

**We are here
for you.**



Annual Report 2019-2020

Building a stronger community since 1958.

We are here for you: Building a stronger community

by empowering individuals and families
to live healthy and meaningful lives.

Dear Friends,

This has been a year of change; change that was self-directed and change that was thrust upon us as a response to the rapid spread of the coronavirus. This virus has had repercussions on daily life that we have never seen before. Throughout the pandemic, we have been reminded, once again, what an incredible organization we have—one that is **driven by a common purpose to do the right thing for our clients, our community and for each other.**



I am proud to present to you our annual report as we remember a time before COVID and honor those who worked through the pandemic fearlessly, fiercely and with grace. I have been humbled by our staff, who provide **innovative and responsive programming** to those who need us. Staff who worked in our 24/7 group homes **providing care to our most vulnerable** knowing there was a potential for exposure to COVID-19; staff who very quickly and efficiently moved to remote work to ensure that the bills were paid, new staff were hired and appointments were scheduled; clinicians who learned, on the fly, how to make telehealth and telephonic counseling work for our clients; and crisis workers who continued to provide in-person services to those in a mental health crisis.

I am so honored to work with the staff, who make UCS exceptional. Their **flexibility and creativity in providing needed services** throughout the year—and specifically during this pandemic—are a sign that, out of this crisis, an even better model will emerge.

We do not desire to simply return back to the way things were. We desire to continue to **grow, innovate and be more accessible**, convenient, and prepared.

We are here for you.

—Lorna Mattern, Executive Director



Dear Friends of UCS,

Having had the privilege of serving on this Board for many years, it appeared to me that 2020 had begun like most other years for the staff, management team, and board of directors. Staff were busy providing services to clients, the management team was working away on the continued implementation of transformational change (in addition to carrying out their routine duties), and the board was having regular meetings, hearing about Payment Reform concerns, the new electronic medical records system, and plans for a new Head Start building.

Then came March.

Overnight, the world as we knew it changed—and for many of us, life came to a screeching halt. But not at UCS. Management immediately worked out and implemented a plan to ensure that essential services continued, and that our clients and community would be provided for.

With overwhelming gratitude, the Board of Directors sincerely thanks every staff member who has provided services, supported their colleagues, and worked with community partners to continue to provide much needed supports.

As we move forward still not knowing what our “new normal” will look like and for how long, UCS staff and leadership continue to put processes in place to ensure that our community will be served in the safest way possible while providing necessary care.

We are here for you!

—Robert W. Thompson, President of the Board



UCS is proud to be part of Vermont Care Partners

Vermont Care Partners is a network of sixteen agencies that provide mental health, substance use disorder, and developmental disability services and supports in every community in Vermont.

In the midst of the pandemic, VCP agencies provided treatment with clients using new technologies, collaborating with partners, and finding ways to get Vermonters the supports they need. VCP health care agencies are reshaping the ways that Vermonters stay well. More information is available at vermontcarepartners.org.

Board of Directors

Robert Thompson, *President*
 Charles Letourneau, *Vice President*
 Nathaniel Marcoux, *Treasurer*
 William Baldwin, *Secretary*
 Joseph O’Dea, *Counsel to the Board*
 David Ballou
 Kristi Cross
 Joanna Mintzer
 Stephanie Mulligan
 Lee Romano



UCS Board, L to R: Nathaniel Marcoux, Charles Letourneau, David Ballou, Joanna Mintzer, Kristi Cross, William Baldwin, Robert Thompson, Joseph O’Dea, Lee Romano. **Not pictured:** Stephanie Mulligan

Board welcomed Stephanie Mulligan

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



Stephanie Mulligan joined the UCS board in the summer of 2020. She is a graduate of the University of Vermont with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting. Following graduation, she worked for a private CPA firm in Latham, New York specializing in personal and small business taxes, then returned to Vermont and Crossroads Accounting in Bennington. In 2013 she became the Business Manager of the Career Development Center (also in Bennington), overseeing budget development and Human Resources. In 2019 she was appointed Finance Director at MSK and Goldstone Architects.

“UCS serves the ongoing needs that individuals and families experience,” comments Stephanie. “The organization is very important to the health and welfare of this community, and I look forward to helping the organization as a board member as it moves forward during these challenging times.”

Stephanie has served on the boards of the Bennington Early Childhood Center and Southwest Vermont Union Elementary School District, where she currently serves as Treasurer. She lives in Shaftsbury with her husband and two children, and enjoys hiking and spending time with her family.

Senior Leadership Team

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

Lorna Mattern, *Executive Director*
 Leslie Addison, *Human Resources*
 Dawn Danner, *Developmental Services*
 Jill Doyle, *Finance*
 Amy Fela, *Operations*
 Heidi French, *Community Relations and Development*
 Penny Galusha, *Executive Assistant*
 Julie Pagliccia, *Youth and Family Services, Northshire Services*
 Betsy Rathbun-Gunn, *Early Childhood Services*
 Alya Reeve, MD, *Medical Director, Emergency Services*
 Lori Vadakin, *Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Use*



Leadership with accountability: Division Directors presented program outcomes to managers and supervisors at a half-day retreat.

We are here for you, Providing programs and services

that support thousands of Bennington County residents
and a host of local organizations.

