



**UCS**  
UNITED COUNSELING SERVICE

**Annual Report  
2022-2023**

**Building Resilience,  
Responding to Change**



YouTube

YT





Annual Report

AR



## Additional content links

Our 2022–2023 Annual Report has its own section on our website and a dedicated YouTube playlist. You can find videos and expanded information on many of the articles in this report. Just look for the  and  symbols and use these QR codes for quick access.

Greetings,

This year has been marked by changes and challenges, as our community continues to feel the impacts of COVID, and social shifts have created added stressors that Bennington County residents are as affected by as are their friends and families nationwide. Here in our home region, we have seen an increase in drug overdoses and suicides, local businesses have experienced an increase in crisis-driven impacts within their own organizations, and children and youth have not fully recovered from the losses they suffered by the pandemic and its restrictions. Social ills have affected our clients, our staff and the community and resulted in a greater demand for services, consultation, and interventions.



UCS works hard to meet the ever-growing requests and needs of the community. As we celebrate our 65th year of serving our neighbors throughout the county, we reflect on our years of service and our continued commitment to addressing the very real struggles of each person who looks to us for support. With the help of community partners and our dedicated staff, we will continue to provide critical mental health care, substance use treatment, and developmental services and meet the changing needs of all who seek our services.

—Lorna Mattern, Executive Director

Dear Friends,

With all the changes and challenges of the current times, our staff stayed on top of each new twist that came their way. They are a group of dedicated, hardworking individuals who strive to provide quality service to those who ask.

This year in celebration of 65 years of service, we welcomed the Me2/ Orchestra to perform for the community. The teamwork and support apparent in their performance and the stories they shared reminded me of the team at UCS, working together and supporting each other to make great things happen.



Thank you.

—Robert W. Thompson, President of the Board of Directors



## Center of Excellence

UCS is a Center of Excellence and member of Vermont Care Partners, a statewide network of 16 non-profit community-based agencies providing mental health, substance use and intellectual and developmental services and supports.

# Our Mission

Building a stronger community by empowering individuals and families to live healthy and meaningful lives.



## UCS marks a milestone

In the decades since our founding in 1958, United Counseling Service has grown not only to serve increasing numbers of Bennington County's residents, but to provide new and varied services to meet the evolving needs of the community. Much of what we do goes well beyond counseling, and we invite you to browse this annual report and visit our website for a more in-depth look at UCS programs and services.

## An orchestral celebration AR

On Saturday May 13, 2023, as part of UCS' yearlong 65th anniversary celebration, the **Me2/ Orchestra of Burlington** performed Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 at the Southern Vermont Arts Center's (SVAC) Arkell Pavilion. UCS Executive Director Lorna Mattern welcomed the audience and spoke about current challenges in Bennington County, including the significant increase in mental health crises affecting our communities.

Led by Music Director and Conductor Michael J. Colburn, Me2/ Burlington is an ensemble of Me2/, a Boston-based classical music organization created for people with mental illnesses and those who support them. The orchestra performed all five movements of the inspiring symphony, interspersed with Me2/ musicians and staff briefly sharing their own experiences with mental illness. The audience of nearly 300 responded with a resounding standing ovation at the concert's close.

The mission of Me2/ is to erase the stigma of mental illness, including addiction, through supportive classical music rehearsals and inspiring performances.

### More Community Events:

In addition to our signature events for our 65th anniversary (which spans two fiscal years), we hosted several community events this past year, including:

- **UCS Presents: *The Hungry Heart***
- **Suicide Prevention Awareness Vigil**
- **5th Annual UCS Superhero 5K and Kids' Dash**
- **UCS Presents: *Untreated and Unheard: The Addiction Crisis in America***
- **Psychiatric Urgent Care for Kids Open House**
- **Bennington Youth Summit**



**Top:** Me2/Burlington warming up at SVAC  
**Middle:** You are entering a Stigma-Free Zone!  
**Bottom:** UCS staff and volunteers

# Leadership and Advisories

## Board of Directors

The Board of Directors oversees the operations of the community mental health and developmental services for Bennington County.

**Robert Thompson**, *President*

**Charles Letourneau**, *Vice President*

**Nathaniel Marcoux**, *Treasurer*

**William Baldwin**, *Secretary*

Dave Ballou

Kristi Cross

Joanna Mintzer

Stephanie Mulligan

Lee Romano

---

## Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership team is a group of talented individuals who are dedicated to community improvement and passionate about the work they do.

**Lorna Mattern**, *Executive Director*

**Dawn Danner**, *Director of Developmental Services*

**Jill Doyle**, *Director of Finance*

**Amy Fela**, *Director of Operations*

**Heidi French**, *Director of Community Relations and Development*

**Danielle Gallen**, *Director of Human Resources*

**Ryan Lane**, *Director of Children, Youth, and Family Services*

**Julie Pagliccia**, *Director of Northshire Services*

**Betsy Rathbun-Gunn**, *Director of Early Childhood Services*

**Alya Reeve, MD**, *Medical Director*

**Lori Vadakin**, *Director of Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Use Services*

---

## Advisory Boards

Our advisory boards provide valuable feedback about agency services and initiatives. Membership includes people receiving services, family members, community members, board members, and agency staff.

### Children, Youth and Family Services Advisory Board

Bill Baldwin

Erin Blest

Ryan Lane

Julie Pagliccia

Amanda Scott

Kendy Skidmore

Keili Trottier

### Developmental Services Advisory Board

Dave Ballou, *Chair*

Celine Blair

Lisa Guare

Deborah Munoz

Lisa Rudiakov

Eric Webster

### Peer Advisory Group

Barbara Baker

Nancy Balconis

Stacy Barnett

Caroline Gauthier

Jo-Anne Larsen

Joanna Mintzer

Heather Tuller

Lori Vadakin





Danielle Gallen



Ryan Lane

## Welcoming new directors to the Senior Leadership Team

### **Danielle Gallen, JD, PHR, SHRM C-P, Director of Human Resources**

Danielle has held HR leadership roles in both the public and private sectors, most recently running her own HR consulting firm. She specializes in conflict resolution, employee relations, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. Danielle earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Florida State University and her Juris Doctor (JD) from University of California, Hastings College of Law.

### **Ryan Lane, M.A., Director of Children, Youth, and Family Services**

Ryan brings 22 years of experience and passion for community mental health to the organization. Before joining UCS, he was a clinician at the Howard Center, a Vermont Care Partners Center of Excellence in Burlington. Prior to his clinical work, Ryan held leadership positions at the Vermont Department of Health Division of Substance Use Programs as Director of Clinical Services, and taught psychology as a faculty member at Burlington College and Southern New Hampshire University.



