

2022 Annual Report



RESILIENCE...

Adapting to challenges

NORTHWESTERN
COUNSELING
& SUPPORT SERVICES
we're here for you



Fiscal Year 2022: July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

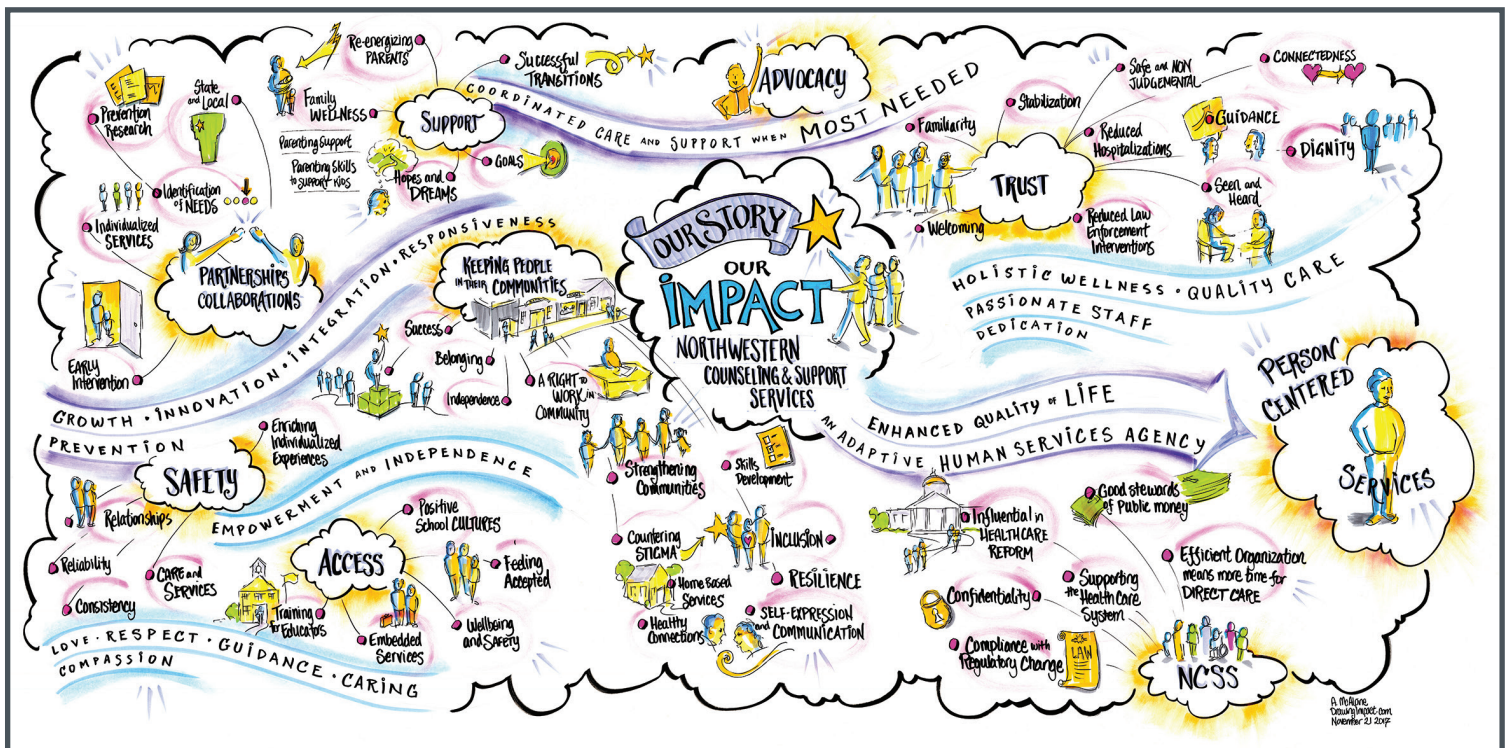
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Our Mission...

is to ensure that the residents of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties have access to high quality services, which promote healthy living and emotional well-being.



Dear Friends,

We are excited to share our FY2022 Annual Report with the theme of RESILIENCE... Adapting to challenges. As the pandemic continued to disrupt all facets of life, the past year has certainly presented numerous challenges but also opportunities in continuing to deliver quality services. We sought out opportunity and took chances. Through the hardships we faced, we learned how to overcome, and as an organization we are stronger now having endured these experiences.

The past year has challenged us. However, we adapted, maintained safety, and ensured that our community had access to the care they needed. NCSS served 4,388 people in our offices, in the local schools, via telephonic and videoconferencing platforms, in the community, in their homes and in their places of work. It's important to note that the services that we offer assist individuals throughout the entire life cycle spanning from birth to death.

We are proud of our accomplishments. Especially, as we reflect on many of the struggles that were encountered including, myAvatar NX EMR upgrade, navigating school closures, health scares, mask/vaccine mandates, and revamping our entire billing system due to payment reform. In addition, we felt incredible stress within our teams due to workforce disruptions.

With COVID-19 continuing to change daily life as we knew it, NCSS worked closely with our community partners to meet additional needs. Collaborations with our local partners increases access to care and ultimately improves outcomes.

As we transitioned an increasing number of services in-person NCSS also continued to utilize technology ranging from telehealth, videoconferencing, and telephonic in keeping individuals that prefer one of those methods safe while addressing their emotional well-being during these uncertain times.

We are very proud of our team and the work they do and are excited to highlight much of their work in this year's annual report. We also are honored to have such strong relationships with our community partners. Together we are making a difference in the lives of the people we serve.

NCSS... we're here for you.

RESILIENCE...



Sincerely,

Jim McMillan
President,
NCSS Board of Directors

Todd Bauman
NCSS Executive Director



LEADERSHIP TEAM

Executive Director

Todd Bauman

Medical Director

Steve Sobel, M.D.

Behavioral Health Services Director

Stephen Broer, Psy.D.

Children, Youth & Family Services Director

Danielle Mitchell

Director of Developmental Services

Samantha Thomas

Finance Director / CFO

Derek Hoy

Operations Director / COO

Kim McClellan

Human Resources Director

Stacey Remillard

Community Relations Director

Joe Halko



STANDING COMMITTEES

Behavioral Health Services

Lisa Briggs
Steve Broer
Deana Chase
Malina Gonnella
Raymond Halstead
Rob Hirss
Ken Johnson
Evelyn Lavalley
Kay Martell

Geoff McLam
Troy Parah
Jessica Parker
Linda Rollo
Jennifer Spagnuolo
Tony Stevens
Lisette Vaillancourt
Anjanette Watson

Children, Youth & Family Services

Elaine Carpenter
Gillian Ireland
Danielle Mitchell

Jodi Pickel
Lisa Whittemore

Developmental Services

Nancy Coles
Jon Fitzgerald
Kenneth Gagne
Josh Hayes
Randy Lizotte

Heather Raymond
Cory Savage
Amber Schaeffler
Samantha Thomas
Owen Voss

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jim McMillan, *President*

Carl Rosenquist, *Vice President*

Angela Poirier, *Treasurer*

Sara B. Kittell, *Secretary*

Jason Minor, *Member at Large*

Elaine Carpenter

Betty Charron

Ken Gagne

Rob Hirss

David Hutchinson

David MacCallum

Meg Marshall

Dan Thompson

Tony Treanor

Anjanette Watson

This Annual Report reflects a portion of the dedication and time NCSS and its staff provided the community during fiscal year 2022.

YEARS OF SERVICE MILESTONES

5 Years

Leanne Apuan
Tanya Averill
Whitney Bates
Shawn Campbell
Veronica Chalifoux
Jeffrey Clark
Peter Cross
Amy Eldridge
Michele Gagne
Christopher Gaita
Katie Giroux
Amy Johnson
Katharine Mable
Brieanna Magnant
Catherine Marrin
Diane Matton
Jason Matton
Whitney Ovitt
David Palendrano
Carol Parker
Morgan Sanderson
Joanne Saunders
Nicholas Smith
Kristin Sopronyi
David St. Cyr
Alexys Tipper

Lisa Langlois
Tara Lawyer
Margaret Maley
Brenda Menard
Bernadette Myers
Joseph Phenix
Joshua Tuck
Meghan Young

15 Years

Theresa Bigelow
Lisa Briggs
Katherine Goodrich
Kenneth Jacobs
Lori Lamos
Danielle Mitchell
Dana Postemski
Kayla Tatro
Lee Trombley

20 Years

Mary Gratton
Brienne Heyer
Patricia Rogati
Anthony Stevens
Michael Tuttle
Amber Unwin

10 Years

Christopher Antaya
Riley Benway
Geoffrey Comstock
Stephen Farrow
Robin Galbraith
Karen Johnson-Phenix

25 Years

Beatrice Corwell

30 Years

Kathleen Berard-Brown

Years of service based on calendar year Jan. – Dec. 2022



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

EMERGENCY & CRISIS STABILIZATION SERVICES

- 24 Hour Emergency & Crisis Stabilization
- Walk-In Crisis Services
- Mobile Outreach Services
- Rapid Access
- Tomlinson Center
(administered by CRT program)
- National Suicide Lifeline
(Responds to calls for Vermont)

OUTPATIENT COUNSELING FOR ADULTS, COUPLES & FAMILIES

- Individual, Couples and Family Counseling
(children, youth & adults)
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy Program
for Teens & Adults
- Elder Outreach Services
- Reach Up Provider at Reach-Up Office
- Co-occurring Counseling
(Mental Health & Substance Use)
- Court Ordered Guardianship Evaluations

INTEGRATED HEALTH SERVICES (located in Primary Care & Specialty Practices)

- Health Assessment & Screenings
- Care Coordination
- Brief Therapy
- Wellness Counseling & Wellness Groups
- Consultation with Medical Providers

COMMUNITY REHABILITATION AND TREATMENT (CRT) SERVICES

- Recovery and Peer Support
- Therapeutic Residence and Transitional Housing
- Community Support Team
- Intensive Case Management Team
- Employment Services Team

PSYCHIATRY & NURSING SERVICES

- Provider to all three Service Divisions
(Behavioral Health, Developmental Services
& Children, Youth & Families)
- Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation Program
- Evaluation & Consultation Services

EVIDENCED BASED PRACTICES

Programs continually examine ways to learn and implement established and emerging evidenced based practices. Some of these practices include:

Wellness Recovery & Action Planning (WRAP), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), Collaborative Assessment & Management of Suicide, CBT for Insomnia, Acceptance & Commitment Therapy, CBT for Chronic Pain, Wellness Self-Management (WSM), Seeking Safety to address trauma and substance use, and Blueprint Health Conditions Wellness Groups.