1,133

Individuals Supported

Outpatient Mental Health

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

Substance Abuse Programs

- Alcohol and drug abuse counseling and education
- Substance abuse receiving center
- Assessment for and facilitation of detox or residential services
- Consultation to agencies and schools
- Community outreach

337

Individuals Supported



179

Individuals Supported

Community Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT)

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



Developmental Services

- Residential services
- Community support services
- Family support services
- Employment services
- Crisis services
- College Steps Program
- The Gathering Place at Camp Ondawa

335

Individuals Supported

721

Individuals Supported

Psychiatric and Crisis Services

- Psychiatric evaluation
- Medication management
- Liaison to intensive hospital care
- 24-hour emergency service
- Battelle House Crisis Stabilization Center
- Mobile crisis services

693

Individuals Served

Youth and Family Services (YFS)

- Family Emergency Services (FES)
- Family outreach services
- Therapeutic case management
- Respite services
- School-based services
- Jump on Board for Success (JOBS) program
- Transitional Living Program
- Teens for Change Youth Group
- Camp Be A Kid
- Mentoring at UCS
- Psychiatric Urgent Care for Kids (PUCK)



Early Childhood Services (ECS)

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

200

Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers



5

 Community Organizations Supported

Business Programs

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Management consultation
- Community partnerships

Lori Vadakin — Director of Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Use

Lori Vadakin, MA, LADC has returned to United Counseling Service as the Director of Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Use Services. Previously, she was VPI South's Director of Trauma Integration Services, and an EMDRIA-certified Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapist and consultant.

Lori earned a BA in History/Pre-law at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and her master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Antioch New England Graduate School. She was one of the first clinicians in Vermont to be trained in ARC (Attachment, Self-Regulation & Competency), and she provides trauma-informed care trainings throughout the community. She is certified as a Level One Child Specialist by the Ana Gomez Attachment Trauma Education Institute; an EMDR Sandtray Specialist, Intensive Program for Child & Adolescent Therapists; and an EMDR Equilateral Therapist, Equine-assisted EMDR Protocol, through Sarah A. Jenkins' Dragonfly International.

"I am so excited to be returning to United Counseling Service," said Lori, who had worked for UCS as an outpatient clinician in the early 2000s. "This agency plays a vital role in the community and the staff truly care. The relationships they build with clients and the high quality of care provided are amazing."





“We did *whatever was needed* to make it possible for people to access mental health care they required. We are still working to keep improving access and delivering the highest standard of psychiatric care.”

*—Alya Reeve, Medical Director,
Emergency Services*

Driven by a Common Purpose

to do the right thing for our clients, our community, and each other.

UCS partnered with Genoa Healthcare to provide better care

Genoa Healthcare opened a pharmacy at our Ledge Hill Drive Facility to serve clients, employees, and families of UCS staff.

The on-site pharmacy is tailored to help serve patients with complex challenges and to custom-design care for each individual by providing special packaging, support with refilling prescriptions, and assistance with insurance companies. Pharmacy staff build relationships with physicians, caregivers, and consumers, which creates additional value and provides easier access for those we serve. In a recent study published by *The Journal of Managed Care & Specialty Pharmacy*, it was found that integrating Genoa Healthcare pharmacies within community mental health centers not only improved medication adherence but also reduced the need for other expensive healthcare services.

“The integration between Genoa and UCS has allowed me to play a more active role in the care of our clients. I am able to work directly with prescribers, which allows me to provide a higher level of care. I am so proud to be a part of this partnership.”

—Lauren Carter, RPH, Pharm.D.



GENOA HEALTHCARE is the largest provider of pharmacy, outpatient telepsychiatry and medication management services. UCS has partnered with them to provide better personalized care for our clients and our staff. Pictured here (L–R) are **Leah**, **Lauren**, and **Ashley**, Genoa Healthcare staff, on opening day.

MHFA and YMHA

“The practical advice about how to speak with others was great.”

—MHFA Course Participant

UCS continues to offer **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)** and **Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHA)** training to the community. Courses introduce participants to the unique risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems, build understanding of the importance of early intervention, and teach people how to help someone in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge. The courses use role-playing and simulations to demonstrate how to assess a mental health crisis; select interventions and provide initial help; and connect people to professional, peer, social and self-help care.

“This provided a great overview to mental health. It helps to educate and correct misconceptions about mental health disorders.”—MHFA Course Participant

15

Trainings held
in 2019–20

326

Individuals trained in
MHFA/YMHA

COVID-19 RESPONSE: resilience, flexibility, and extra attention to community needs.

It is no secret that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an outsize impact on the lives of everyone in our communities. Although the coronavirus hit Vermont in earnest nearly two-thirds of the way through UCS's fiscal year, its effects have been so far-reaching that we would be remiss if we did not devote significant attention to our organization's response at every level. We are tremendously proud of our staff and leadership, who came together at the most difficult time to do all that was necessary to ensure that Bennington County residents had access to high-quality mental health services and supports.

Rapid EAP for SVMC: We are here for our healthcare partner

As part of our COVID-19 response, UCS partnered with Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC) to offer a rapid Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for medical staff. Healthcare workers are especially at risk of psychological distress and other mental-health issues related to being on the front lines at the best of times, and the risk factors are amplified during times of crisis. SVMC encouraged its staff to contact UCS if they are struggling or feeling stressed and staff at UCS are ready to provide whatever is needed to help our healthcare partners.

