Employment and Mental Health
By Betty Kenyon, Community Rehabilitation and Emergency Services Vocational Coordinator

I help people with severe and persistent mental illness find and maintain work. Offering or even suggesting the Supported Employment Program to a client carries a powerful message of hope with the expectation that people can, and do, recover from serious mental health and substance use challenges.

One person I am working with, who has been employed for almost three years, told me, “Working has enhanced my life by making friends, having more money and getting more exercise.” Another person I support, who has been working for several years, said, “Work makes me feel like I’ve accomplished something. Accomplishment is very important to me. I feel like I am part of the team and they trust me.”.....Read entire article.

Pictured: Betty Kenyon (L) and Cindy (R).

Anxiety affects us all!
Wednesday, January 29th United Counseling Service presented the documentary Angst: Raising Awareness Around Anxiety at the Manchester Community Library.

Anxiety disorders are the most common mental health challenge in the U.S., impacting 54 percent of females and 46 percent of males, with age seven being the median age of onset, according to the World Health Organization. While anxiety disorders are highly treatable, only one-third of those impacted by anxiety receive treatment. This film sends a powerful and positive message to help understand that there are many faces to anxiety and that it is OK, we’re not alone, and we can change the narrative with the right supports.

The film was followed by a facilitated discussion lead by Bob Wubbenhorst, UCS Clinical Manager of Youth and Family Services. The panel included Katie Baroody, UCS Youth and Family Services/Blueprint for Health Outpatient Counselor, Mary Mendez, Student at Burr and Burton Academy, Meg Biela, UCS Youth and Family Services Outpatient Clinician and Megan Brooks, Mental Health Clinician at Burr and Burton Academy.

This event was possible with support from Manchester Community Library, MVP Healthcare, Charlie’s Fund and the Gregory S. Hillman Fund.

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**UCS Legislative Breakfast Highlights**

**Urgent Care for Kids**

By Tiffany Tan, Bennington Banner

Since September, at least 30 children who would have gone directly to the hospital emergency room while in psychological distress instead visited a two-story green and blue building on Dewey Street.

The building houses the Psychiatric Urgent Care for Kids, a new program of United Counseling Service and Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, which helps children experiencing a mental health or behavioral crisis.

The program proponents saw a growing number of children being taken by law enforcement from school and brought to the emergency room, a crisis intervention site that can be traumatic for young ones. Read more.

Watch 2020 UCS Legislative Breakfast

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**Did you Know?**

Effective 3/1/2020, Vermont’s Act No. 53 (S.31) regarding the Health Information Exchange (HIE), specifies that, beginning on March 1, 2020, a patients’ electronic health information contained in the Vermont Health Information Exchange (VHIE) will be accessible to health care facilities, health care professionals, and public and private payers.
unless a patient affirmatively opts not to have his or her electronic health information shared in that manner. Exchanging health information is important in order to make sure that your health care providers have access to the most up to date information about you so they can make more informed decisions about your care. HIE can improve the coordination of care for a person who is seeing multiple providers by enabling providers to share important health information. HIE is used both as a noun (to represent the systems and software necessary to exchange information) and as a verb (to represent the movement of information between organizations). More information about the benefits of VHIE and/or your options, can be found here: www.vthealthinfo.com or by calling the VHIE Hotline at 1-888-980-1243.

2020 Ambassadors of Mentoring Announced!

Mentoring at UCS’ Angelique and Darcie of Bennington have been named 2020 Ambassadors of Mentoring. Comcast and Mentor Vermont in celebration of National Mentoring Month, honored them for their service at MENTOR Vermont’s annual Youth Mentoring Celebration in Montpelier on Wednesday, January 22nd.

To read their story visit ANGElique & DARCIE.

Nearly 96% of mentors in Vermont would recommend becoming a mentor to a friend, family member, or colleague.

Mentoring at UCS helps children reach their potential through supported, one to one relationships. To learn more about our program contact Laurie Sallisky at 802.442.5491 or email lsallisky@ucsvt.org

We are so grateful for the support of the community!
In December 2019, Bennington County Head Start/Early Head Start staff and families were overwhelmed with gratitude for the support of our community.