Members of the UCS board and leadership team met with county and district representatives along with Lieutenant Governor Zuckerman and Congresswoman Becca Balint, during the annual Legislative Breakfast.



## Business Programs

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Management consultation
- Community partnerships
- Trainings/Webinars

**6**  
Organizations use UCS for EAP



## Children, Youth, and Family Services (CYFS)

- Family Emergency Services (FES)
- Family outreach services
- Individual and group therapy
- Therapeutic case management
- Respite services
- School-based services
- Jump on Board for Success (JOBS) program
- Teens4Change peer-led program
- Camp Be A Kid
- Psychiatric Urgent Care for Kids (PUCK)

**631**  
Youth and families served



## Community Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT)

- Residential program
- Community support services
- Supported employment program
- Individual counseling
- Group counseling
- Programs for those with dual diagnoses

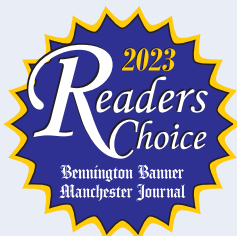
**153**  
Individuals served



## Developmental Services

- Residential services including group homes and shared living
- Community support services
- College Steps program
- Case Management services
- Family support services
- Employment services
- Crisis services

**218**  
Clients served



**In 2023, UCS was again voted Best Community Service Organization** by the readers of the **Bennington Banner and Manchester Journal**. For 65 years we have worked to build a stronger, more resilient community. We are honored to be recognized for our service.



### Early Childhood Services (ECS)

- Bennington County Head Start
- Bennington County Early Head Start
- Parenting and family education
- Family outreach

**173**  
Families served



### Emergency Services

- 24-hour emergency service
- Battelle House crisis stabilization center
- Mobile crisis service

**2383**  
Services provided



### Outpatient Mental Health

- Child, adult, family, and couples counseling
- Psychotherapy groups
- Mental health and developmental disabilities counseling
- Evaluation and psychological testing
- Equine Assisted Therapy
- Community education and consultation services

**1043**  
Individuals served

### Psychiatric Services

- Psychiatric evaluation
- Medication management
- Liaison to intensive hospital care

**3374**  
Services provided



### Substance Use Programs

- Alcohol and drug counseling and education
- Substance use receiving center
- Assessment for and facilitation of detox or residential services
- Intensive Outpatient Program
- Consultation to agencies and schools
- Community outreach
- Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)

**125**  
Individuals served







Presenting FAST at the National Council for Mental Wellbeing's annual convention in Los Angeles, May 2023.

**664**

Clients served through FAST

**97%**

of clients had a decrease in Subjective Unit of Disturbance from when they entered FAST to when they left the session.

## Finding Access to Services and Treatment YT

Like many healthcare organizations, UCS saw a significant increase in the demand for our services across nearly every division. We are experiencing:

- An increase in the number of people needing help
- An increase in individuals in crisis going to the emergency room
- A growing waitlist
- Higher intensity of symptoms

**Find Access to Services and Treatment (FAST)** was designed to help assess, triage, and respond efficiently and effectively to those who access our agency through our Same Day Access model of care. Any person seeking assistance can call or come in, meet with a Universal Access Coordinator for administrative intake, and immediately begin the screening and support process with the FAST team, which might include a Case Manager and Same Day Access Clinician. The team uses Collaborative Network Approach (CNA) methods, a best practice model, to create a culture of trust and safety and determine the best approach to support each client.

The goal of FAST is to get people the help they need, when they need it, as quickly as possible. UCS launched its FAST process in January 2022 and has seen a steady increase in its use ever since.

“ This resource exhibited the power of a professional, listening ear—they did not just listen to words I spoke, but they felt them, they saw my story within their imagination, and they truly heard me. I love this method of therapy because it emulates the power of unity, vulnerability, and courage.”

—Makayla, who entered UCS services through FAST



When I came here I wouldn't look at anyone; I wouldn't speak to anyone. Look at me now.”

—**Caroline Gauthier**, Peer Advocate



Members of the Peer



## Power of partnership AR

Helping law enforcement better serve the community

**Law enforcement officers, often among the first or only ones to respond to what are increasingly behavioral distress calls,** may lack the training to deal with these situations as effectively as social workers and mental health counselors. In 2021, UCS began embedding mental health workers with area law enforcement agencies, starting with Vermont State Police's Shaftsbury barracks. Clinician Bill Elwell often responds with an officer to manage and deescalate calls for service. "Every call a trooper responds to has a high probability of having some sort of behavioral health element," says Bill, who responds to around 20 calls per week. This model has worked so well that UCS received funding to place a clinician within the Bennington Police Department (BPD) this coming year.



Bill Elwell on the job

"The Bennington Police Department and United Counseling Service have an amazing working relationship," says BPD Chief Paul Doucette. "We rely on UCS to provide assistance with mental health and crisis situations in our day-to-day operations. This not only includes calls for service, but also assisting our employees after they have dealt with critical situations." Both their own mental health issues and their views on mental health, can significantly impact officers, their families, and those around them. The new partnership aims to address both public and intra-department needs. "We can provide assistance in the field and after the incident," says Doucette. "This allows us to better serve the Bennington community and provide critical resources for people in need."

## Prioritizing Humanity: Peer Recovery Movement at UCS AR

**UCS' Peer Support team** gives people with lived experience an opportunity to help others who are going through their own mental-health challenges. In addition to providing a perspective that can't be taught or learned, Peer Support Advocates participate in trainings including CPR, First Aid and Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI), Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP), and Motivational Interviewing. The team continually seeks ways to increase their knowledge and help their peers.

**Kayla Stannard** came to UCS through the FAST process experiencing trauma and a deep fear of people, battling depression, anxiety, and sadness. She now works as a Peer Support Advocate in our Community Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT) program, which supports adults with long-term mental illness. "Had I kept the story to myself, I never would have had this opportunity," she says. The work of a Peer Support Advocate is ever-changing, offering myriad supportive opportunities. It may mean stopping by someone's home and helping with laundry; sitting with someone and coloring; watching a movie; or making a few jokes and laughing together.

From teaching self-compassion in UCS' Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP), to providing direct-service case management out in the community, there is novelty in every day. Emphasizing humanity, according to Kayla, is why peer support is uniquely effective.

Peer Support Advocate **Stacy Barnett** completed UCS' Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) and now uses what she has learned to help others. "There is a sort of emotional communion among people who have walked similar paths..." says Stacy, "My goal is to inspire and encourage others, to help them value and respect themselves just as was done for me."