"UCS's Employee Assistance Program became such an important part of supporting our staff through this unusually stressful year," said Jill Maynard, BSN, RN, CEN, SANE, Director of Nursing Emergency Services and ICU at SVMC. "It's often difficult for healthcare providers to reach out for help, and knowing that UCS is there whenever we are finally ready to do so is comforting. It's made coping with the rigors of the pandemic easier to bear."



Crisis Services: Here for our community 24/7/365 – even during the pandemic

UCS Crisis Services provides 24-hour, 7-day-per-week emergency service for anyone in Bennington County experiencing a mental health crisis.

"The COVID-19 pandemic tested our crisis team on many fronts as we had to change almost every aspect of how we traditionally help our clients," said Jason Fleming, Assistant Director of Crisis Services. "Procedures were implemented using PPE, social distancing, and tele-assessments to maintain much-needed support to our community while still prioritizing everyone's physical health."



State-mandated COVID-19 guidelines meant that Battelle House, the agency's crisis stabilization unit, was forced to decrease its maximum occupancy from 6 beds to 3. As a result, the crisis team had to find new ways to support people in their homes who traditionally would have been admitted for crisis stabilization.

The UCS Crisis team has a longstanding relationship with Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC), providing collaborative care to those in our community who need it. During the early weeks and months of the pandemic, UCS Crisis also became a support system for the front-line workers at SVMC, facilitating debriefing sessions for a variety of hospital staff.

UCS Crisis leadership is currently working with the Bennington Police Department to embed a full-time mental health worker at the police station. This is a critical step in helping provide immediate and supportive care to the many people in our area who call the Police Department amid mental health and substance use crises. Having additional crisis workers in the community will help UCS continue to improve access for those who need us.

12

Average number of calls the crisis team received per day



Warm Line

UCS made accessing services easier to better help our community during the COVID-19 pandemic by developing a warm line. Unlike a hotline for those in immediate crisis, the warm line is designed to provide early intervention with emotional support that can prevent a crisis and get individuals the immediate help they need. It is also designed to help individuals with referrals for a clinical service or other resources if needed.

When a caller needs immediate crisis help, their contact information is collected and an Emergency Service Provider contacts them within 10 minutes. For those experiencing a mental health crisis, services are available 24/7.

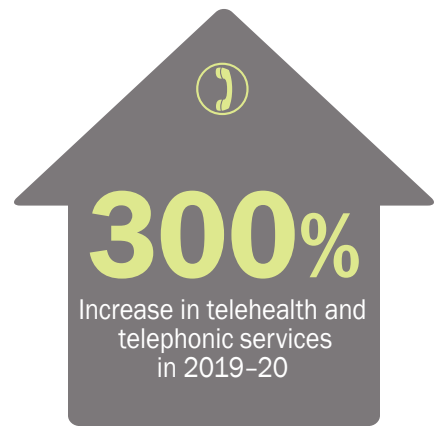
Technology increases access to care

Being isolated can be a struggle for many of us as we juggle work, life, parenting, and mental health. The use of **telehealth** and **telephone services** increases access to services for many clients and can remove barriers caused by economic, transportation, health, and other issues that are beyond the client's control.

In March, outpatient staff and clients quickly adapted individual and group treatment to the urgent need for telehealth services. The response was overwhelming. As of January, 8% of UCS services were being provided via telephonic or telehealth. "By June, 43% of our services were being provided via these technologies. This enabled us to continue providing services with minimal disruption," explained Daniel Merges, Outpatient Program Manager.

"Video sessions have been a lifeline for me during the pandemic. I don't have a car; I live alone, and my medical conditions make it so I can't use public transportation. We should have done this sooner!"

—UCS Client J.



2019-20	Hours	Sessions
Telehealth	1,758	2,274
Telephone	4,882	9,581
TOTALS	6,640 hours	11,855 sessions



"While many of us miss the in-person contact with colleagues and clients, we have found telehealth to be a very effective way to support clients' progress toward their treatment goals."

—Dan Merges, Outpatient Program Manager



“Living compassionately with an open heart is about reaching out, connecting, and lifting others up. When we come together in groups with similar hurts, problems, concerns, or interests, the process naturally supports the realization that everyone matters. The goal of offering multiple groups through UCS is an opportunity to cultivate authentic, genuine connection.”

—Lori Vadakin

Director of Outpatient Mental Health and Substance Use

Innovative and Responsive Programming

for all those who need services and supports.

Same Day Access: care when it's needed

Lack of access to timely, high quality care has been identified as the largest barrier to those in need of mental health and addiction treatment services, and delays or other lack of access may dissuade people who need it from seeking help in the first place. In October 2019, our agency implemented Same Day Access (SDA) to ensure easy and immediate access to the right care, at the right time, in the right place, with the right provider.

“Our agency implemented Same Day Access to eliminate access as a barrier to care,” said Amy Fela, Director of Operations. “We are pleased with the response to this model from our clients, our referral sources and our community partners.”

Individuals who contact UCS or who are referred by a provider are offered a clinical assessment on the same day, without a scheduling delay or being placed on a waitlist. The initial assessment is completed by an intake clinician. This triage assessment helps direct the individual to the most appropriate level of care and initiates a preliminary treatment plan. Following the intake assessment, people are scheduled for their next clinical service within fourteen days. Consumers who are offered a same-day appointment have a much greater show rate; no-shows are virtually eliminated.

635 individuals have completed a Comprehensive Assessment for Outpatient Services since October 2019



Rachel Darby, PMHNP-BC, Nurse Practitioner was one of many who provided services both in person and via telehealth, a trend that is likely to continue.