ZERO SUICIDE PROJECTS

For the past 7 years NCSS has been one of the first pilot sites in Vermont to examine ways to prevent suicide through a range of initiatives within NCSS and in the community.



Services Provided By NCSS *cont.*

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

FAMILY AND HOME-BASED SERVICES

- Family Assessment
- Family Support/Home Visiting
- Applied Behavior Services

SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES

- Collaborative Achievement Team (CAT Program)
- School-based Autism Program
- School-based Clinician Program
- School-based Behavior Consultation
- Home School Coordination

COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

- Respite
- Community Support Services
- Skill Building/Support Groups
- Resource Specialists



CLINICAL OUTPATIENT SERVICES

- Individual and group therapy for children, youth, and families
- Substance Abuse Assessment & Treatment

ADOLESCENT SERVICES

- Transitional Living Program
- JOBS Program
- Youth in Transition Program

SOAR LEARNING CENTER

- Independent Special Education School and Day Treatment



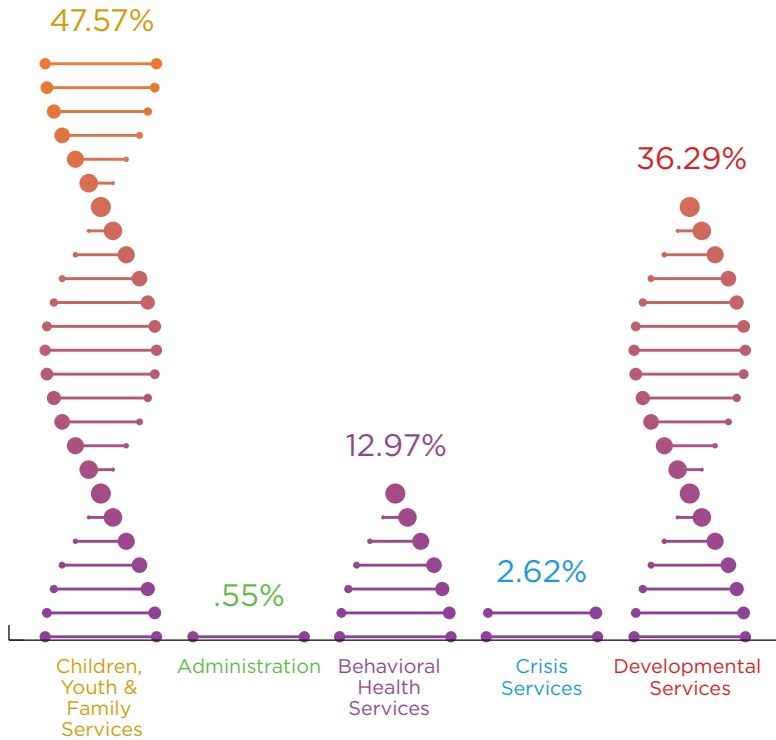
PARENT CHILD CENTER SERVICES

- Early Intervention Services including Developmental Screening
- Children's Integrated Services
- Early Childhood and Family Mental Health Services
- Family and Childcare Support Services
- Mental Health Consultation
- Parents as Teachers
- HEART Program
- Childcare Financial Assistance Program

DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

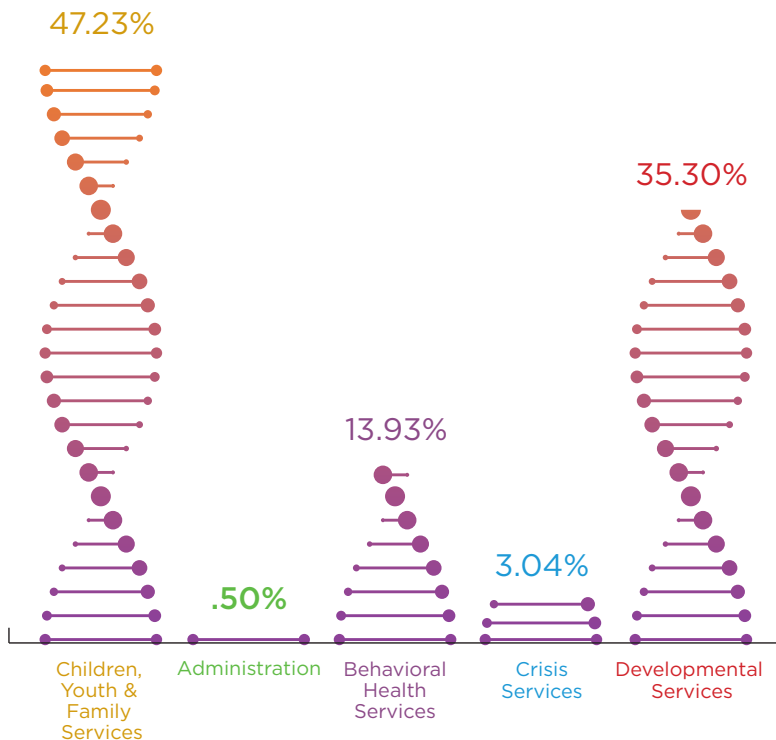
- Alternative Education Program
- Adult Services, including Life Skill Classes and Continuing Education
- Seniors Services
- Employment Services
- Residential and Support Services
- Unique Program for Adaptive & Expressive Arts - PAEA
- 24 Hour Crisis Services
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
- American Sign Language (ASL) Instruction
- Traumatic Brain Injury Program (TBI)
- Emergency Respite Services
- Residential Services
- Dialectical Behavior
- Therapy Support Team
- Clinical Counseling & Support Team
- Academy of Learning
- Professional Peer Advocacy Services
- Peer Self Advocate
- Sexual Education for People with Developmental Disabilities
- Specialized Case Management Services
- Core Transition Team Planning - moving from children to adult services seamlessly

BUDGETED AGENCY REVENUE & EXPENSES • • • • • JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022



FY22 Budgeted Revenue

Children, Youth & Family Services	\$24,372,236
Administration	\$283,990
Behavioral Health Services (Adult)	\$6,644,511
Crisis Services	\$1,340,647
Developmental Services	\$18,596,210
Total	\$51,237,595

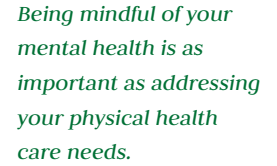


FY22 Budgeted Expenses

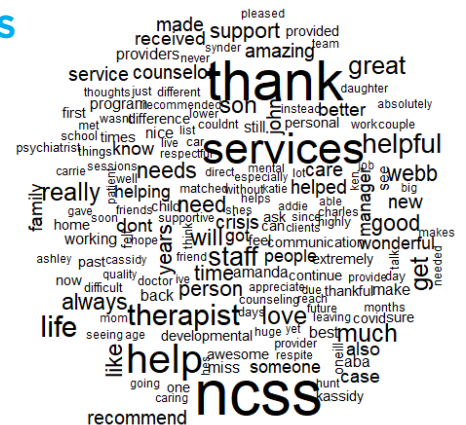
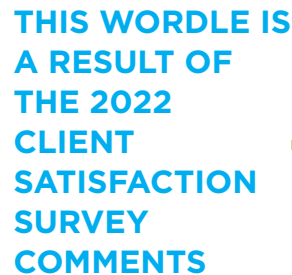
Children, Youth & Family Services	\$24,027,742
Administration	\$254,624
Behavioral Health Services (Adult)	\$7,087,547
Crisis Services	\$1,544,130
Developmental Services	\$17,960,052
Total	\$50,874,094

OP/Ed by Emerson Lynn in the St. Albans Messenger: July 9, 2021

To be successful will require a rebalancing of the public's health care needs. The public's mental health care needs should be funded on par with what we pay for our physical health. That make sense for two reasons: first, one's mental health is no less critical than one's physical health and second, people with mental health conditions are at high risk for experiencing chronic physical conditions. In



Before the “catastrophe.”





THE VERMONT AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AGENCY REVIEW OF NCSS

The Agency Review is the mechanism used by the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to evaluate aspects of the performance of mental health programs offered by Vermont's Designated Agencies (DAs) and Specialized Service Agencies (SSAs).

The programs reviewed by DMH include Children, Youth, and Family Services; Adult Mental Health; and Emergency/Crisis Services for all Designated Agencies.

NCSS PROGRAMS

Child, Youth, and Family Services

Kudos for:

- DMH hears consistently positive feedback about staff in the Intensive Home Support program
- NCSS has improved its working relationship and coordination with Northeastern Family Institute (NFI)
- NCSS has continued to be creative in response to workforce challenges
- NCSS is quick to respond to complex client needs and find creative solutions

Adult Mental Health Program

Kudos for:

- Supported Employment at NCSS is one of the stronger employment programs in Vermont, which has remained true for multiple years. Employment staff have assisted some clients get CDL certifications and helped them get better paying jobs.

- The clinical team responds strongly to complex client situations
- NCSS displays positive relationships with primary care offices and unique collaborations with:
 - VetCenter: Despite NCSS's distance from the White River Junction VA Hospital, the agency has been able to support area veterans by providing space for a specialized clinician.
 - Title VI Indian Education program: NCSS maintains a partnership with the Abenaki Indian Education Program to address disproportionate rates of suicide in their community. Together they have conducted needs assessments and social autopsy research to be more responsive to needs in the Abenaki community.