Supports team gather after WRAP training.

## Community Supports AR

Reaching goals, having fun, and making connections

**On any given day, there is something good going on in UCS' Developmental Services division.** The Community Supports program has a full schedule of activities planned each week, from lawn games and a gardening club to special-interest classes, outings, and more. The aim of the program, according to Community Supports Coordinator Christopher Burke, is to help clients reach their personal goals. "Sometimes a client's goal is to make or save money, or to exercise and eat right," says Burke. "Sometimes the goal is to learn independent living skills, or to have access to their community."

The program gives clients guidance and encouragement to achieve the things they want, while also providing rewarding experiences every day. Weekly Men's Group and Women's Group gatherings and outings provide dedicated time for peer interaction and shared activities. Other offerings include Jobs Club, video gaming at Gamer's Grotto, Visions Group, where clients can focus on academics of their choice, and more. Staff member Stephanie Currie teaches a weekly American Sign Language (ASL) class, where clients learn ASL and about the hearing-impaired and deaf community. Direct Support Professional Roxy Iskowitz leads an art class on Mondays, a gardening club at the Bennington Community Garden on Wednesdays, and supports a client-led cooking class. Clients in art class created dragons out of papier-mâché, and the cooking class made food for the annual three-day Lake Days event at Lake Shaftsbury this summer, where Roxy also facilitated dreamcatcher and tie-dyeing workshops.

Burke observes, "Community Supports is adventure time...we like to have groups out in the community where they can interact with their neighbors around town."

UCS also offers an Employment Connections program that connects clients to paid jobs that align with their goals and interests. Staff support clients during their workdays and guide them in training, job development, maintaining employment, and building skills for the workplace and beyond. Along with Community Supports and Employment Connections, UCS offers a Family Supports program for families with their adult

children at home, as well as shared and supervised living programs, developmental services for children, and residential group homes.

**21%**  
increase in the number of companies hiring UCS clients through the Employment Connections program



DS client Mia has worked at Vermont Kitchen Supply for almost three years.

## Lisa Rudiakov: Advocate for change

**Lisa Rudiakov is a Developmental Services client at UCS and an advocate for all.** She is a graduate of the Vermont Leadership Series in Montpelier, a six-month course that trains adults with developmental disabilities and their family members to advocate for positive social change. The program prepares participants to advocate to legislators, promote positive attitudes about disabilities, and ultimately make Vermont a better place to live for all people. "I did this for me," says Lisa of her graduation from the program. "I feel blessed to do this for myself. I'm just grateful."

Lisa is also the vice chair of the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council and was recently named President of Green Mountain Self Advocates (GMSA), an organization that empowers people with developmental disabilities to make decisions and speak for themselves. Lisa is a powerful community advocate for all who need support, including local veterans. Through her advocacy work locally and beyond, Lisa challenges people to use their voices to lift others up and make a better home for everyone.



Lisa Rudiakov proudly displays her VLS certificate.



staff, and the greater Bennington County community



DS clients participate in many solo and group activities throughout the year.

## Creating a welcoming culture

The UCS Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Committee is working hard to create a workplace that feels inviting. The monthly meetings are open to all employees, and two new members joined the ranks this year. The committee implemented key initiatives such as including a DEIB question in the biannual staff engagement survey, providing Psychological Safety in the Workplace Training to staff, and participating in a community Juneteenth Celebration and several events held during Pride Month. The committee regularly contributes to the monthly staff newsletter and offers pronoun pins to all staff should they choose to wear them. This year staff were also encouraged to take a self-directed implicit bias test.

“UCS Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee’s objective is to create a culture that allows all staff, clients, and groups to feel safe, respected, and valued for who they are, where they come from, and what they believe,” says Alex Figueroa, Assistant Director of Substance Use Services and Chair of the DEIB Committee.

UCS embraces the National Culturally and Linguistical Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards to advance health equity, improve quality, eliminate health disparities, and promote an informed culturally aware, and welcoming workplace.



UCS staff walk in pride and allyship at Bennington’s annual Pride Parade.



## When a crisis occurs Preventing and responding to suicides

**There has been a significant increase in suicide** across the state this year. UCS has responded with trainings, consultations, and counseling to several local organizations and businesses. Responding at a moment's notice, our staff are there for the community where and when they are needed.

Doris Russell, Assistant Director of Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Use Services, reported that clinicians are seeing more individuals presenting with suicidal ideations and a history of serious attempts than in years past. UCS Clinicians are available to meet with organizations in the event of a suicide, providing debriefing and support.

In addition to bringing in UCS clinicians after a critical event, organizations can contract with UCS for an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). It is becoming increasingly common for organizations to request debriefing of staff in the event of a suicide as part of the contract. UCS tailors EAP services to each company or organization depending on their needs and budgets.

As part of its role in providing community training and resources, UCS regularly offers Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid both for staff and the community at large. Additionally, we provide suicide prevention and postvention resources on our website (see the link at right or use the QR code to link directly to the suicide prevention landing page).

UCS will be rolling out the Zero Suicide initiative this coming year. The foundational belief of Zero Suicide is that suicide deaths for individuals under the care of health and behavioral health systems are preventable. More information on the initiative can be found at <https://zerosuicide.edc.org>.



In September 2022 UCS hosted an Awareness Vigil as a way to spread awareness of the toll of suicide. Families gathered to share their stories and released memorial lanterns.



<https://www.ucsvt.org/suicide-prevention-page>

## Medication-Assisted Treatment Facilitating recovery with new tools and approaches

**It's no secret that a skyrocketing rate of substance use** is having a devastating impact on individuals, families, and organizations across our community. This year alone, there was a 65% increase in clients served by our Intensive Outpatient Program. As part of UCS' commitment to expanding access to treatment and recovery services, we launched a Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) program, which involves administering buprenorphine to help individuals detoxify from illicit opiates, reduce overdose risks, and maintain long-term recovery from opioid misuse.

**"The goal of the MAT program at UCS is to meet a critical need** as we see mental health and substance use challenges increasing by the day," says Executive Director Lorna Mattern. "This is a significant step toward filling a gap in substance use disorder (SUD) treatment that is felt throughout Bennington County."



**UCS' MAT team (L to R):**

Crickett Polis, Keili Trottier, Patricia Johnson, Alex Figueroa, Taylor Ganier, Wendy Sergeant, Taija LaFontain

their treatment and recovery plans. The application is highly focused on relapse prevention and gives participants an opportunity to connect with a larger community that includes other people with shared or similar lived experiences.

