welch, Town Manager Stuart Hurd, Early Childhood Services board chair William Baldwin and Head Start policy chair Stephanie Eames.

According to UCS, parents who can depend on childcare that is safe, nurturing and educational are more productive and reliable members of the workforce. According to the 2018 Let's Grow Kids report, 78 percent of infants likely to need care in Bennington County do not have access to high-quality programs, and 53 percent of toddlers do not have access. The new Early Childhood Center will allow for an increased capacity for infants and toddlers.

Construction of the addition is expected to take about one year. Monthly "Pulse" meetings are being held to review programming and construction updates with members of the public. The next meetings will be held on Dec. 18, Feb. 19, April 15 and June 17. All meetings are scheduled to run from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., and will be held at the Bennington Senior Center at 124 Pleasant St.

A second phase of construction at the Rec Center, which has not yet been funded or permitted, would include a gymnasium and second-story running track addition.
Pulse meetings are held every third Wednesday of the month from 5:30 pm - 6:30pm at the Bennington Senior Center at 124 Pleasant Street in Bennington. Please join us for these open meetings about programming and construction updates for the Bennington Recreation Center/Senior Center/Early Childhood Center addition. All community members are encouraged to attend.

**Upcoming Meetings**
December 18, 2019
February 19, 2020
April 15, 2020
June 17, 2020

Rebecca Bishop receives Visionary and Spirit Awards

Early Childhood Services staff attended the 47th annual Early Childhood Conference held at Mount Snow in October. This conference is a statewide annual professional development conference, held over three days and cosponsored by the Vermont Agency for the Education of Young Children, Vermont Head Start Association, Bennington County Child Care Association, and Windham Early Childhood Educators Co-op. Over 400 professionals attended from around the state and 38 of the staff from Bennington County Head Start were able to attend.

Our very own Rebecca Bishop received the Visionary Award, which is presented to an early childhood professional who brings creativity and innovation to early care and education in Vermont. She also received the Spirit Award awarded to a professional in the early childhood field who actively lives the Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children’s (VTAEYC) mission.
Head Start and Early Head Start staff attended the Early Childhood Conference held at Mt. Snow.

Head Start/Early Head Start
2 Park Street
North Bennington, VT 05257
Phone: 802-442-3686
Locations in Bennington, North Bennington, Manchester and Pownal

Save the Date

Mental Health First Aid
For a complete list of times and locations, visit our website at ucsvt.org.

November 13 and 14, 2019
9:00am - 1:00pm
Bennington, VT

This training is free and open to the public but seating is limited. To sign up contact Jennifer Parizo at jparizo@ucsvt.org or call 802.442.5491
“We’ll need a million new workers in the next 10 years. Where are they going to come from and how will we keep them?”

Join us for this documentary film exploring the underappreciated and underfunded work of direct support professionals (DSP). Through stories and interviews with DSPs, family members, advocates, and people with disabilities from across the country, the film honors the complexity of the work and the immense value it provides to individuals receiving support. And it asks us to take action now in strengthening the DSP workforce before the system collapses. The screening will be followed by a Q&A session with the Director of the film, Jerry Smith from University of Minnesota’s Institute on Community Integration.

Friday, November 22
3:00 to 5:00pm
Community College of Vermont
Community Conference Room
324 Main Street, Bennington, VT

For a full list of upcoming trainings and events please visit ucsvt.org.

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.

For more information about giving, please click here to email Heidi French, Director of Community Relations and Development, or call at 802-442-5491.

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

Are you interested in a career with a great organization?

We are proud to announce that UCS has been selected as the Best Place to Work and the Best Community Service Organization for the 2019 Readers Choice award!

An established leader and provider of health and human services in Southern Vermont, United Counseling Service provides nearly 3,000 people each year with a broad range of mental health, developmental and children’s services along with early childhood education. Approximately 300 employees are making a positive difference at 16 facilities operating throughout Bennington County.

Our employees are creative, thoughtful, energetic, forward thinking and empowered. UCS is living its mission: Building a stronger community by empowering individuals to live healthy and meaningful lives. If you want to make a difference and help those who need it most, consider joining our team. UCS is a great place to work and a great place to get care.

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