Book Angels: The Northshire Bookstore and its patrons purchased books for 78 Head Start/Early Head Start students throughout the county! Children loved receiving the wrapped gifts just before the holiday.

Second Congregational Church: Second Congregational Church of Bennington sponsored seven individuals, supplying clothing and toys to children and items such as slow cookers and gift cards to families.

Gifts and Groceries: The employees of Vermont Country Store again sponsored Head Start/Early Head Start and Youth and Family Services Families this year. In all, they purchased gifts for thirty-five children! The company matched their employees’ donations dollar for dollar, in the form of Price Chopper gift cards. Family Services staff enjoyed delivering these items to parents, many of whom were moved to tears with thanks and surprise. (pictured)

Feeding Families Project: The Bennington Rotary Club, United Methodist Church Missions Committee and Norshaft Lions teamed up to fill reusable, insulated tote bags with breakfast, lunch and snack items to help support children and families over the long holiday break. Over sixty families received a full bag of healthy groceries, relieving the stress of having to make up twenty-four meals (per child) while school was not in session. (pictured)

Dorset Church: The Dorset Church called on Friday, December 20th asking whether UCS and Head Start families could use overflow from their spirit of sharing initiative. Two truck loads later, the North Bennington Head Start gym was transformed into a toy store! Volunteers organized and distributed the multitude of toys, books and games to grateful parents and children. Families from Youth and Family Services and Sunrise Family Resource Center also benefitted from this incredibly generous donation.

Due to the incredible outpouring of community support, Head Start/Early Head Start families were able to experience the joy of the holiday season, with full bellies and full hearts.
UPCOMING EVENTS

Podcast & Pizza - When Work Takes Over Your Life
February 12 at the Lightning Jar from 12-1 pm

Are you feeling STRESSED out?! Do you have work/life BALANCE? The Lightning Jar is teaming up with Dan Merges of United Counseling Service of Bennington County who will facilitate a round table discussion around Adam Grant's podcast, "When Work Takes Over Your Life".

Listen first to the podcast, which provides helpful strategies from various leaders in setting boundaries, saying "no" and managing "odd-hour" emails. Then come to this interactive event where Dan Merges, Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Abuse Clinician from UCS, will lead everyone in sharing their own stories of work/life stresses and how to manage them. Learn more here about Dan.

Listen to PODCAST here:

Things to reflect on prior to event:
-What do you want to learn or take away from this discussion?
-How is your work-personal life balance?
-Do you tend to integrate or separate your work and personal life?
-How would you rate your ability to set limits in your work life?
-Do you have strategies for managing stress in your life?
-Do you have self-care practices?
Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid Offered

Adult Mental Health First Aid
Feb. 24th and 27th

Youth Mental Health First Aid
March 24th and 25th

For more information or to register visit ucsvt.org or contact Maria DeLeon at 802.442.5491 or email mdeleon@ucsvt.org.

Stepping Forward Together 2020:
Creating Solutions that Promote Health Equity

Vermont Care Partners' annual conference will be held on March 13th 2020. Continue the discussion with national, regional, and local speakers about health disparities, cultural competence and ways we can improve our service delivery to all Vermonters. Join hundreds of other committed professionals interested in solutions that address racism, sexism, stigma, classism, ableism, and cultural blindness.

Register now at VCP Conference Registration.
More than Meets the Eye
A series of thematic exhibitions meant to inspire connections and conversations.

Opening Reception
January 11 from 2-4 p.m.
Exhibition on view January 11 - March 15, 2020
Southern Vermont Arts Center
Yester House Galleries

Featuring:
The Yellow Tulip Project's I Am More: Facing Stigma
Gisela Gamper • Carl Austin Hyatt • Terry Boddie
Burr & Burton Academy • Long Trail School
The Forty-Sevent Main Street Artists Group
United Counseling Service

A great place to work and a great place to get care.

United Counseling Service is an established leader and provider of health and human services in Southern Vermont. UCS 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 in 16 facilities operating throughout Bennington County since 1958.

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

To learn more or register a team visit Mentoring at UCS Bowlathon.
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.

For a list of current job opening visit UCS CAREERS.

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