"With the integration of the eRecovery Connections app into our substance use services, we can ensure that the people we serve have access to valuable life-saving resources," says Alex Figueroa, Assistant Director of Substance Use Services with UCS, "Partnering with CHES enables us to support individuals throughout their journey, day or night, no matter where they live."



## Healing with EMDR

A trauma-informed approach to trauma care on the human consequences of substance use. Disorder treatment. Prolonged Exposure Movement (EMDR) offers EMDR mind and body offers EMDR EMDR cli

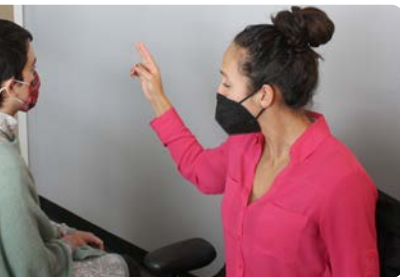
Kai  
th  
su



held its first Candlelight Suicide Vigil to remember those lost to suicide and to honor those who have taken their own lives. The vigil featured stories and reflections, and then a candlelight vigil on Lake Paran.



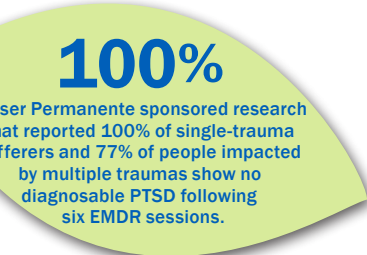
rg/programs/trainings/  
intervention



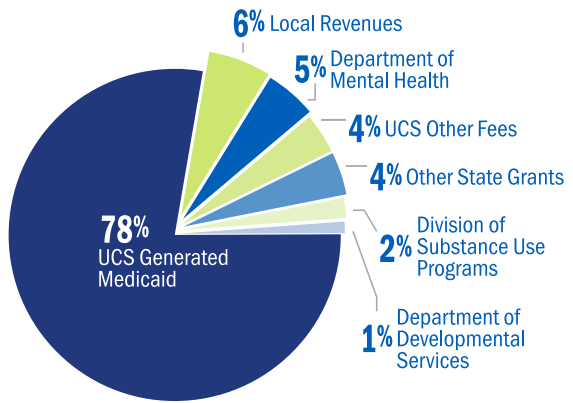
### ng Trauma through

AR

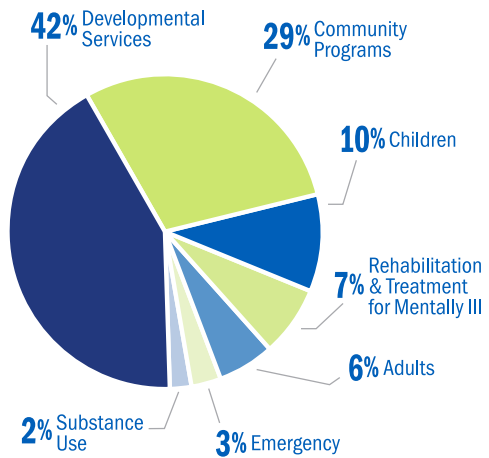
traumatic experience or prolonged exposure to violence can have a profoundly damaging influence on the human mind, with devastating long-term consequences, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Since the 1980s, many therapists treating PTSD have used a method known as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) to help their clients achieve peace of mind and retrain their stress responses. UCS has an EMDR and currently has nine certified EMDR practitioners.



### Source of Funds



### Use of Funds by Program



### Budgeted Income for Fiscal 2022-23

Medicaid	\$ 18,750,836
Fees & 3rd Party Payments	\$ 532,474
Vt. Division of Substance Use Programs	\$ 523,284
Vt. Dept. of Mental Health	\$ 1,137,356
Vt. Dept. of Developmental Svcs.	\$ 104,644
Other State Contracts	\$ 921,581
Local Revenue	\$ 1,403,928
Miscellaneous	\$ 377,245
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 23,751,348</b>

### Budgeted Expenses for Fiscal 2022-23

Salaries	\$ 11,950,624
Fringe Benefits	\$ 2,729,839
Other Personnel Costs	\$ 5,073,836
Operating Expenses	\$ 2,548,572
Travel & Transportation	\$ 374,172
Building Expenses	\$ 1,074,305
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 23,751,348</b>

# Creative approaches for all ages

## Children, Youth and Family Services (CYFS) AR Supporting kids in crisis, addressing the mental health needs of young people and their families

As it has done for the past 10 years, this summer, CYFS hosted **Camp Be a Kid** at Lake Shaftsbury, a five-week program that provides a classic summer-camp experience. The camp is specifically designed for kids with trauma backgrounds and mental health diagnoses, where therapeutic elements are woven into the daily schedule. Camp lets kids practice self-care, learn how to decode their emotions, and gain experience managing behavior. No child is sent away from camp due to behavioral issues, thanks to CYFS' trained staff. "This camp allows children to have a typical, fun camp experience, while continuing their therapeutic programming through the summer," says CYFS Director Ryan Lane.

On the other end of the care spectrum, CYFS also runs **Psychiatric Urgent Care for Kids (PUCK)** at its Dewey Street location in Bennington. PUCK was created in response to a growing number of kids in active mental-health crisis being transported by police from school to the emergency department, an often traumatic experience. UCS' Family Emergency Services clinicians can conduct mental health screenings in schools, and if PUCK is a good fit, they can, with parent permission, bring a child to UCS, where a quiet and safe space awaits. PUCK staff are trained to safely get kids through times of crisis.

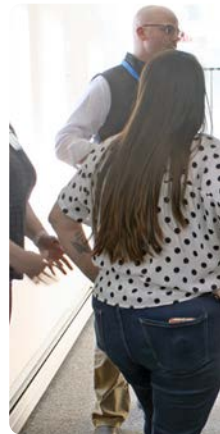
CYFS' **Teens4Change (T4C)** program is a peer-led group in which youth plan activities in their community and make friends and connections. Youth in T4C stay engaged in activities all year long, and can often be found volunteering at local organizations. This year, T4C members volunteered at Bennington's Turning Point Center, founded an LGBTQIA+ hiking club, and represented at UCS' fifth annual Superhero 5K and Kids' Dash, as well as Bennington's Mayfest. Says member Tori, "at T4C, we learn how to express ourselves and how to be truthful to ourselves and to others."

**CYFS creates new pathways to reach children, youth and families in the community who need support.** School-based clinicians help to ensure kids can access help during the school day, and behavior interventionists are available to provide one-on-one mental health support. The goal of CYFS is to reach people wherever they need us, whether in school or in their homes, to help them achieve their best outcomes.