Emergency Services

Kudos for:

- The NCSS Emergency Services division has been a leader in the 988 initiative.
 - While the three-digit phone number is not active yet, NCSS was the first agency to staff the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline for individuals in distress (1-800-273-8255).
 - When Northeast Kingdom Human Services joined this effort, NCSS provided mentorship for their onboarding.
 - Between both agencies, the in-state answer rate for the lifeline was 83% for calendar year 2021, up from 52% in calendar year 2020.
 - To further specialization in this work, staff are being trained in the LivingWorks Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), focused on teaching intervention providers how to navigate the roles of identifying risk, engaging an individual, understanding, creating safety, and planning.
- The NCSS Emergency Services team is a Zero Suicide pilot site for Vermont.



NCSS prefers to look at stigma as an acronym...

STRIVING TO INCREASE GOOD MENTAL Health AWARENESS



MYAVATAR NX MOVES TOWARDS GO-LIVE

Our myAvatar NX upgrade is underway and will be coming to fruition at the start of FY23! Resources were pulled from across the agency to support testing and prepare for next

steps. The first step was UAT (User Acceptance Testing). Testing which includes validation of forms in the NX environment. While the content and data elements on the forms have stayed the same, there were formatting issues that needed to be addressed. The following team worked hard throughout the year and looked at using each form to make sure they are easy to use for end users!



The different roles for this process included:

UAT Testers:

This team tested and validated the system. This group in partnership with the other three (3) agencies of the Core 4 (WCMHS, LCMHS and UCS) will ensure the forms look correct in the system and function properly. They will also be verifying that routing and setup is functioning as expected.

NX Trainers:

This group was pivotal in supporting training for our staff.

Superusers:

NCSS go-to EMR users. These staff were woven throughout divisions and programs to help everyone be successful in our EMR. Each division also identified superusers.

UEMRVT Config Team:

This is the same config team that has supported us since well before myAvatar Go-Live, a year and a half ago. They continue to be the best config team to ensure the best end user experience possible.



"I could not have asked for better care than I have gotten and continued to get from CRT. Thank you!"

- FY22 Client Satisfaction Survey comment



FY2022 CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

NOTE: As a result of the continued disruption that COVID-19 posed, some surveys were hand delivered with others being mailed. The disruption resulted in a lower response rate versus pre-pandemic years.

Staff treated me with respect

98%

I received services that were right for me

93%

The services that I received made a difference

91%



EMBEDDED MENTAL HEALTH WORKER PLAYS KEY ROLE FOR ST. ALBANS POLICE *By Kevin Gaiss, published: Jul. 21, 2021*

Segment seen on WCAX – CBS Channel 3 news and on their digital platforms.

Excerpts from story:

ST. ALBANS, Vt. (WCAX) - Police departments across the country are changing the way they operate, including adding mental health experts to the team.

The concept of a clinician embedded in the St. Albans Police Department dates back to 2011 and was rolled out in 2014. A founding member says now there's even more need.

According to Northwestern Counseling & Support Services data from 2017, 60% of problems police were running into or being called for were mental health-related. While officers we spoke with say they feel trained, they said it adds a layer of confidence having a mental health professional there, too.

The program NCSS has with city police can take a serious load off officers.

“Really moving in that direction of more advanced mental health trainings and things like that,” said St. Albans Police Sgt. Joseph Thomas, who's been with the department for 20 years.

Thomas has watched policing in the city evolve over time with more training and increased responsibility. But he says one of the most valuable resources for mental health emergencies are embedded clinicians.

“We do have training in it, but it's not our dedicated career path,” Thomas said.

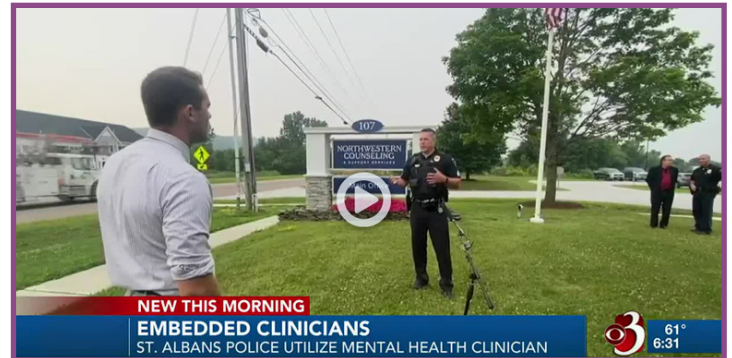
A common phrase at St. Albans PD is to “Send Sam.” That would be Sam Weber, the NCSS clinician embedded with the department.

“I show up at the police department and see what the day holds for us,” Weber said.

Their goal is to get her on as many calls as possible. The police department's philosophy is if someone is calling 911, she can help.

“Be their counterpart and sort of help find more complex solutions for more complex situations,” Weber said.

She says how people feel about police can be complicated, so she can be a listening ear. She estimates roughly 65% of her contacts result in follow-up or community resource recommendations.



Link to segment:

<https://link.zixcentral.com/u/279fc53f/Gk3QmULq6xGLX-PBWg-oQLQ?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.wcax.com%2Fap-p%2F2021%2F07%2F21%2Fclinician-helps-out-st-albans-police-department%2F>

“One of the ways we are starting to find a lot of success is the fact that in the community members that I have interacted with are starting to pass my contact information along to neighbors and friends and saying this is someone you can contact and this is someone you can trust,” said Weber.

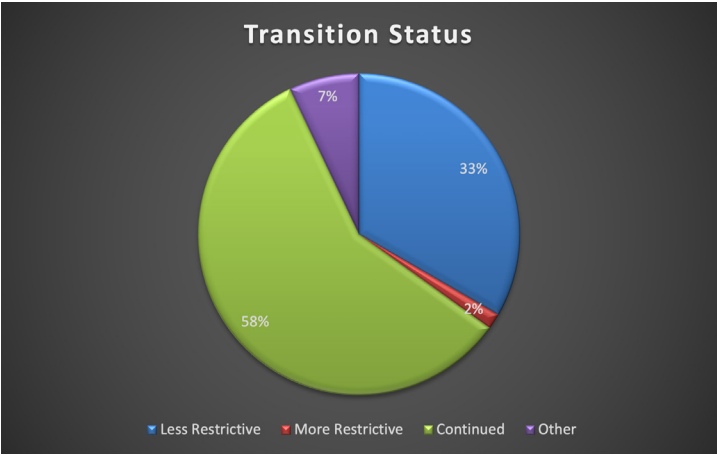
Tony Stevens, a leader of the NCSS crisis team, says no matter why someone calls 911, there is more often than not a place for mental health support services.

“Safety is always the number one priority for law enforcement, and they do a wonderful job keeping our clinicians safe, as well as everyone in the community. But I picture it like a delicate dance. There is a lot of communication on the way to those calls or even right there on scene, and I think that's one of the benefits to being embedded -- you have and build that trust and that relationship and it works pretty seamlessly,” said Stevens.

As for what the future of this program holds, they are looking into second shifts and weekends as well as more therapeutic options like dogs, but for that, they need sustained and increased funding.



2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR STUDENTS TRANSITION STATUS FROM SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMS



The above graph shows the transition status at the end of the 2021-2022 school year for all students served through the Soar Learning Center, School Based Autism, School Based Behavior Consultation, and Collaborative Achievement Team. This data was summarized from data submitted for the Success Beyond Six Behavior Intervention report.

The raw numbers are:

- Students who transitioned to a less restrictive setting (blue). **85**
- Students who transitioned to a more restrictive setting (red) **4**
- Students who continued in their current level of support (green) **148**
- Other (inclusive of “other”, those who moved out of region, and who dropped out (purple) **18**

Total. 255

We conceptualize maintaining with the current level of support or transitioning to a less restrictive setting as successful outcomes, which encompasses 98% of students served this year. Only 1.6% of students served required support in a more restrictive setting to access their education.



NCSS BRINGS DOLLY’S IMAGINATION LIBRARY TO GRAND ISLE AND FRANKLIN COUNTIES

ST. ALBANS - The Parent Child Center of NCSS announced during July that starting immediately Franklin and Grand Isle families can enroll children in the Dolly’s Imagination Library program. This program makes available high-quality, age appropriate books to children from birth to age five. Children receive a monthly book delivered right to their home and it’s free!

“We are so excited to continue to support early childhood literacy by bringing Dolly’s Imagination Library to our region! We’ve wanted to do this for quite some time and thanks to a commitment from NCSS and the hard work of our wonderful legislators this past session we’re making it a reality for all families in our region. This program will greatly benefit young children, support the caregiver/ child bond, and bring joy to so many!” said Amy Johnson, Parent Child Center of NCSS.

People interested in learning more about Dolly’s Imagination Library in Franklin/Grand Isle should contact

Amy Johnson (amy.johnson@ncssinc.org) or visit <https://imaginationlibrary.com/check-availability/> to enroll in a child in your life.



NCSS STAFF HOURS OF CARE DURING FY22



TOMLINSON CENTER - Where Wellness Matters

The Behavioral Health Standing Committee gave much thought to a new name for the Crisis Bed Program (formerly known as Bay View: Crisis Care Center) and identified a name which accurately reflects the care provided in the program. The new name is Tomlinson Center: Where Wellness Matters. This name change is in honor of Jim Tomlinson who played a large role in identifying the need for this program and helped to present the proposal for funding in Montpelier.

His presentation influenced this program being one of the first in Vermont to be awarded funding. Jim served a cumulative 12 years on the NCSS board of directors. In addition, Jim was an active member of the Behavioral Health Division Standing Committee for over 15 years.

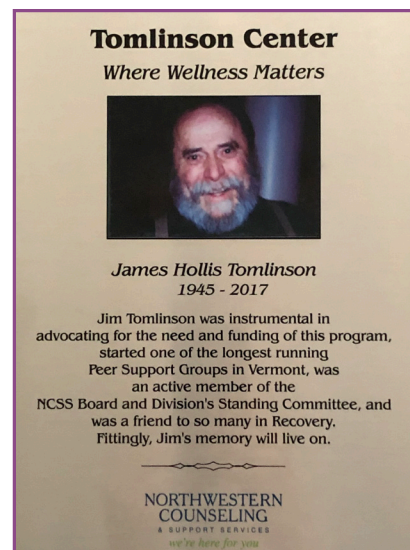
Jim also formed one of the longest running peer support groups in the state. Add to these accomplishments that on occasion he was asked to provide testimony to the Vermont State Legislature.