100%
of callers are offered a same-day appointment

“I think the decision for same-day access was the right decision. The staff is very professional and very caring. Everyone I have spoken with has been very genuine.”

—Client Satisfaction Survey 2020

Group supports and therapy

This year, in response to community needs, UCS increased the number of therapy groups offered to the public, with groups meeting both in person and remotely over the course of the year. Group therapy helps individuals realize they are not alone and facilitates giving and receiving support, allowing participants to express their issues and relate to others in healthier ways. Participants begin to develop self-awareness by listening to others with similar issues.

Groups were segmented for adults, youth, and families. They covered issues ranging from substance abuse to stress and anxiety to parenting, mindfulness, yoga, and more.

152
individuals participated in group therapy in 2019–20.

1546
sessions of group therapy were attended.

Employment program improves quality of life

Betty Kenyon is United Counseling Service’s Vocational Coordinator/ Employment Specialist for the Community Rehabilitation and Treatment Program (CRT). Using an evidence-based model of supported employment called Individual Placement and Support (IPS), Betty helps people with severe and persistent mental illness find and maintain work.

In contrast to subsisting on Social Security (SSA) benefits, being employed offers individuals a better quality of life, because SSA benefits are designed primarily to ensure subsistence, not provide enrichment. For many with persistent mental illness, being employed has been shown to reduce psychiatric hospitalization, which is better for the individual and ultimately saves money and resources for the mental health care system. Not least, employment gives people a sense of purpose, a goal, and a reason to get up every day.

Some of the barriers people with mental illness face in even considering seeking work are fear, concern about losing benefits, having a criminal history, poor self-care, and symptoms of the mental illness itself. Offering or even suggesting the IPS supported employment program to a CRT client carries a powerful message of hope and the expectation that people can, and do, recover from serious mental health and substance use challenges. But it is always the individual’s decision—not the agency’s nor anyone else’s; only the client knows when they are ready to work. “I feel like I am planting the seed, giving hope and encouragement, and, most of all, believing in them,” says Betty, “They start to feel they *have* an illness rather than *being* the illness.”

“Work makes me feel like I’ve accomplished something. Accomplishment is very important to me. I feel like I’m part of the team and they trust me.”

—Employment Supports Client



Betty Kenyon (R) with Cindy, an employment program participant: “If I can make a difference in even one person’s life and help someone find a good job match that improves their quality of life, then my work is done. It is my honor to work with the people in the CRT program at UCS.”

Response team focuses on harm reduction

UCS is a member of the Bennington Opioid Response Team, a cross-sector public health and safety partnership that also includes Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, the Bennington Police and Fire Departments and Rescue Squad, Turning Point Recovery Center, and SaVida Health. Funded by a community action grant, the group performs outreach to reduce opioid and other substance use disorders and overdoses. The group envisions its actions will improve the lives of those afflicted by supporting them and their families directly while at the same time working to educate the broader community and reduce the stigma associated with addiction and substance use. In addition to providing ongoing supports, UCS collaborates with the Department of Health and the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse to deliver Harm Reduction Bags. Along with a single dose of Narcan (a brand name of naloxone, the medicine used to reverse opioid overdose) and fentanyl strips, Harm Reduction Bags also include other helpful items and resources.

“In tandem with the distribution of the Harm Reduction Bags, we strive to engage family and friends of people with opioid or substance use disorders, to educate them on naloxone access and administration, the Good Samaritan Law, and harm reduction methods. We also provide other supports as needed,” comments Christine Ouellette, Community Substance Use Outreach Manager. “We offer general support, grief counseling, and help for those addressing their own treatment or recovery needs.”



Community Substance Use Outreach Manager **Christine Ouellette** displays one of the Harm Reduction Bags used by the Opioid Response Team.



Building resilience through compassion

By the time she was 9, Keri had experienced more trauma than any person should know. After suffering years of sexual abuse by two different family members, she and her siblings were witness to their father’s murder by their uncle during a family gathering.

A few days after her father’s murder, Keri met with Lori Vadakin, then a counselor at United Counseling Service, and there was an instant connection. “I was at such a low place that I would not have accepted support from people I thought had never struggled. I had difficulty believing someone else could understand the deep, complex trauma I had experienced. I was ambivalent and resistant and lost all faith in ever feeling normal again,” says Keri. “When Lori and I began working together, I could feel in her presence that life was not always kind to her. In the same presence, I felt a warm and unconditional love and positive regard for others during their most difficult days. It made it easy to trust her.”

Over the course of several years of therapy, Keri, while working on her own healing, decided what she wanted to become when she grew up. As a 13-year-old, she determined that she would help other abused children one day—she wanted to help people the way that she had been helped.

During high school, Keri was able to use some of the skills she had acquired during her therapy sessions when she was hired for a summer job at UCS’ Camp Be a Kid. Before

heading off to college, she worked part-time as a respite worker with our Youth and Family Services Division.

Keri went on to earn her bachelor’s degree from Skidmore College and her Master’s in Clinical Social Work from Boston University Wheelock College of Education and Human Development. She is now a Licensed Clinical Social Worker specializing in drug and alcohol counseling for youth and adults. She and Lori have stayed in touch, and Lori even attended Keri’s Skidmore commencement ceremony. “When I think of Keri, what goes through my mind is, ‘out of difficulties grow miracles,’” comments Lori, “Keri is the definition of resiliency.”