**Above:** A camper enjoys Camp Be a Kid.

**Below:** At its PUCK office, Bennington police officers, educators, staff from the Center, and other community members.



## Horses as healers: Equine Assisted Therapy AR

**Rhythm Hollow Stables in North Bennington is home to a unique partnership** of mental health professionals, horses, and trained equine specialists. Kanthaka is a non-profit organization offering equine-assisted therapies and learning experiences for all ages. It was founded by UCS Medical Director Dr. Alya Reeve and Tara Lowary, Executive Director of Kanthaka and owner of Rhythm Hollow Stables, to bring the healing power of horses to individuals seeking mental health counseling and therapy. The partnership started with one client in 2017 and now serves 45 children and adults.

One reason horses are such effective therapeutic partners is that they are expertly tuned-in to nonverbal communication, picking up on things that we are not aware of, like tension, nervousness, anxiety, or fear. "I knew that animals could have a therapeutic quality, but I had no idea how wonderful the horses would be," says UCS Crisis Recovery Specialist Coral Hunt, who works with many young people with significant past and present trauma as well as difficulties managing emotions. "Working with equine therapy helps them to be more present," says Coral. "I've seen a decrease in anxiety and depression in the kids who work with horses, and a significant decrease in all the effects of trauma."

Anne Rogers, FAST Clinician at UCS, leads regular group sessions at Kanthaka for women. "Horses model life well," says Anne. "Because they are herd animals...they are very tuned in to one another." Horses also take time to evaluate threats before reacting—another important lesson for healing. "Being authentic and relational are the two biggest, best benefits we can learn from horses." In one client's words, "Horses help with my emotional regulation and create a sense of calm for me." Horses offer humans a means to trust another living being, even if trusting a person is still far off. Equine Assisted Therapy is more than just a complement to other therapy methods—it can be an effective starting point for healing in people of all ages and backgrounds.





...s some quality fishing time at

...en house in May, UCS welcomed  
...cers, state troopers, local  
...Southwestern Vermont Medical  
...community partners.



**73%**

increase in clients receiving equine services over the past year

## Worksite Wellness **AR**

**UCS is a winner of the 2023 Vermont Governor's Excellence in Worksite Wellness Gold Level Award**, presented by the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports in partnership with the Vermont Department of Health. This award is presented each year to organizations across the state that make employee wellness a priority.

The Worksite Wellness Committee engaged staff in several initiatives this year that focused on environmental, social, financial, emotional, and physical health. The committee hosted a Fall Family Hike at Equinox Preserve, prepared and served a salad-bar lunch with fresh local produce, conducted ergonomic assessments of employee workstations, and secured free summer passes to Lake Paran for staff and their families. As part of a **Healthy You in '23** campaign, the committee also held random monthly drawings for gift cards to local businesses ranging from healthy food options to bookstores, sporting goods, and farmers markets.



## UCS: A Great Place to Get Care

Data from our winter 2022 Client Satisfaction Survey

**92%** Agreed or Strongly Agreed  
*I/We received the services that were right for us.*

**89%** Agreed or Strongly Agreed  
*I/We received services that we needed.*

**97%** Agreed or Strongly Agreed  
*Staff treated me/us with respect.*

**88%** Agreed or Strongly Agreed  
*The services I/We received made a difference.*

**82%** Agreed or Strongly Agreed  
*My quality of life improved as a result of the services I/we received.*

**89%** Would recommend UCS to a friend or family member.

**97%** Feel like your personal identity/culture was/is valued.

## UCS: A Great Place to Work

Staff rated UCS benchmarks on a scale of 1–5

**4.55** I have a good relationship with my supervisor

**4.48** My work makes a meaningful difference to clients

**4.42** My job gives me a sense of accomplishment

**4.37** I feel driven to help the organization succeed

**4.36** I am encouraged to take action when I see a problem

**UCS celebrated its workforce of over 300** at our annual Staff Recognition Luncheon at the Sacred Heart Saint Francis de Sales Parish Center in Bennington. Employees, board members, and community partners from all over Bennington County enjoyed a catered lunch from Mach's Market in Pawlet, at UCS' best-attended recognition luncheon to date.

Several UCS team members received certificates celebrating 5-year increments of continuous service, and many were recognized for team and individual excellence. Community members were also recognized for their commitment to UCS' mission of building a stronger community. **More detailed descriptions of awards and photos of honorees can be found on our website.** **AR**

## Excellence Award Winners

Sarah Bowen	Carol McLenithan
Sarah Church	Rachel Munoz
Maria Coley	Rachel Olmstead-
Kirk Dennison	Miri
Bill Elwell	Cindy Randall
Mary Gates	Anne Rogers
Ian Hulbert	Rebecca Shuler
Taija LaFountain	Mike Webb
Tori Matteson	



## I CARE Champions

Deb Amadon	Lyndsey Johnson
Corrine Bakaitis	Sandy Matteson
Jaci Brillon	Stephen Mattison
Cassandra Buell	Julie Oakes
Courtney Button	Ben Prandini
Mariah Coley	Betsy Rathbun-Gunn
Dawn Danner	Alya Reeve
Michelle Ennis	Mike Sass
Olivia Fox	LaShea Stewart
Sophia Garder	Noreen Stratton
Allyson Gerity	Keili Trotter
Taylor Hayes	

## Gerrit Kouwenhoven Award

This award is given in memory of our longtime board president and devoted staff advocate, to employees who have demonstrated a commitment to continued learning and professional development. Our 2023 recipients were **Eva Leonetti** and **Erin Shulman**.

## Milestone Anniversaries

Staff celebrating multiple years of service are committed to their work and to promoting success for our organization, clients and the community.

### 25 YEARS

Rebecca Bishop  
Nancy Lively

### 20 YEARS

Alicia Acevedo  
Grace Winslow

### 15 YEARS

Deborah Amadon  
Kathy Galusha

### 10 YEARS

Ashley Hebert  
Alison Clausnitzer-  
Lane  
Jenna Langlois  
Ajay Martucci

### 5 YEARS

Connor Andrews  
Emily Croft  
Lisa Dale  
Olivia Drzewiecki  
Michelle Ennis  
Jenifer Haskins  
Victoria Hill  
Taija LaFountain  
Cynthia Leonard  
Eva Leonetti  
Corinne Lyons  
Stephen Mattison  
Amanda Mentiply  
Gayle Rogers  
Marie Shutts  
Stacie Sullivan  
Molly Thompson  
Taylor Zimmermann



## Julie Held Award

Presented in memory of Julie Haynes Held, an HR recruiter who dedicated her final working years to UCS and those we serve. Her optimism and passion were evident in every interaction as she promoted a culture of caring. Congratulations to **Jaci Brillon**, this year's honoree.