The Tomlinson Center is NCSS's crisis stabilization service for adults designed to prevent hospitalization, support stabilization of a crisis, and to ease transition back into the community from inpatient psychiatric hospitalization. The Tomlinson Center is located in a comfortable and supportive environment with staff available 24-hours a day, 365 days a year and includes two crisis beds and other community-based supports. Anyone in the community can utilize this program's services, and it is not necessary to be associated with NCSS.

On March 25th the renaming dedication ceremony, from Bay View to the Tomlinson Center, took place via Zoom, with attendees from as far away as Texas.

Take a short video tour of this amazing program run by the Behavioral Health Services division.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1srMfrfj2kyPczzYHeM-Lfn_Mbt68uUaCI/view?ts=62348f60



Below:
Tomlinson Center Staff



MUSIC. SENSORY. COMMUNICATION.

That's exactly what Developmental Services (DS) clients can expect when they sign up for services through the Program for Adaptive and Expressive Arts (PAEA). Founded in 1999 under the moniker AMP, Adaptive Music Program, the program was later rebranded under its current name. This now 23-year-old program continues to grow and evolve to meet the needs of people who look forward to receiving the services from staff who work under this DS program.

PAEA Associate Pádraic "Pád" Smith said that the agency's Academy of Learning contains a sensory room, which clients with autism or other sensory processing disorders can use to regulate their stimulation levels. "Everything is put together for the individual," said Pád. "People become dysregulated, and sometimes, all they need is some hang-out-and-chill time." AOL's sensory room is equipped with weighted blankets, vests, and yokes; rigid, soft and basket swings, the latter of which makes the client feel like they are being held; and the room also comes equipped with therapy putty.

MUSIC. SENSORY. COMMUNICATION. *cont.*

Another focus of PAEA programming is communication – using alternative communication methods to help people who are nonverbal, Deaf, or who have encountered another disability or circumstance that prevents them from communicating verbally. Clients can use methods such as facilitated communication, where a trained facilitator uses an iPad to help the client to communicate using a digital keyboard.

PAEA Associate Tina Cross said that some behaviors are driven by communication. For Tina, to understand why someone is doing what they’re doing, it is imperative that clients are given the opportunity to discuss that. Since then, both Tina and PAEA Associate and service coordinator Marie Greenia have helped numerous clients learn to find their voices through FC, communication boards or other methods. “It brings tears to your eyes,” said Tina

about one of her clients. “People talked around him, but not to him.”



HEART (HELPING EVERYONE ACCESS RESOURCES AND THRIVE)

Supporting all families, from hospital to home

Program Purpose: The HEART Program is a universal home visiting program that seeks to mitigate the risk and impact of postpartum depression and related disorders in families. The program is offered to anyone in the region and uses a multi-generational approach to support the whole family, including the non-birthing partner. HEART providers help families increase their knowledge and access to community supports and services to build protective factors in families and decrease social isolation and exclusion. The program seeks to support family bonding and attachment which has positive, long-term impacts on child development, health, and wellness.

FY22 Program Highlights:

- Invited to do daily rounds at the local hospital birthing center
- Staff trained as Certified Lactation Educators
- Utilized data to demonstrate need for an additional full time employee to provide counseling
- Launched three groups:
 - MOM (Meeting Other Moms) Group
 - HEART Evolved for families transitioning out of services through a “step-down” model
 - Weekly Family Stroller Walk

- Hired a per-diem overnight postpartum doula
- Continued to support families who have experienced grief & loss in the perinatal period
- Connected with local OBGYN/Medical Offices to expand service delivery to community settings

HEART data for FY22

- # of Referrals:145
- # of Families Served:85
- # of Families Served by Counselors:53
- # of Families Served by Perinatal Specialists: 32
- % of Families Screened with Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale:95%
- % of Families with Improved Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scores at 6 months or discharge: ...94%

Client Success Story

“Client had been struggling since the birth of her second child. She had been experiencing suicidal thoughts, extreme anger outbursts, mood swings, and depressive symptoms. Client and HEART clinician identified and worked on the following goals: communication skills, self-care, coping skills, and developing an understanding of interpersonal relationship dynamics. She attended our

HEART (HELPING EVERYONE ACCESS RESOURCES AND THRIVE) *cont.*

M.O.M. support group and engaged in joint HEART therapy sessions with her partner. She was able to reduce her Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale score from a 14 to a 3 in about 6 months, and no longer reported SI or significant mood swings.”

“I recommend HEART to all of my friends with babies, it has been so helpful and literally changed the trajectory of my life!”

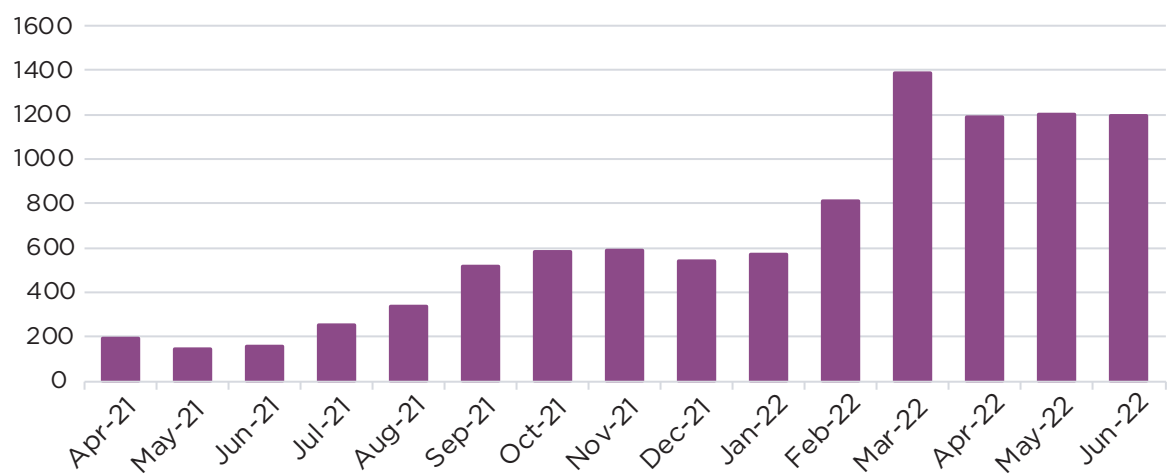
NORTHWESTERN
COUNSELING
& SUPPORT SERVICES
Parent Child Center



DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES ADDRESSES ISOLATION OF PEOPLE SERVED **Group Community support hours**

Isolation impacted many of those served in Developmental Services with many begging to pair up with their friends out in the community and/or to come back to the Academy of Learning (AOL). The chart below shows an increase in Group Community Support hours. You can see slow growth at the start of the fiscal year and then a steep spike in February and March as the Academy of Learning reopened. Also included is the last quarter of FY21 as it shows a more marked increase and reflects the impact of the pandemic.

DS Group Community Support Hours



Hearing the voices of people served we brought back the Academy of Learning and in person Program for Adaptive & Expressive Arts music sessions. Within the first month of AOL being open a staff member stated, “It has a great vibe and we’re getting lots of positive feedback from clients”. One client remarked, “I loved being at the AOL!”. Clients said it’s so nice to be back out in the community with their friends.



NCSS BRINGS MENTAL HEALTH TO HOMES, SCHOOLS, COMMUNITIES IN ISLANDS

by Michelle Monroe, Islander Staff

SOUTH HERO - Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (NCSS) provides assistance to Grand Isle and Franklin County residents struggling with a wide variety of mental health issues, as well as intellectual disabilities. Yet much of the agency's work is invisible.

"People think of mental health as you go into an office," said NCSS executive director Todd Bauman. But only 8 percent of the services provided by NCSS clinicians and staff take place in a traditional setting. The other 92 percent is offered in homes, schools, doctor's offices and the community.

By taking services out of their offices and into the community, NCSS makes it easier for people to receive those services, according to Bauman. "Access is one of our key priorities."

NCSS clinicians can also be found at the Northern Tier Center for Health (NOTCH) clinic in Alburgh, the Alburgh school, and accompanying a Vermont State Police K9 unit serving Northwestern Vermont.

The agency has long had a good relationship with the Grand Isle Sheriff's Office, Bauman said, with the sheriff's K9 unit and the K9 unit with the embedded clinician often working together.

Much of NCSS's work in the Islands is with young children and their families through an early childhood intervention program that sends NCSS staff into their homes. Often, those staff

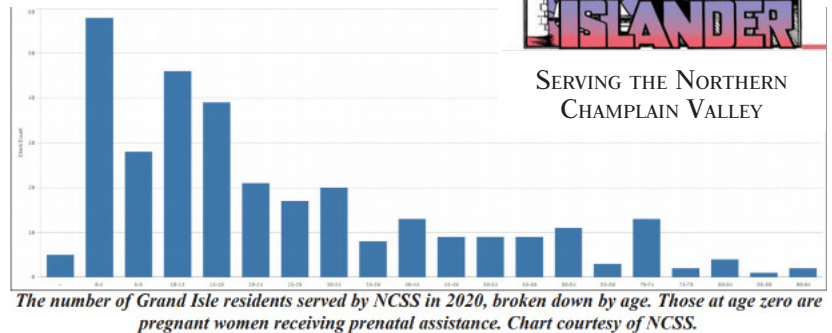
are working with the school or a preschool as well as parents to make sure the children hit key developmental milestones, Bauman explained. That work frequently includes teaching parents skills such as how to play with their child in ways that promote the child's development.

Diapers and other supplies may be provided through NCSS's Family Center. NCSS recently received a grant through Dolly Parton's foundation to provide books to 650 families in Franklin and Grand Isle counties.