Keri sums up her trajectory, “I am so proud that I can create that same safe environment, regardless of where I am offering support. There are specific techniques that you learn throughout the years of education and field training. It’s not about where you are, but who you are that can make the difference in someone’s therapeutic experience. I can only thank Lori for my learned ability to create a place for kiddos to feel vulnerable but still safe, to be themselves unapologetically, and to just be a kid.”

Keri shares her home with her Catahoula Leopard Dog, Louie, and—when she’s not working to help others—loves to exercise, kayak, and spend time with her family and friends.





**“Since the creation
of Psychiatric Urgent
Care for Kids (PUCK), we**

have been able to provide support and treatment to children in crisis and their families. Our staff works with primary-care physicians, schools, community partners and families to provide the support and resources needed to keep kids out of the Emergency Department and in their current environments.”

—*Julie Pagliccia*

*Director of Youth and Family
Services, Northshire Services*

Psychiatric Urgent Care for Kids

Recognizing that the Emergency Department is not the ideal place to care for children experiencing psychological distress, United Counseling Service and Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC) teamed up and, with an Innovation grant from OneCare Vermont, created Psychiatric Urgent Care for Kids (PUCK).

PUCK is a child- and family-centered, recovery-oriented, trauma-informed approach to mental health treatment. It is designed to provide a therapeutic environment and the right level of care, mitigating unnecessary utilization of Emergency Departments (EDs), and reducing costs. PUCK provides a homelike environment stocked with kid-friendly activities and sensory tools. PUCK originally partnered with a single referring site—a local elementary school—as a pilot, and quickly expanded to work with other Bennington County schools. Children may be referred to PUCK for a variety of reasons ranging from behavioral dysregulation to suicidal ideation or self-injurious behavior. The common theme is that these children in crisis cannot safely remain in their current settings (often schools) and are in need of an alternative to the Emergency Department.

“The new way of handling these cases is better for children and families, because the treatment more closely matches their needs,” said Jill Maynard, RN, BSN, CEN, SANE, Director of Nursing Emergency Services and ICU at SVMC and one of the authors of the project. “In addition, PUCK improves care for all by making better use of the Emergency Department, freeing it up for patients who need the type of care it is equipped to provide.”

At PUCK, parents and family are an integral part of the team. PUCK’s complete array of services are available to both child and family upon their first visit to the program, and full intake for ongoing services can be completed as appropriate. UCS is now able to provide the right care in a therapeutic environment that keeps kids out of the ED, reduces costs to the system, and improves outcomes for children.

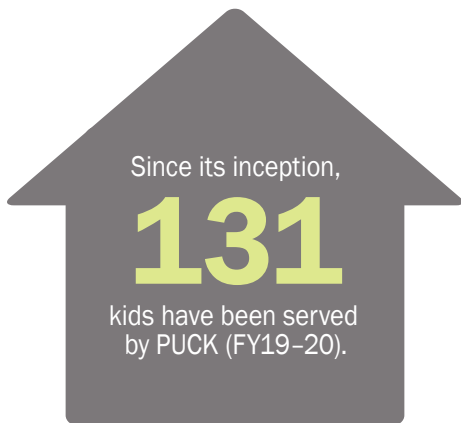


Cleveland and Phyllis Dodge Community Service Award

Each year the UCS Board selects a community member or organization whose support of UCS and its mission has been notable and significant. This year’s Cleveland and Phyllis Dodge Community Service Award was presented to Jill Maynard, Director of Nursing Emergency Services and ICU at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center. Jill was instrumental in SVMC’s work with UCS to create Psychiatric Urgent Care for Kids (PUCK).

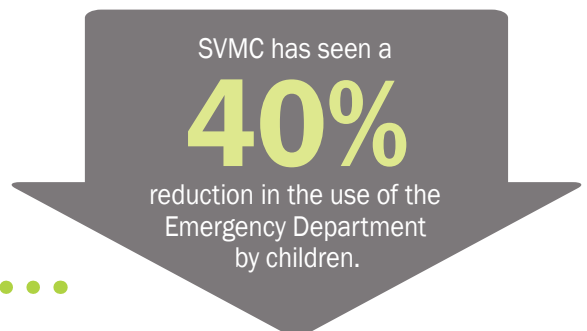
“*Jill is a rock star! She is about action and making things better for the staff and community. Her leadership makes a difference to UCS and our community.*”

—Lorna Mattern, Executive Director



“Kudos for expanding your programs to include using your facility on Dewey Street as a crisis intervention site in lieu of the emergency room for kids in psychiatric trauma. That soothing environment will surely be more conducive to aiding and alleviating their distress. Many thanks for your efforts.”

—The Southwestern Vermont
Chamber of Commerce



Close to home

It was early fall and Sandy, a UCS staff member, was meeting with her supervisor. In the middle of the meeting, Sandy received an urgent call from her son's school—they were requesting her presence because her son was having extreme difficulties regulating his behavior in the classroom. When Sandy shared this information with her supervisor, she recommended that Sandy allow the school to call UCS's Family Emergency Services (FES). Sandy took the advice, and a FES crisis worker was dispatched to the school.

After arriving and assessing the situation, the crisis worker determined that Sandy's son could benefit from PUCK services, and transported him to PUCK. Once there, he was assessed and screened for anxiety and depression by a master's-level clinician and his behavior was closely observed. A PUCK case manager came to meet him and he was able to make use of the sensory room for calming.