## Scully Award

UCS' Medical Director from 1977 to 1984, Dr. Scully was an inspiration to all who knew him. The Peter D. Scully Memorial Award is chosen by senior leadership and presented to employees who embody the highest qualities of professionalism, dedication, and sincerity in working with clients and colleagues. This year's award went to **Victor Martini** and **Nadine Wisher**.



## Team Award

This year has been marked by a dramatically increased volume and acuity of the need for crisis services. Our Crisis Service teams have responded with creativity, flexibility and a willingness to do what was necessary for those we serve.

### Crisis Services, Emergency Services, and Family Emergency Services:

Dave Clark • Pam Clark • William Elwell • Emily Hakkinen • Rose Hall • Taylor Hayes • Emily Held • Jean Henderson • Coral Hunt • Lindsay Johnson • Steve Lecce • Rachel Munoz • Desiree Pechtel • Chessica Sauvie • Rebecca Shuler • Jamie Spear • Ethan Therrian • Hope Therrian • Kimberly Warren



## Cleveland and Phyllis Dodge Community Service Award

Working together to find solutions

The Dodge Award is presented to a community member or organization whose support of UCS and its mission has been notable and significant. **Jessica McCrae-Massey, R.N.** works with the Vermont Chronic Care Initiative and also participates in the State Housing Project. Working closely with UCS' Community Rehabilitation and Treatment Program, Jessica identifies individuals who have significant needs and connects them with UCS, helping numerous people find their way to our doors to ensure the best possible outcomes.

## Market Adjustment

### Initial step toward achieving fair and equitable pay

Following a multi-year wage compensation project, UCS increased compensation for most of the agency's staff this year. In 2022, UCS, along with other Designated Agencies across the state, received an 8% boost to their funding. UCS gave a 3% increase to staff and used some of the capital to offset employee insurance and other administrative cost increases, but held most of the new funds in anticipation of implementing its compensation plan.

“The work we do is so essential to our community and the need for our services continues to grow,” said Executive Director Lorna Mattern. “It’s been a hard reality that staff, despite loving their work at UCS, end up leaving for higher paying jobs. We know that creating and implementing a competitive wage structure is critical to both attracting and retaining great staff.”

UCS invested more than \$1.5 million to advance its goal of a more equitable salary structure. 90% of the positions within the agency experienced an increase.



Direct Support Professionals' (DSPs) starting compensation increased by **25%**



# Fundraising Events

## The Barn Sale

The Barn Sale is an annual tag sale that takes place at Riley Rink at the Northshire Civic Center. Volunteers of The Barn Sale Committee, chaired by **Craigín Salsgiver**, work year-round to collect, sort and price and then store and transport the tens of thousands of items donated for the two-day sale. This wonderful group of volunteers spends countless hours to make a difference in our community. All proceeds from the sale support UCS's Northshire Services, including outpatient mental health and counseling, psychiatry, substance use treatment, youth and family services, and Head Start. **The 2023 Barn Sale raised over \$75,000.**



## Celebrating 5 years of superheroes

Hundreds of people gathered at the Bennington Community Center on Saturday, November 5, 2022 to participate in the **5th Annual Superhero 5K and Kids' Dash in support of UCS' Equine Assisted Therapy program.** All funds raised directly benefit the program, a therapeutic partnership between Kanthaka Equine of North Bennington and UCS that gives participants the opportunity to address mental health challenges through healing interactions with horses.



### Caped Crusaders



### Aquaman Water Stop Sponsors



**DEFENDERS:** Better Bennington Corporation • r.k. Miles • MSK Engineers  
 Northeast Delta Dental • Southwestern Vermont Health Care • VNA & Hospice of  
 the Southwest Region **CHAMPIONS:** Casella Waste Systems, Inc. • Hill & Thompson, PC

# ANNUAL FUND

Those we serve are at the heart of everything we do—helping people to grow, develop, recover, and lead their best possible lives. We welcome your unrestricted donations to our General Fund or your contributions to one of our named funds. With your help we can continue to provide much-needed individual and group services and education, and reduce mental health stigma in our community.

## 100%

of UCS board members contribute.

### \$10,000+

Anonymous  
The Phillips Family Foundation  
John and Barbara Ann Reilly

### \$5000-\$9,999

Anonymous  
The Alcyon Foundation  
Brian and Janice Cunningham  
Peter and Lisa Hillman  
The Right Track Foundation  
Bob and Mary Anne Vandegna  
Vermont Community Foundation

### \$2500-\$4,999

Anonymous  
\$1,000-\$2499  
Lynn and Jerry Babicka  
*in honor of Bill Elwell*  
Cheryl L. Ehrgott, Esq.  
Christopher and Kirsty Elwell  
Community Foundation  
for a Greater Richmond  
Robert and Cora May Howe  
Ira and Anne Kaplan Fund of the  
Vermont Community Foundation  
Juliette Combe Larson  
Langdon Wheeler and Kathy Metcalfe

### \$500-\$999

Dean Dixon  
Nancy Scattergood Donavan and  
Peter Donavan  
r.k. Miles, Inc.  
Keith and Pam Nemlich *in memory*  
*of Gerrit Kouwenhoven*  
Laura Walker

### \$250-\$499

Anonymous  
Abacus Automation  
Bill and Ruth Botzow  
Richard and Martha Heilemann  
Darlene Hazelton  
Hayden Plumbing and Heating Inc.  
James Howe  
Charles and Elaine Letourneau  
Kathi Marcoux *in honor of Nathaniel*  
*and Colleen Marcoux*  
Nathaniel Marcoux  
Lorna and Tom Mattern  
Michael and Susan McKenna  
McEvoy Charitable Fund of the  
Renaissance Foundation  
Joseph O'Dea  
Alya Reeve  
The Richards Group  
Mikey and Linda Rollyson  
Alice and Ross Sandler *in honor of*  
*Joanna Mintzer*  
Kevin J. Sprague  
Catherine Stewart  
Robert W. Thompson  
Lori Vadakin  
Joel Whiting  
Town of Winhall