COVID-19 has increased the number of parents calling NCSS for support for their children. "We're seeing an influx of calls," Bauman said.

Being away from other kids during the pandemic has placed a strain on kids while hindering their ability to develop crucial language and social skills, he explained.

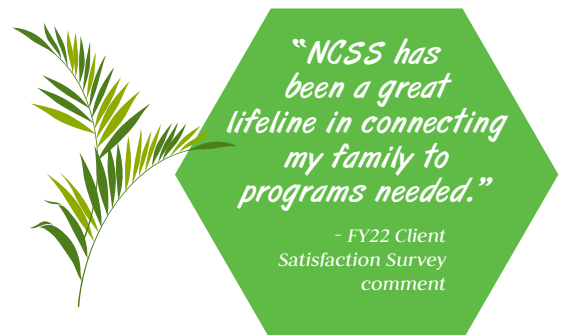
As seen in



A TRUE SUCCESS STORY

The Developmental Services Employment Team has been working closely with our state partners from HireAbility to support a young man as he transitions into the workforce. Despite significant disruptions due to COVID, they worked with VSAC to secure a grant, which allowed him to complete his course work and obtain his Welding Certification. They then worked with local businesses to help him get a job as a temporary employee. The employer was so impressed with his skills and attitude that, his job has now been changed to permanent status. Our partners shared how much they appreciate our flexibility and willingness to go the extra mile to help those we serve.

Huge kudos to the DS Employment Team. This is just one example of how our NCSS team is making a difference in the lives of the people we serve.



'THESE ARE STUDENTS IN CRISIS': VERMONT EDUCATORS GRAPPLE WITH A SPIKE IN STUDENT MISBEHAVIOR

As seen in VT Digger. Includes quotes from Matt Habedank

So, for many Vermont students, the start of the fall semester six weeks ago represented the first time in roughly a year and a half that they had attended fully in-person classes.

That transition meant that students could no longer keep to their own schedules, a change that was likely stressful for children who had grown used to their own routine, said Matthew Habedank, a program manager at Northwestern Counseling & Support Services.

"That sort of, 'I'm not on my own time schedule and I'm not on my own timeframe,' I think, impacts a lot of kids pretty significantly," Habedank, who focuses on children's behavior and works with a number of Vermont schools, said in an interview.

After a year where kids could "sign on and off at will" during remote learning, some are "really having a difficult time reengaging," he said.

The root cause of different students' behavioral concerns is likely "all over the board," Habedank said. But he noted that Covid-19 had deepened stresses throughout households: Many parents worried about keeping their jobs amid the economic fallout of the pandemic, and the pressures of whole families working and learning from home only compounded the situation.

"Whatever needs the kids were bringing to the table are being really compounded by the fact that there's not enough people to meet all the needs anyway," Habedank said.

Link to article:



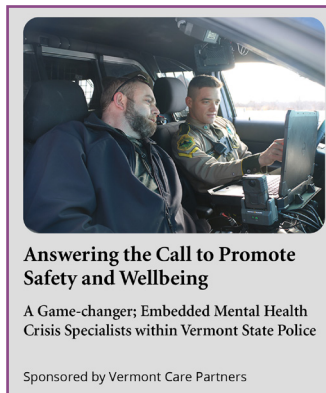
<https://vtdigger.org/2021/10/15/these-are-students-in-crisis-vermont-educators-grapple-with-a-spike-in-student-misbehavior/>



ANSWERING THE CALL TO PROMOTE SAFETY AND WELLBEING

A Game-changer; Embedded Mental Health Crisis Specialists within Vermont State Police

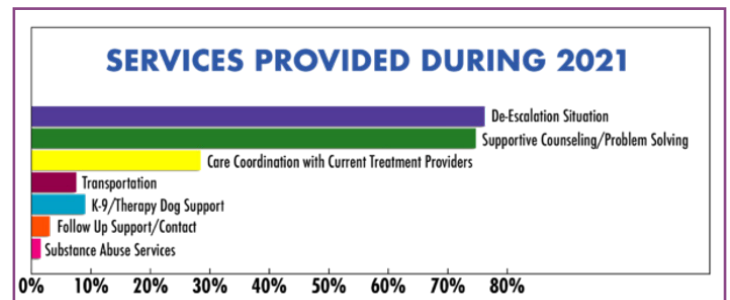
Every time people call the Vermont State Police, they are in some form of crisis – that's why they're calling. Now, innovative police social work teams are proactively intervening in crises to avoid unnecessary involvement of Vermonters in the criminal justice system; interrupt cycles of serious family, personal, and criminal problems; and improve mental wellbeing.



an individual exhibiting violent behavior to finally accept medical attention. The crisis situations require a varied number of services depending on circumstances, but the most important focus is on the individuals in crisis. Fortunately, Nic's skill set and his impact on the VSP is never-ending.

The graph indicates services that were provided by the NCSS mental health crisis specialist during 2021 ranging from de-escalation and supportive counseling/problem solving to care coordination with current treatment providers and even K-9 therapy dog support. Yes, a dog is an important member of this team...

Nicholas (Nic) Tebbetts, Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (NCSS) mental health crisis specialist accompanies Vermont State Police (VSP) from the St. Albans barracks on calls every day during his work week; everything from barricaded suicidal individuals to vehicle crashes. He has supported the VSP field force in situations ranging from responding to a kidnapping victim to spending several hours determining how to help



Demonstrating the Effectiveness of the Partnership

Todd Bauman, the Executive Director of NCSS observed, “We have found that having a Mental Health Crisis Specialist dedicated to a VSP Barracks accelerates the trust and connection where we can work together in more meaningful ways, ensure necessary services are initiated, respond to highly volatile situations to help facilitate a safe resolution, and support more immediate access to a mental health professional.” Since the embedded MHCS program began in 2016, NCSS reported that 45% of scene responses by the mental health crisis specialist resulted in mental health referrals and additional outreach services.

These initiatives are not just making Vermont communities safer, they are also supporting Vermonters in time of crisis find the support they need to achieve health and wellbeing. **Read more...**

[Link to entire article:](#)

https://vtdigger.org/sponsored_content/answering-the-call-to-promote-safety-and-wellbeing/



NCSS JOINS FORCES

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and Northeast Kingdom Human Services Partnerships

Since August 2019 NCSS has joined forces with the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline to help prevent suicide in Vermont.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) is a national network of local crisis centers who provide around the clock free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

Due to NCSS's active involvement in a range of suicide prevention initiatives, the Vermont Department of Mental Health urged our agency to meet Lifeline's rigorous standards and submit a competitive proposal. This ultimately resulted in NCSS becoming the first Vermont Designated Agency to be certified as a National Lifeline Call Center.

Our crisis responders have seen a dramatic increase in Lifeline call responses. In the first month of operation, NCSS answered 31 calls. As awareness and needs in the community have increased, so have the number of calls. As of October 2021, NCSS answered a total of 152 calls. These calls are more than a one-time conversation. Our team initiates follow-up calls, referrals and active rescue calls based on the needs of the situation.

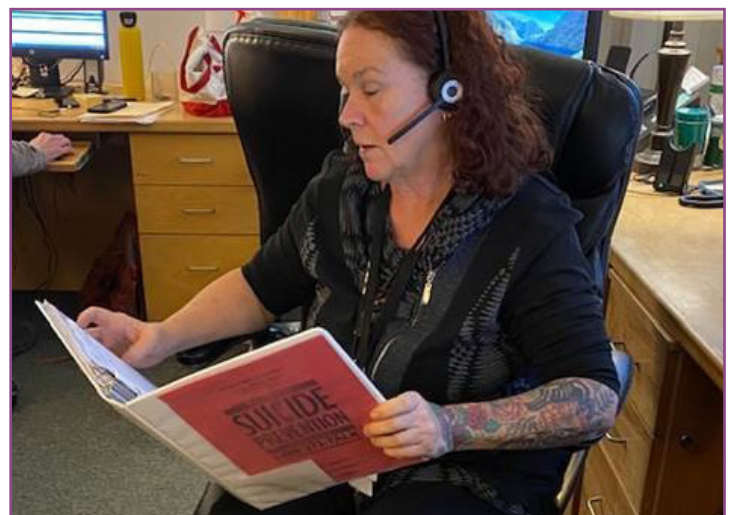
These calls can come to our agency from anyone with an (802) area code, regardless of where the person is physically located. So, it is not unusual to field calls from all over the country. At times, it has been necessary to initiate active rescues with first responders in states across the United States.

To ensure the best support possible, NCSS also maintains a close partnership with Northeast Kingdom Human Services (NKHS), Vermont's second certified Lifeline Center.

Together, the agencies collaborate to share best practices and data to ensure consistency and support for callers.

In July 2022, the already highly publicized National 3-digit number '988', will have another promotion. Call centers expect a large increase in call volume. NCSS will continue to expand as needed to meet this ever growing and definite need.

Throughout this community, and nation, NCSS will continue to provide support to end the rising numbers of suicide.



NCSS's Celine Blondel answering a call.

**NORTHWESTERN
COUNSELING
& SUPPORT SERVICES**
we're here for you

**NATIONAL
SUICIDE
PREVENTION
LIFELINE**
1-800-273-TALK
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

**NORTHEAST
KINGDOM
HUMAN
SERVICES**
We're all about being human.



NCSS and the Afterglow Foundation

Addressing suicide prevention and awareness



AFTERGLOW MUSIC FESTIVAL RETURNING TO ST. ALBANS AFTER PANDEMIC HIATUS *By Krystin Rae*

SAINT ALBANS TOWN, Vt. - Following a yearlong absence prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Afterglow music festival will return to St. Albans on Saturday.

The event was started in 2019 by the parents of AJ Holzscheiter, who died by suicide at 18 years old. It is now hosted annually on his birthday weekend – complete with music, food and activities.

“I think his legacy is a good reason we continue to do it,” said Andrea Wells, Holzscheiter’s mother.

All proceeds from the event will be donated to suicide prevention organizations, along with the St. Alban’s Recreation Department they said Holzscheiter enjoyed while growing up in the area.