Sandy's son was seen by the psychiatric team for medication adjustment, received an intake into UCS services, assigned a case manager for ongoing service, and referred for an autism assessment. He was even able to access some of his schoolwork, so he didn't fall farther behind his peers. All of this happened in less than 6 hours, in a comfortable and calming environment.

"I never really knew what it was like to be the parent in a situation like this," says Sandy. "No matter what you know or what experience you have, nothing prepares you for your child to struggle in this way. I was amazed at how quickly we were able to access the services and the support my child needed and I'm grateful for the difference it's already made in his life."



Adventures with Flat Becky: Reaching out to youth during the pandemic

Rebecca ("Becky") Shuler is a Therapeutic Case Manager and the Family Emergency Service Coordinator in UCS's Youth and Family Service (YFS) Division. Recognizing that some extra creativity would be needed to keep young people connected to their supports even while facing long-term isolation, she created a paper cutout of herself to send to kids receiving YFS services. "Flat Becky" was mailed out to young clients along with this letter:

"I miss going on adventures with you. I have been feeling a little sad lately and could use some fun. I have sent you a 'Flat Becky' and was hoping you could take Flat Becky on adventures with you. If you are willing, please have your parents send me pictures of the adventures you take with Flat Becky. I would love to go on treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, and learn how to build with LEGOs. Riding a bike? Bring me with you, but don't go too fast—and make sure you draw a helmet on me in case we fall...I cannot wait to see your pictures and what adventures we go on!" The kids and their families said they enjoyed going on adventures with Flat Becky.



Mentoring makes a difference

Mentoring at UCS helps children reach their potential through one-to-one relationships with adults. Among the many benefits of having a mentor, children in the program enjoy quality time and forge strong bonds with adult role models, and develop strategies to deal with the stresses in their daily lives.

Mentor Angelique and mentee Darcie, both of Bennington, were named 2020 Ambassadors of Mentoring by Comcast and MENTOR Vermont, who jointly honored them for their participation at MENTOR Vermont's Annual Youth Mentoring Celebration in Montpelier.

"This relationship has opened my eyes to what being a positive role model can mean," says Angelique. "Darcie is a spitfire with incredible personality and heart. At times, she gets caught up in her fear of being hurt, judged, or letting others in—and thus can come off as hard or defiant, but she's blossomed in many ways throughout our time together. Ultimately, our mentor/mentee relationship resembles, I think, the ups and downs of who Darcie is and can become with support and encouragement. I only hope moving forward that I can continue to be that positive influence for her and look forward to mentoring her further."



The Bank of Bennington President **Jim Brown** shows off the bank's 2020 "Archie" award.



The Bank of Bennington's **Annick Zwodz** (2nd from L) presents the bank's \$5,000 donation to support Mentoring at UCS to (L-R) **Heidi French, Laurie Sallisky, and Ann Marie Mazzuco**.

Archie Warner Award

UCS awarded this year's Harold C. "Archie" Warner Award to The Bank of Bennington for their support of the organization's Mentoring at UCS program. The award is presented annually to individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to our agency's children's programs. The Bank of Bennington has supported UCS's mentoring program for more than fifteen years. Among its contributions, the bank has supported our Bowlathon, the major annual fundraiser for Mentoring at UCS. This year, though the COVID-19 pandemic meant the event had to be canceled, the bank generously donated their sponsorship in continued support.



“In the strange and often uncertain world of COVID-19, Developmental Services at UCS has been and will continue to be here for any need, any problem, no matter how big or how small. The individuals we serve remain our first priority and the DS commitment and dedication has not wavered. We can get through this together.”

—*Dawn Danner, Director of Developmental Services*

Providing Care to Our Most Vulnerable

We are here for our consumers in Developmental Services with unwavering dedication to quality of life.



The Gathering Place fosters integration and equality

Since 2006, UCS's end-of-summer program at Camp Ondawa in Sunderland, Vermont has provided adults with intellectual disabilities a camping experience that's close to home, with people they know and trust. Known as The Gathering Place, the program was created for participants of all abilities to take part in special events while enjoying peer companionship, staff support, and a genuine camping experience. Activities are what one might expect of a typical summer camp—arts and crafts, Zumba, yoga, movie night, morning walks, sports, plus live bands and more. **120 campers** took part in our 2019 camp.

Visitors stopping by Camp Ondawa are immediately struck by the observation that campers and staff are in their element—the camaraderie and sense of joy are palpable and powerful. “This was my first year as the camp director, and with a great team and assistance from Community Support (CS) staff, it was a big success!” commented Courtney Randall, Camp Director. “I truly appreciated all those who volunteered their time and brought special activities for campers to enjoy. I’m already looking forward to next year’s camp.”



179

DS consumers received weekly phone check-ins from staff during COVID-19.

In Memoriam: Ray Andrews



Ray Andrews was the manager of UCS's Autumn House Group Home for adults with intellectual disabilities. Ray was a compassionate and kind poet with a wonderful sense of humor. He will be remembered with affection and respect by his family, staff, and residents.

46.8%

of DS consumers who work are now completely independent at their jobs, up **10%** from last reporting period.

This is reflective of UCS staff's great relationships with area employers and their passionate commitment to helping people live as independently as possible.