### \$100-\$249

Anonymous  
John Ahearn  
Amazon Smile Program

Joel Ario  
William Baldwin  
David Ballou  
Bernard Bandman  
Jack and Patricia Bennett  
Michael and Catherine Brady  
Roberta Lynch Carroll  
Deborah and John Cave  
Kenneth and Lila Cestone  
Kathryn Chamberlain  
Agnes Charlesworth  
Jane Childs *in memory of*  
*Austin Wilcox*  
William and Lisa Christman *in*  
*memory of Austin Wilcox*  
James and Laura Clune  
James H. Colvin  
John and Lisa Cueman  
Darwin Cusack  
Wade and Roberta Devlin-Scherer  
Jane and Stephen Duda  
Patricia Farren  
Donald R. Ferrell  
Mike Finnerty  
Marc and Robin Fisher  
Laurie Fontaine  
The GE Foundation  
Virginia Freeman  
Mary Ellen Geer  
Network For Good  
Grant Norten and Associates PLLC  
*in honor of Leslie Addison*  
John and Bonnie Halpin  
Thomas and Jim Hand *in memory*  
*of Austin Wilcox*  
Jean Haynes  
Christian Heins  
William and Janis Ketterer  
Ellen D. Kouwenhoven *in memory*  
*of Gerrit Kouwenhoven*  
Tom and Marie Litowsky  
Cashelle Lukas  
Claire Lyons  
Elizabeth Marsh  
Stephen and Catherine McClure  
Claire Merritt  
Curtis Merrow  
Miles Lumber Company, Inc.  
Charles Moore  
Monument Electric  
Deborah E Perkins  
Robert and Alice Pezulich  
Robert and Paula Planer  
Susan Plante *in memory of*  
*Linda Lewis*  
William Plath  
Ralph and Mary Provenza  
Dale and Craig Raisig *in honor of*  
*Joanna Mintzer*  
Mikel and Linda Rollyson  
Suzanne Ruck  
Victoria, Elizabeth and Sammy Silsby  
*in memory of Austin Wilcox*  
Richard Sylwester  
Phyllis L. Warren  
Wassick Tire Service  
Joel Whiting  
Arthur L. Whitman  
Vermont Timber Works, Inc.

Winburn Law Offices  
Sue and Ted Wright

### Up to \$99

Gloria Alexander *in memory of*  
*Austin Wilcox*  
Rita Allard  
William and Jennifer Amatruto  
*in memory of Austin Wilcox*  
Darcy Anderson  
Dawn Bacon  
Willard and Lisa Christman *in*  
*memory of Austin Wilcox*  
Don and Mary Cone *in*  
*memory of Austin Wilcox*  
Marlyn Couture *in memory of*  
*Kimberly Couture Rist*  
Ken and Karen Cross  
Fredrick Dunn  
Mike Finnerty  
Louis and Marie Guariniello  
Henry and Kathy Hall  
Dorothy C. Halvorsen  
Dean Hanson  
Elaine Harwood  
Jocelyn Hay  
Deborah Haynes *in memory of*  
*Austin Wilcox*  
Jean Haynes  
Bruce and Lynda Hobson  
David and Diane Howard  
William Innes  
Roger D. Jones  
Richard Jorgensen  
The Joyce Family *in memory of*  
*Jared Fahmy*  
Leatrice Katz  
Susan LaPorte  
Alan and Terry Lindsey  
Gennaro and Diana Lobosco  
Patricia Lovell  
Dolores K. Mahlmann *in honor*  
*of Andrea Malinowski*  
David Malinowski  
Mary McGuinness  
Linda M. Meskun  
Bradley D. Myerson  
William and Patricia Nealon  
Valerie E. Oakland  
Kelsey O'Dell  
Kristen E. Olmstead *in memory*  
*of Austin Wilcox*  
Elizabeth Pierpont  
Iwanna Kerod Reed *in honor of*  
*Mental Health Workers*  
Helen Rogers  
Suzanne Ruck  
Jane Sobel and Stanley Rosen  
Isabella Skidmore  
Tyler Stowe  
Linnea S. Turner  
Heather Vernon  
Veterans of Foreign Wars  
Post 1332  
Phyllis Warren *in memory of*  
*Austin Wilcox*  
Gail Wood

To learn more about our funds or to  
make a donation, visit [ucsvt.org/give](https://ucsvt.org/give)



# United Children's Services



**Main Office (802) 442-3686**  
2 Park Street, North Bennington, VT 05257

Locations in  
**Bennington • North Bennington • Manchester • Pownal**



**Bennington County Head Start and Early Head Start** provide essential services for children from birth to age 5. We partner with parents, teachers, and community members to create meaningful, measurable change.

### OUR MISSION:

To prepare children and their families for school through collaborative approaches to high-quality education, health, and social services.

### OUR VISION:

All children and families will be successful lifelong learners.

### OUR VALUES:

- Respect • Integrity • Positive Outlook
- Responsibility • Equality • Accessibility

### United Children's Services Board of Directors

- William Baldwin, *President*
- Nathaniel Marcoux, *Treasurer*
- Kathleen Clark
- Jessica Hartleben
- Katelyn Mason

### Read and see more

On our website and YouTube playlist, you can find expanded information on many of our 2022–23 activities.

YouTube  
YT



Annual Report  
AR





# 2022–2023 Annual Report

## Policy Council

Policy Council is a group of Head Start and Early Head Start parents and community members who help lead and make decisions about the local Head Start programs. Policy Council members are elected by parents of enrolled children, and work closely with the Head Start/Early Head Start management team and governing body to provide overall direction for both programs.

Katelyn Mason, *Chair*  
Anne Baldwin-Smith, *Co-Chair*  
Harold Lessman, *Co-Chair*  
Kim Smith, *Secretary*  
Charles Raetz  
Stacey Sherman



“*Being part of the future success of the children at Head Start and Early Head Start has given me a greater sense of being...I feel great knowing kids are getting what they deserve.*”  
—*Katelyn Mason, Policy Council Chair*

## University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) Head Start Management Fellows Program **AR**

This year, Director of Operations **Amy Fela** and Associate Director of Early Childhood Services **Rebecca Bishop Ware** graduated from the Head Start Management Fellows Program at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The fellowship is a two-week intensive training tailored to managers and directors of federally funded Head Start and Early Head Start programs across the country.

The curriculum focused on strategic planning, finance, marketing, communication, data analysis, and effective and inclusive leadership. UCLA Fellowships are highly competitive and granted for one year to professionals working in Head Start, early childhood, or children's and family services.

Amy and Rebecca represented the only Region 1 (New England) Head Start team chosen to take part in the Management Fellows Program this year. Around 1,700 fellows have graduated from the program over the last 20 years.



Amy Fela (L.) and Rebecca Bishop Ware

Noted Rebecca, “We developed plans to improve specific systems and services provided by the agency, and were able to share the management tools that we learned with other UCS leaders and supervisors to increase the quality and efficiency of all our work.”