“It’s doing something that will keep his memory alive and take his life, what happened to us, and try to make something good of it,” said John Holzscheiter, AJ’s father.

In an effort to help other families experiencing the same type of loss, this year’s festival will be dedicated to Avery Vaillancourt, an Enosburg native. The 19-year-old artist, environmentalist, and social advocate died by suicide last year.

Both young Vermonters would have celebrated their 21st birthday during the coming week.

“It’s an unfortunate bond that we have. It’s a club that none of us want to be in, but this kind of loss is very isolating,” said Avery’s mother, Judy Vaillancourt.

Vaillancourt said the Afterglow foundation has helped her grapple with the loss they all now share. For the family of AJ Holzscheiter, they describe building that type of community support as essential.

“Anyone that has lost someone to suicide, we welcome them to Afterglow to be a part of what we’re doing,” said John Holzscheiter.

Northwestern Counseling & Support Services, which operates out of St. Albans, said the family is also helping de-stigmatize the conversation around suicide.

“It brings this conversation to everyone in our community, so by being a part of the music festival you’re actually



Link to segment:

<https://www.mynbc5.com/article/afterglow-music-festival-returning-to-st-albans-after-pandemic-hiatus/37619173>

being a part of suicide prevention and intervention,” a spokesperson for the group said.

Tickets can be purchased at Hard’Ack recreational park in St. Albans the day of the event on Saturday, Sept. 18, or through an online portal.



“All staff have been very helpful especially being a first time mom. I felt confident I could not only confide but also get tips.”

- FY22 Client
Satisfaction Survey
comment



NCSS and the Afterglow Foundation

Addressing suicide prevention and awareness



AFTERGLOW CONCERT DRAWS 1,500+ CROWD IN MISSION OF SUICIDE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION *By Josh Ellerbrock, St. Albans Messenger*

ST. ALBANS — Just after sunset Saturday, the sky swelled with shades of pink, purple and orange, and the crowds at Hard'Ack Recreation Area danced under the afterglow.

With more than 1,500 people surrounding them, A.J. Holzscheiter's family members were grateful — for the community, for its support and for the weather.

“Even if it did rain, we'd have been happy with the turnout,” Don Wells, husband of A.J.'s mother Andrea Wells, said.

“A.J. pulled a miracle,” John Holzscheiter, A.J.'s father, said.

This past Saturday, Sept. 18, the Afterglow benefit concert returned for its second iteration after organizers canceled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year featured live music, food trucks and plenty of dancing throughout the day and early evening in honor of A.J., who died of suicide in 2018.



“We weren't going to lose A.J. and let him fade away,” Holzscheiter said. “That's what started the idea of Afterglow. Let's do a benefit concert.”

Event proceeds go towards Northwestern Counseling & Support Services, the Vermont chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, as well as the St. Albans Recreation Department and Hard'Ack Recreation Area.

In 2019, the concert raised \$27,000 for the organizations. If the crowds were any indication, this year's event was expected to pull in even more.

While music played a large part throughout day, organizers also took the time to raise awareness of suicide in order to prevent such tragedies in the future. In between



sets, NCSS mental health professionals Tom Murphy and Tony Stevens laid out some of the basics of how to engage with people on the difficult subject.

“The more we can talk about it, the more people are comfortable reaching out,” Lance Metayer, NCSS team leader of school-based clinical services, said.

Two to three die by suicide per week in Vermont, according to Vermont Suicide Prevention Center statistics. The organization recommends that people be informed, open and direct when talking about suicide in order to help people better connect with the support they need and allow loved ones to recognize critical warning signs.

Valerie Pallotta, co-director of the Josh Pallotta Fund, also emphasized the need for community-wide support, which was exemplified by the more than 1,000 people who sat on the slopes of Hard'Ack Saturday night.

“We need to focus on stuff like this. Awareness is one thing, but it helps to have things like this,” she said on stage as Holzscheiter stood next to her under the early evening sky. “Let's build programs to prevent [suicide] where they don't even have the thought.”



NCSS and the Afterglow Foundation

Addressing suicide prevention and awareness



HOW NCSS IS USING AFTERGLOW DONATIONS TO REACH YOUTH, ADULTS

By Bridget Higdon, St. Albans Messenger



ST. ALBANS — Across the nation, September is recognized as Suicide Prevention Month, but for Northwestern Counseling and Support Services, every day is a good day to raise awareness.

“As an organization, we try to highlight this each and every month in some fashion,” Joe Halko, NCSS’ director of community relations, told the Messenger on Sept. 23.

In 2019, a \$15,000 donation from the Afterglow Foundation, a nonprofit founded by St. Albans residents John Holzscheiter and Andrea Wells, helped NCSS in this mission. Another donation is expected later this year, following Afterglow’s well-attended charity music festival on Sept. 18.

Dr. Steve Broer, director of NCSS’ Behavioral Health Services, told the Messenger an Afterglow committee — made up of NCSS staff as well as a youth and an adult with lived experiences — helps determine how the funds are used.

“I think one of the things that’s nice about Afterglow is that we’ve been told by the family to just be creative with how we address this,” he said.

Teaching and targeting youth

In the last two years, some of the funds from Afterglow have been used to offer free Teen and Youth Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training in Franklin County schools.

NCSS has reached a combined total of 150 students between Richford, BFA-St. Albans and BFA-Fairfax with its Teen MHFA training, according to Lance Metayer, a team leader at NCSS.

The interactive program teaches high schoolers how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders among their friends and peers.

“One of the things that we are very aware of...is the number of individuals who are so young, who are feeling really sad and depressed,” Halko said. “Teen Mental Health First Aid is an effort to try to raise awareness on early warning signs and what the various resources are that are available.”

Every other year, the Vermont Department of Health and the Vermont Agency of Education sponsor the Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The most recent survey, conducted in 2019, showed that 31% of Franklin County high school students felt sad or hopeless almost every day for at least a two week period.

In 2009, that number was 21%, a difference that Halko said is significant for a ten-year period.

“There’s just a lot of these pressure points...social media, bullying...that kids are dealing with that they didn’t have 10, 20 years ago,” he said.

Reaching medical and athletic professionals

Broer said the committee is currently looking at how it can use funds to expand the training it provides to people in the medical community.

For example, earlier this year, NCSS provided MHFA training to staff at Northwestern Medical Center.

“We are working with them on some workflows around how we can all work together in identifying youth who might be at risk, particularly after a life-altering medical injury,” Broer said.

HOW NCSS IS USING AFTERGLOW DONATIONS TO REACH YOUTH, ADULTS *cont.*



NCSS has also worked this year with counselors at Swanton NOTCH, paraeducators at BFA-St. Albans and health care workers at Rutland Hospital, according to Metayer.

Ideas of an in-person forum, directed at athletic directors, trainers and physical therapists, are also being formed. Halko said this was a project that was derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but is still a priority.

Reducing stigma

The main goal of all of NCSS' programs – whether they be for youth, adults, health care professionals or educators – is reducing stigma.

"I always like to say, somebody who's broken their arm will talk all day long perhaps about what they did, but boy, the minute you bring up mental health, people dive under the table," Halko said. "They say, 'It doesn't happen

here.' Yet we know one in five people seek treatment for mental health disorders."

While people are still not talking about mental health as openly as NCSS would like, staff is seeing a slow wearing away of that stigma.

In fact, in the last year, NCSS has seen an increase in demand for services, Broer said. More people in Franklin and Grand Isle Counties are seeking support, whether that be through scheduled appointments or calls to the Vermont extension of the National Suicide Lifeline, which for 40 hours a week is answered by dispatchers at NCSS.

"I've got to say, we've been very busy," Broer said. "Obviously we're here for people who are at risk of suicide, but also folks who are feeling really isolated and don't know where to turn."



NCSS BUDDY WALK

During October 2021, the 12th annual Buddy Walk organized by NCSS took place using a different format. Following the cancelation last year, due to COVID. With Safety as our number 1 value, we decided to go virtual with our walk. Participants had the entire month to walk while raising funds and raising awareness of individuals diagnosed with down syndrome.



REACHING OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY

Teen Mental Health First Aid training

Holly Branon and Lance Metayer provided a teen Mental Health First Aid training for Bellows Free Academy and Northwest Career & Technical Center students, (Medical Career, Human Services, and Cosmetology) on March 30th. Twenty-four students participated in the training which was held in the Mable Room. Students were trained in recognizing the early warning signs of a peer struggling with a mental health challenge, how to recognize the warning signs of suicide, and discussed how to create and a positive culture around mental wellness.



NCSS BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PROGRAM BENEFITS FROM RUNNING OF THE BELLS

NCSS proceeds of \$1,000 directed towards assisting with Behavior Intervention in the Maple Run Union School District

NCSS Behavioral Intervention Program

At the core of the program is a Behavior Interventionist (BI) who provides the direct service to the student in the school setting. The term Behavior Interventionist (BI) is used to describe mental health staff who provide 1:1 or small group assistance to students struggling with an emotional disability in a classroom or school setting. The BI is supported with a team of clinical professionals, including a clinical supervisor and Behavior Specialist. The Program services are individualized to the student's mental health and behavioral needs to help the student access his/her/their academics. The BI Program includes clinical training and supervision of the BI, initial and ongoing assessment by clinical professionals, and behavior interventions that are grounded in the assessment and behavior support plan.



AN AUTISM WALK TO REMEMBER

After 2 years of cancelled events and creative ways to keep people connected, the NCSS Autism Walk 2022 took place in person and was a success! The event was held on Sunday, June 7th at Collins Perley Sports & Fitness Center in Saint Albans. It was a beautiful sunny day, and participants came out to celebrate Autism Acceptance and Awareness in our community! A huge thank you to our Event Sponsor, KBS, plus, all of the sponsors and vendors who made the event even better! It was great to see the smiling faces of the kid's painting rocks, dancing to music, playing in the bouncy house and taking silly pictures in the photo booth. Being together for this event was invaluable and we are looking forward to many more in the years to come!