It takes a team: A dream of mobility realized

Nicole Sosis has been a UCS client since 1994 and has lived at our Union Street Group Home since February 2020. Social and inquisitive, Nicole, who requires a wheelchair for mobility and does not drive, often found it frustrating to be unable to go somewhere because she had to wait for her parents to be available. What she really wanted was a vehicle of her own—a seemingly unreachable dream given her specific needs and lack of funds.

Over the summer, with assistance from the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Services Division, Nicole was finally able to purchase a van that could accommodate her in her wheelchair. And though she can't drive the vehicle herself, the staff at Union Street are willing and able to take her where she wants to go. The van is equipped with a ramp, so Nicole can get in and out under her own steam.

“Purchasing the vehicle was no easy task. Our request for funds had to be reviewed and approved through a Developmental Services funding committee at the agency level,” commented Dawn Danner, Director of Developmental Services, “We had to recommend to the committee that there was a need for Nicole to have her own accessible van in order to be safely transported. Next, the funding had to be approved at a state-level committee where all requests for DS funding are considered. Finally, the funds were approved by the Director of the Developmental Disabilities Services Division for the state.”

As soon as they learned the request had been approved, the UCS team kicked into high gear. They located a suitable van and were trained in operating and using the ramp. “Getting a vehicle of her own is a huge step toward Nicole’s independence,” said Darlene Lockwood, Union Street Group Home Manager, “It gives her access to her community and more flexible scheduling. Now, Nicole can ask her support people to take her places instead of waiting for her parents. Nicole is someone who does not like to let grass grow under her!”

The van has given Nicole the opportunity to enjoy the things she loves. During COVID-19, she has been able to take rides around Bennington and avoid feeling stuck in the house. While she says that the local jaunts have been lovely, Nicole is looking forward to summer 2021, so she can take her first trip to a beach: “I don’t care what beach I go to—I just want to go to any beach! I have never been to a beach, so I am really excited for next summer.”

Karen Sosis, Nicole’s mother, was overjoyed. “UCS is amazing! Nicole needed to have an accessible vehicle so that she would be able to participate in the community. Her UCS team came together and made it work for her. UCS cares about their clients and does everything they can to make sure they have everything that they need.”

Client metrics: the outlook is positive

Our Spring 2020 client survey showed that the hard work we are doing to continually improve is making a difference. Clients report being more satisfied and having better results from the services they receive, and indicators were up across the board:

Percentages in arrows indicate improvements over our 2019 survey.

93.5% of clients agreed or strongly agreed that the **services received were right for them.** **5.5%**

94% of clients agreed or strongly agreed that they **received services they needed.** **4%**

96.4% of clients agreed or strongly agreed that **staff treated them with respect.** **4%**

91.7% of clients agreed or strongly agreed that **services they received made a difference.** **7%**

87.4% of clients indicated that their **quality of life improved** as a result of services received. **5%**

93% **would recommend UCS** to a friend or family member. **8.8%**

*SOURCE United Counseling Service 2020 Client Survey



“In this time of unprecedented challenges,

I am reminded daily of my gratitude for UCS and its culture of caring. Employees know we are built on certain values that are key to successful interactions—we call it the **I CARE** model. Under this values-based approach, we are asked every day to strive for **I**deal Service, to contribute toward our **C**ulture of Caring with **A**ccountability, **R**esponsiveness and **E**mpowerment. In leading by example, we support each other, we build up and we show we care.”

—Leslie Addison, Director of Human Resources

Flexibility and Creativity

in providing needed services

Supporting our own staff

During the COVID-19 pandemic, UCS staff were faced with new and unique challenges in maintaining a healthy work/life balance. The need to homeschool children, fear of the unknown, and learning on the fly to work in new and different ways (telehealth, telephonics, virtual meetings) created stress and anxiety for everyone in our agency.

The UCS Worksite Wellness Committee took up the challenge of remote support, hosting virtual coffee hours to help coworkers stay connected and virtual mandala workshops to help manage stress; partnering with Invest EAP to host webinars and workshops; providing employees with practical information (like how to set up ergonomic work stations at home) as well as information on managing mental health and anxiety; and hosting a private Facebook group where employees could share their news and thoughts with each other in a secure online forum.

UCS was recognized for its exceptional workplace wellness program by MVP Health Care, and was honored for the seventh consecutive year with the Vermont Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports' Excellence in Worksite Wellness Award.



“UCS strongly values the importance of mental and physical health of our employees. We provide our employees with incentives, tools, social supports, and strategies to adopt and maintain healthy behaviors to support a healthy lifestyle.”

—Amy Fela, Director of Operations and Worksite Wellness Committee Chair



Celebration of Staff and Community Partners

This year UCS held its annual staff recognition event at Hathaway's Drive-In, in Hoosick Falls. The event, which is usually held as an indoor luncheon, took a creative turn due to the coronavirus. The catered outdoor event offered a delicious dinner to employees and their families. They attended the recognition ceremony (socially distanced) and then stayed to enjoy *The Jungle Book* on the big screen.

Staff were recognized for years of service, obtaining licenses and degrees, performing with distinction, and demonstrating that they uphold the agency's core values. Three staffers were recognized with the Peter D. Scully Award: Shannon Buck, Amie Niles, and Kim Lawler-Batty. The Scully Award is given annually to long-serving employees who exemplify the characteristics of Dr Scully, a former UCS Medical Director, performing their work with compassion, skill, and distinction.