[ucsvt.org/programs/benningtoncountyheadstart](https://ucsvt.org/programs/benningtoncountyheadstart)

Head Start® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)





## School Readiness

All enrolled children were assessed at the Fall Baseline, Winter Midpoint, and Spring Final Progress Checkpoints once again this year. Infant-and-toddler curriculum focused specifically on social and emotional development. Preschool curriculum heavily emphasized lessons and experiences in social and emotional development, literacy, and approaches to learning, as part of the school readiness goals.

While other domains of learning align with national trends of lower data in children’s development and milestone expectations, physical development for the second year shows a return to pre-pandemic outcomes. Further impacting data are the high disability rates of enrolled children. As of June 2023, 24% of Bennington County Head Start-enrolled preschoolers have an active Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and 75% of Early Head Start-enrolled infants and toddlers have an active Individualized Family Support Plan/One Plan this year.

“This year, 59 children graduated from the program in the spring ready to transition to kindergarten in the fall.”

### Percentage of children meeting or exceeding age-level expectations:

**Social and Emotional Development:** 94% of infants and toddlers (*increased 15% from fall*) • 74% of preschoolers (*increased 33% from fall*)

**Language Development:** 92% of infants and toddlers (*increased 27% from fall*) • 89% of preschoolers (*increased 40% from fall*)

**Literacy Development:** 90% of infants and toddlers (*increased 8% from fall*) • 66% of preschoolers (*increased 39% from fall*)

**Mathematics:** 91% of infants and toddlers (*increased 16% from fall*) • 65% of preschoolers (*increased 31% from fall*)

**Approaches to Learning:** 95% of infants and toddlers (*increased 25% from fall*) • 84% of preschoolers (*increased 43% from fall*)

**Physical Development:** 96% of infants and toddlers (*increased 14% from fall*) • 93% of preschoolers (*increased 25% from fall*)

**Scientific Reasoning:** 96% of preschoolers emerging or meet program expectations

*The auditor’s report on compliance for the major federal award programs for United Children’s Services of Bennington County, Inc. expresses an unqualified opinion on all major federal programs.*

In the 2022–23 school year, Bennington County Head Start and Early Head Start programs served:

**EARLY HEAD START:**

73 children enrolled / 74 families served

**HEAD START:**

91 children enrolled / 99 families served  
136 average monthly enrollment

**% Eligible Children Served:**

164 (children enrolled)/402 (projected children ages 0–4 living under the Federal Poverty Limit\*) = **42%**

100% of enrolled children received

**medical exams**

52% of Head Start children received **dental exams**

33% of Early Head Start children received **dental exams**

*\*Based on population estimates provided by economic and policy research for the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations (PMFO)*

**United Children’s Services  
Head Start Program  
Fiscal 2022–23**

**REVENUE**

US Department of	
Health & Human Services	\$ 2,996,545
State/Local Contracts	\$ 1,925,113
Fee for Service	\$ 356,475
Miscellaneous	\$ 128,780
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 5,406,913</b>

**EXPENSES**

Salaries	\$ 2,872,795
Fringe	\$ 692,167
Other Personnel Costs	\$ 404,633
Operating Expenses	\$ 791,009
Travel & Transportation	\$ 113,942
Building Expenses	\$ 526,369
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 5,406,913</b>



Jennie Moon receives her award, with team member Melissa Hyde (L) and UCS Director of Early Childhood Services Betsy Rathbun-Gunn

**Early Intervention team recognized**

The 2023 Harold C. “Archie” Warner Memorial Award, honoring Archie’s memory and longstanding commitment to our children’s programs, was presented to **Jennie Moon** and the **Early Intervention Services** team. Part of the VT Division of Children’s Services, this group works tirelessly to advocate for families of children with special needs, pursuing funding sources to provide assistive technology, working with state agencies to bring resources to our corner of the state, and partnering with childcare providers such as our own Bennington County Head Start. Jennie and her team have worked with us this past year to provide specialized training for staff working with unique conditions and to make accommodations in the classroom.

**Family Engagement**

Throughout the year, we offer numerous opportunities for parents and caregivers to participate in activities with or in support of their enrolled children. In 2022–23, family programs included:

- **Ready Rosie** Parenting Curriculum
- **Off to Kindergarten** workshop
- **Managing Challenging Behaviors** workshop
- **Spring Bash**
- **Parent committees** at each center
- **Explorer’s Club**
- **Virtual Cooking Club** (pizza!)
- **Pumpkin painting**
- **Seed planting** and **Harvest of the Month** activity
- **Kindergarten playground meet-ups** (this year open to the community)

**Head Start Fire**

Bennington County Head Start and Early Head Start experienced a late-night fire on December 21, 2022 at our Head Start West location. Seven fire departments responded, and support poured in from the local early-childhood community. With this support and some extra flexibility, Head Start West staff and families whose work and services were displaced were relocated within a month of the fire.

Thanks to our community, the West location reopened in the fall of 2023.





**United Counseling Service Main Office**  
100 Ledge Hill Drive, Bennington, VT 05201 | (802) 442-5491



**United Counseling Service Northshire Office**  
5312 Main Street, Manchester Center, VT 05255 | (802) 362-3950

---

**Atwood Center for Developmental Services**  
335 Dewey Street, Bennington, VT 05201

**Battelle House Crisis Stabilization Center**  
348 Dewey Street, Bennington, VT 05201

**Burgess Road Youth and Family Services**  
21 Burgess Road, Bennington, VT 05201

**Community Rehabilitation and Treatment**  
316 Dewey Street, Bennington, VT 05201

**Head Start/Early Head Start Main Office**  
2 Park Street, North Bennington, VT 05257 | 802-442-3686

**Head Start/Early Head Start Spring Center**  
655 Gage Street, Bennington, VT 05201

**Early Head Start Infant and Toddler Center**  
100 Ledge Hill Drive, Bennington, VT 05201

**Head Start/Early Head Start**  
5312 Main Street, Manchester Center, VT 05255

**Head Start/Early Head Start**  
97 School House Road, Pownal, VT 05261

---

**UCS Residential Facilities**  
Autumn Street Group Home  
Bank Street Independent Living Complex  
Gatling House Group Home  
South Street Group Home  
Union Street Group Home

---

**United Counseling Service** provides outpatient counseling and addiction services, emergency mental health services, extensive rehabilitation services, home and school-based services, employment services for people recovering from mental illness or with developmental disabilities, and early childhood services.

**We are here for you!** For more information about UCS visit [www.ucsvt.org](http://www.ucsvt.org) or call 802.442.5491.