And of course, a huge thank you to all our volunteers from multiple teams across the agency who helped to set up, run stations and clean up after the walk!



THE RETURN OF THE COMMUNITY PARTNERS CLASSIC

The Community Partners Classic Golf Tournament is a great way to interact with the community in friendly competition. This tournament is a collaborative effort between two prominent non-profit organizations, Northwestern Counseling & Support Services and Northwestern Medical Center. After a 2-year hiatus, the Golf Tournament came back for the 14th year during June.



The event allows employees to engage with community members and participate as volunteers. Volunteers served up hot dogs, were witnesses for various competitions, and helped set up and tear down and more. This year, NCSS had 56 volunteers helping at the event!



This year the NCSS portion of the net revenues raised will be earmarked to assist with the renovations at the Soar Learning Center.



Presentations to Rotary Club of St. Albans

During Mental Health Awareness Month, NCSS' Ed Riddell spoke to the Rotary Club of St. Albans about the Developmental Services division's Emergency Services program which serves individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

In June, Tim Stanley and Sarah Kenny presented on the value of the NCSS Soar Learning Center as an alternative education and day treatment program for students K-12.

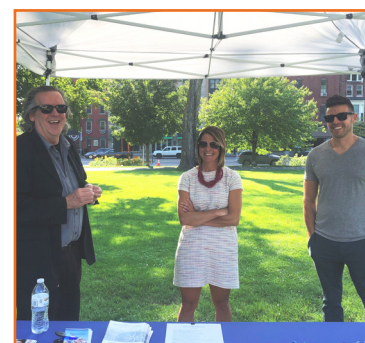


Some examples of NCSS community collaboration:

Abenaki Culture & Wellness Fair June 25, 2022



National Night Out August 2021





CELEBRATING STAFF



THE POWER OF ADVOCATING

Our Legislature finalized the State's Fiscal Year 2023 budget in what was an unrepresented year for the Mental Health Designated Agency system of care. Thanks to great advocacy from our agency Directors, Program Managers, Team Leaders, Legislative Committee, and many of you, our voices were heard.

The Legislature is clear about the importance of our services and the value we bring to the people we serve. They have also heard our stories highlighting the need for adequate funding.

"I appreciate those of you who have talked with me about your personal experiences... both the pride you have shared from your successes, as well as the incredible challenges you have faced. I know the challenges are felt here at work as well as at home." -Todd Bauman

It's important to continually reach out to our local State Legislators and let them know how important our work is, and the critical need for adequate funding. Also, thank them for all their efforts during the past legislative session. The FY23 budget was a positive step for our system of care.



CHITTENDEN EARLY INTERVENTION TEAM

Early Intervention is a family-centered system of early intervention, service coordination, developmental education, information, resources and supports for families who have a child, age birth to three, at risk of or experiencing delays in development and/or special health needs. As the Early Intervention program provider for Franklin & Grand Isle Counties, the Parent Child Center of NCSS has demonstrated the experience, resources, and knowledge to effectively support a robust program in Chittenden County.

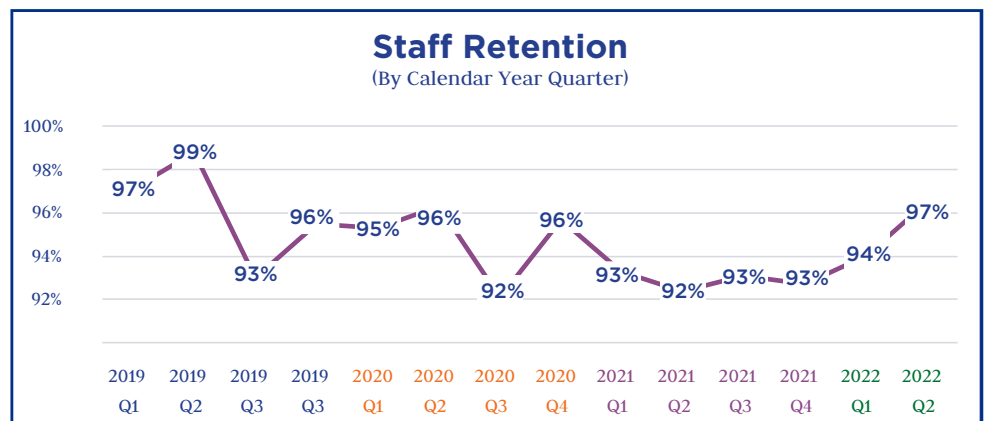


The Parent Child Center of NCSS Chittenden Early Intervention Team



STAFF RETENTION REBOUNDS

The pandemic was a major contributor to the decline in staff retention. However, the rate at the close of FY22 achieved a pre-pandemic level of 97%.



CRT TEAM CELEBRATES HITTING GOAL TO INCREASE CLIENT SERVICES IN JUNE

The Community & Rehabilitation Treatment (CRT) Team set a goal of increasing client engagement and reached it with great success... ice cream celebration it is!

The team had identified ways to support staff and strategies to engage clients as we continue to strive towards our NCSS mission "To ensure that the residents of Franklin and Grand Isle Counties have access to high quality services, which promote healthy living and emotional well-being."

Given challenges with COVID and many of the persons we serve not wanting Zoom or phone contacts, it was difficult to provide the level of services we typically provided. After experimenting with a range of alternatives and learning from others on how to meet needs differently, staff were able to demonstrate a steady increase in the percentage of services to the persons

we serve. The team achieved a 5% average monthly increase over the past 6 months of fiscal 2022.



A BBQ TO REMEMBER

The NCSS Annual BBQ during August 2021 was a special event! A great deal of team spirit was exhibited throughout the day.

The creativity was flowing, with teams dressed up as everything from Scrabble letters to a box of colorful crayons to our very own Camp Rainbow! Everyone looked amazing but one team stood out among the rest.

Congratulations to Snow White and her dwarfs, or as we like to call them: The Early Intervention Team! They went home with first prize!

Beyond the team spirit, the NCSS family enjoyed good food, good laughs, good company and even lawn games! We can't wait to see everyone again next year!



RAIN OR SHINE: VERMONT CORPORATE CUP

May 19th proved to be the rainy endcap to a beautiful week of sunny weather! As the day progressed, the weather looked all the less promising, yet our runners and walkers prevailed! At this year's Vermont Corporate Cup, NCSS had 12 representatives - all of which crossed the finish line in style!

The Vermont Corporate Cup Challenge and State Agency Race is a 5-kilometer team running/walking event open to businesses, government and non-profit organizations in Vermont.

The purpose of this event is to promote physical fitness within the workplace and at home by bringing employees together to enjoy and experience the benefits of fitness.



14TH ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL

On May 5th the Behavioral Health Division held the 14th annual Ice Cream Social. It was a beautiful day filled with laughter, smiles, and LOTS of ice cream! Members of the BH division stood behind the row of ice cream to help serve the agency. While fun was the main priority, safety was certainly taken into consideration.

Accompanying the vast variety of flavors, hot fudge and toppings was Andy Patterson on the guitar providing live music. After 2 years of postponement, it was a great event to bring the agency together as a whole! They also raffled off Downtown Dollar gift cards to 20 winning employees!

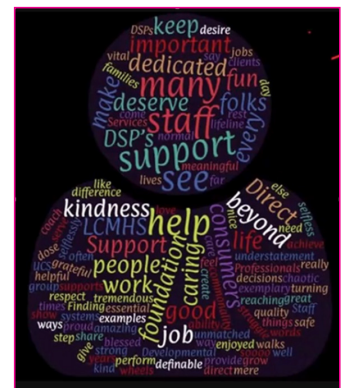


RECOGNITION & AWARDS

GOVERNOR SCOTT SIGNS PROCLAMATION RECOGNIZING DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

Monica White, DAIL Commissioner, read a proclamation signed by Governor Scott establishing September 12-18, 2021 as Direct Support Professional (DSP) Week. In that proclamation he highlighted the incredible value of DSPs in our system and most importantly in the lives of those we serve. You can find that proclamation here:

<https://governor.vermont.gov/sites/scott/files/documents/21-101%20Direct%20Support%20Professionals%20Recognition%20Week.pdf>



ABENAKI RECOGNITION AND HERITAGE WEEK

On April 29th, 2022, Governor Phil Scott proclaimed that the first week in May would be known as Abenaki Recognition and Heritage Week. This provides an opportunity to celebrate the many contributions of the Abenaki to present-day Vermont.

The Abenaki communities successfully gained recognition as Native American Indian tribes in 2010. There are now four State-recognized Native American Indian tribes in Vermont: the Elnu Abenaki tribe, the Nulhegan band of Coosuk Abenaki Nation, the Koasek Abenai of the Koas and the Missisquoi, St. Francis-Sokoki band.

The NCSS Diversity & Cultural Awareness Committee has provided two trainings on the Abenaki community, staff

can watch the recorded version located on the on-line Relias Course Library. The trainings are:

- Abenaki Creation Story, Language and Culture (Jesse Bowman)



- Abenaki Series: History of Abenaki in Vermont, Sovereignty and Recognition (Chief Don Stevens).



AFTERGLOW FOUNDATION PRESENTS CHECKS TO NCSS, ST. ALBANS RECREATION, JOSH'S HOUSE AND THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

By Bridget Higdon, Community Editor

Excerpts from article:

ST. ALBANS CITY – The money hundreds of community members spent on tickets to a memorable music festival last month is now in the hands of local groups working to prevent suicide.

St. Albans Recreation, the Vermont Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) and Josh's House each received checks for \$5,000. The majority of this year's funds – \$35,000 – went to Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (NCSS).

"We do a lot of things, but donations like this allow us to focus it all around a unified goal," Todd Bauman, executive director at NCSS told the Messenger.

How organizations will use the donation

With the \$15,000 it received in 2019, NCSS implemented many of these types of programs in Franklin County schools. Now with an additional \$35,000, it can extend its reach even further, Dr. Steve Broer, NCSS' Behavioral Health Services director, told the Messenger.

"We hope to facilitate trainings with occupational therapists, athletic trainers and coaches," he said.



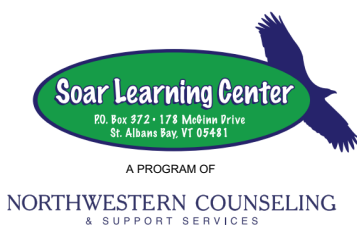
Afterglow's board of directors, John Holzscheiter, Andrea Wells, Don Wells, Debbie Babbie, Geri Barrows and Kelly Viens, stand with Joe Halko, Steve Broer, Todd Bauman, Tony Stevens and Lance Metayer from NCSS during a check presentation on Oct. 26.

Link to entire article:

https://www.samesessenger.com/news/community/afterglow-foundation-presents-checks-to-ncss-st-albans-recreation-josh-s-house-and-the-american/article_25d-6f5b8-3726-11ec-9c67-3b9b367f0a46.html



CRUSHING THE STOCK MARKET



Excitement roared through the halls at the Soar Learning Center! A team of students in Mike Nelson's high school math class, has won the Stock Market Game – for a SECOND TIME!

The Stock Market Game is a virtual experience that connects students across the country to the global economy in a nation-wide competition. Each student competes to grow their portfolio over the course of a school year. The program builds a fundamental understanding of investing while providing students with real world skills and practice in math, English language arts, economics, social studies, and other subjects.

This is a HUGE accomplishment! Congratulations to the students who have proved to be reigning champions!

Special KUDOS to Mike Nelson and the team at SOAR who aided in this great success!

"The agency has been instrumental in improving my daughter's quality of life as well as her education."

- FY22 Client
Satisfaction Survey
comment



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS COUNCIL 297 DONATES TO NORTHWESTERN COUNSELING & SUPPORT SERVICES

ST. ALBANS — The Knights of Columbus Council 297 (KofC) presented a check for \$3,186.40 to Camp Rainbow at Northwestern Counseling & Support Services.

This very generous donation is the result of their Drive for People with Intellectual Disabilities, also known locally as the Tootsie Roll Drive, to benefit children with special needs. Camp Rainbow creates an exciting summer camp experience for children with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder or other Developmental Disability.

“We’re very grateful for the continued support provided by the Knights of Columbus Council 297,” Todd Bauman, NCSS executive director, said. “These funds help to ensure that children with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder or other Developmental Disability can experience this camp that’s designed to meet their needs.”

Link to entire press release:

https://www.samesessenger.com/news/community/knights-of-columbus-council-297-donates-to-northwestern-counseling-and-support-services/article_1f6aa4e2-98ef-11ec-81f2-079643b36ebf.html?utm_source=samesessenger.com&utm_campaign=%2Fnewsletter%2Foptimize%2Fto-day%2F3F-dc%3D1646132405&utm_medium=email&utm_content=headline



Guard Jonathon Quick, Grand Knight Valdemar Garibay, Camp Rainbow Coordinator Merry Hill, Warden Gordon McRae (holding check), Larry Dugan, Deputy Grand Knight Bill Greenwood, NCSS Executive Director Todd Bauman, and NCSS Applied Behavior Services Team Leader April Brooks.



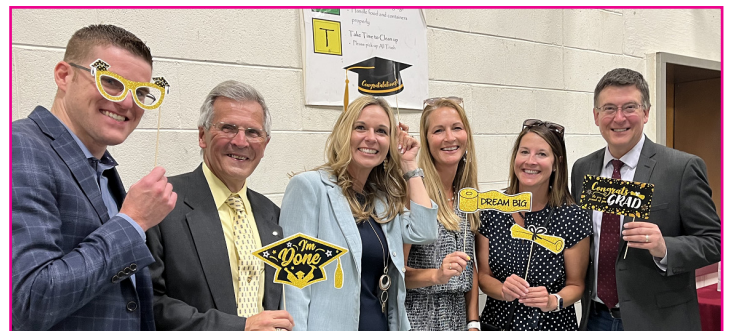
Some of the NCSS Staff in support of Camp Rainbow

CONGRATS TO THE SOAR LEARNING CENTER CLASS OF 2022!

Graduation is a time to celebrate the accomplishments made during the previous school year, and to look ahead at the possibilities the future holds. At the Soar graduation ceremony, many people from across the agency, and the community, came together to celebrate the students of Soar. Three students received their high-school diploma and a fourth student was honored by graduating from middle school and transitioning to high school next year.

The students are clearly incredibly proud of their accomplishments and deserve the attention and recognition for their hard work and resiliency. What is also truly amazing about this event, is not only are the students proud, but so are the moms, dads, grandparents, siblings, staff, friends, and board members! The support each student receives is unmatched. It is truly a testament to the dedication of the Soar staff. The past few years have

presented many unforeseen challenges, that have been handled with grace and with kindness. Your efforts do not go overlooked.



Left to right: Derek Hoy (CFO), Jim McMillan (Board President), Angela Poirier (Board Treasurer), Stacey Remillard (Director of HR), Danielle Mitchell (Director of CYF), Todd Bauman (CEO).

NCSS 2021 ANNUAL AWARDS

NCSS honored individuals that make a difference at the FY2021 Annual Meeting & Recognition Night which due to the pandemic was held, via Zoom, on November 3, 2021. NCSS' purpose statement is 'Creating a stronger community, one person at a time.' Each of our award recipients exemplifies this spirit.

Marcheta Townsend Community Partner Award

Marcheta Townsend Community Partner Award honors individuals from outside the organization who collaborate with NCSS to ensure success.

Mikayla has been a home provider for many years. Shared living is a type of individualized home-based supportive living that is a necessity for people with developmental disabilities. It's a flexible avenue of support that can meet a variety of specialized needs for vulnerable individuals, which honors the consumers choice, their safety, relationships, desired location and community wants/needs. Home providers typically have twenty-four hour a day/seven day a week responsibility for the individuals who live with them. Home providers are not employees of NCSS.



Mikayla Maskell
Home provider

Partner in Excellence Awards

The Partner in Excellence Award which is intended to be the highest honor the organization can give to one of our employees, for it recognizes staff that are in the top 1% in the organization. These employees exemplify the NCSS values of Safety, Responsiveness, Compassion and Integrity. In addition, they have made a major contribution to a client, to the organization or to the community at large.



John LeBlanc
Interactive Community Advocate
Developmental Services Division

Award presented by
Kasey Carpenter



Amanda Snyder (on right)
Early Childhood & Perinatal Systems Specialist
Children, Youth & Family Division

Award presented by
Danielle Mitchell



ROTARY CLUB OF ST. ALBANS DONATION TO KID'S CAMP RAINBOW



Rotarians Valdemar Garibay and Karyn Rocheleau present check to Merry Hill and April Brooks

"Thank you so much for all you do. The help I've received has made a huge difference on my mental health and my family."

- FY22 Client Satisfaction Survey comment

NIC TEBBETTS RECEIVES TEAM TWO FRANK SILFIES AWARD

Awarded annually to a law enforcement/mental health crisis worker who exemplifies working collaboratively in responding to mental health crises.

Team Two provides statewide training to mental health crisis workers, law enforcement and other first responders, thanks to a collaboration between the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Department of Public Safety to provide funding. Currently, 35 law enforcement and mental health crisis workers train their peers in the Team Two curriculum in five regions around the state. Participants include dispatchers, law enforcement officers, mental health crisis workers, EMTs, State's Attorneys and emergency department personnel. Team Two coordinator Kristin Chandler organizes the teams and the trainings and acts as a facilitator at each of the trainings. The grant is overseen by Vermont Care Partners.

Team Two has been recognized nationally for its innovative training model where so many disciplines are brought together to train together.



Kristin Chandler presents the award to Nic Tebbetts.



CRT CELEBRATES NURSING TEAM

During the spring, the Community Rehabilitation & Treatment (CRT) Team gave the Nursing Team a “basket of self-care” as a thank you for their dedication and compassion. In addition to the hot chocolate, Clorox wipes, seltzer, candy, mugs, and peppermint patties, there was an envelope full of NCSS Impact Cards.

This display of generosity both honors our Nursing Team who have been instrumental to our agency as we continued navigating the pandemic and highlights how our CRT Team took the time to reach out and support another team. Another great example of how we can continue to look out for each other.



Representatives of CRT and Nursing Teams celebrate keeping staff and clients safe.

EXCELLENCE IN WORKSITE WELLNESS

NCSS was awarded the 2022 Governor's Excellence in Worksite Wellness – GOLD Level Award from the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports and the Vermont Department of Health. This award is symbolic of the agency's commitment to the health and wellbeing of our employees. Huge kudos to the NCSS HR Team and the WE Committee (Employee Engagement and Wellness).



NCSS WE Committee members Lexie Benware, Jessica Branon, Shawna Shappy, and Jeff Clark with Dr. Mark Levine.

NORTHWESTERN COUNSELING

& SUPPORT SERVICES

we're here for you



*A GREAT
PLACE TO WORK,
a great place to
receive care.*



[LEARN MORE](https://www.ncssinc.org)

about our services at
www.ncssinc.org

OUR OFFICE LOCATIONS

MAIN OFFICE

107 Fisher Pond Road
St. Albans | 524-6554

TED MABLE FAMILY CENTER

130 Fisher Pond Road
St. Albans | 524-6554

SOAR LEARNING CENTER

178 McGinn Drive
St. Albans Bay | 527-7514

APPLIED BEHAVIOR CENTER

12 Houghton Street
St. Albans | 393-6643

ACADEMY OF LEARNING

27 Lower Newton Street
St. Albans | 782-8694

MAPLEVILLE DEPOT

20 Mapleville Depot
St. Albans | 524-6554

TOMLINSON CENTER

48 Lower Newton Street
St. Albans

LUND FAMILY CENTER

50 Joy Drive
South Burlington

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS AND MORE!



United Way of
Northwest Vermont
FUNDED AGENCY



NCSS is a member of the Vermont Care Partners statewide network of sixteen non-profit, community-based agencies providing mental health, substance use and intellectual and developmental disability support.