Two of the Scully Award winners, Amie Niles and Shannon Buck



For a second year, UCS has been voted the **Best Place to Work** and the **Best Community Service Organization** by the Bennington Banner and Manchester Journal.

Celebrating Years of Service

Commitment and consistency from staff results in better service and better outcomes for our clients and our community.



James Reilly receives his 30-year service award from Northshire Director Julie Pagliccia.

30 Years

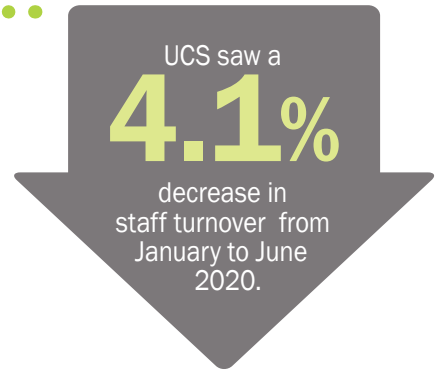
Karolyn Harrington
James Reilly

25 Years

Tim Baldic
Shannon Buck
Joanne Main
Paul Stitelman

20 Years

Jill Doyle
Karen Ejeriefe
Tina Fede
Amy Fela
Bonnie Jamieson
Sal Madison
Julie Pagliccia
Tom Simek



In memoriam: Julie Held

Julie Held worked in Human Resources. Julie's passion for the UCS mission showed in everything she did. Her optimism was contagious and brought out the best in those around her. She saw the good in people, laughed when there was hardship, and forged pathways when a bridge was needed.

Julie Held Memorial Award

"We were 'Held Together' by her warmth, her caring demeanor and her ready smile," said Executive Director Lorna Mattern, "It is with joy that we celebrate Julie's life by selecting a staff person each year who exemplifies those very special qualities."

The first recipient of the Julie Held Memorial Award was **Amanda Mauri**. Amanda is a member of our Human Resources department and worked closely with Julie, who was her mentor.



Amanda Mauri and Julie Held

15 Years

Anne Baldwin
Smith
Mary Babcock
Ronald Burgess
Edith Lane
Keili Trottier

10 Years

Sarah Church
Pam Clark
Rose Hall
Sandrya Matteson
Jennifer Parizo
Harry Porter

5 Years

Katie Aiken
Monica Bolio
Kimberly
Bouplon-Funck
Kimberly Brooks
Jennifer D'Onofrio
Jill Egbert
Alison Frakes
Allyson Gerity

Marie Hawley
Lisa Kosche
Rose LaCroix
Bonnie McGowan
Amanda Murray
Gary Peterson
Alya Reeve
Rebecca Schuler

Clinical Internships

United Counseling Service offers clinical internships to students pursuing masters degrees. Interns are placed in clinical divisions within the organization and are provided with weekly clinical supervision from a Masters-level clinician. Interns typically spend two 11-week terms with UCS. They may also work with our nurse practitioners and be located at the Southwestern Vermont Medical Center.

This year UCS had 11 interns. "We are proud to be able to help these students grow in their chosen careers," said Susan Wright, LICSW, Clinical Supervisor with UCS. "We were all interns once and it is a way to give back."

Interns have come to us from the following colleges and universities:

Castleton University
Columbia University
Fordham University
Our Lady of the Lake University
Post University
Regent University

Smith College
Southern New Hampshire University
Springfield College
Union Institute and University
Walden University



"My clinical mental health counseling internship with United Counseling Service provided me with the tools, resources, and exposure that I needed to become a confident and competent counselor, fully equipped to work in the field after graduation. I have had numerous colleagues from across the country comment on what an impressive, robust experience I had as an intern! I am continually thankful for the quality support, guidance, and training I received through UCS."
—Kathleen Baroody, MA, YFS/Blueprint
Outpatient Mental Health Counselor

Grow, innovate, and be more accessible

to meet the evolving needs of our neighbors

Community programming

Our **UCS Presents** series, focusing on topics relevant to our community, continues to grow. This year, in addition to hosting live programs, we expanded to online programming—in early spring, after only the briefest of pauses to regroup and harness needed technology, we were up and running with virtual programs, talks, and webinars, which were well attended and garnered excellent feedback. All UCS programs were offered at no charge.

From late summer through late winter, we screened documentaries on diverse subjects like parental incarceration and its effects; suicide awareness and prevention; the often thankless work of direct support professionals (DSPs); understanding anxiety, and more. We partnered with several organizations, including the Lamoille Restorative Center, Bennington Center for Restorative Justice, Vermont Care Partners, and others. Screenings took place at schools, theaters, and libraries throughout the county. All events included a post-screening discussion or Q&A session with professionals in each field, and often included individuals with direct involvement in the documentary's subject or production.

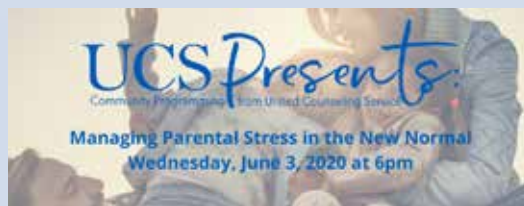
In early spring, **UCS Presents** went virtual. To address community needs in a crisis, we hosted a series of webinars and talks to help adults and children manage stress and anxiety and deal with the uncertainties of life in the 'new normal'. We presented mindfulness workshops, also online, that taught practical, physical methods for managing and reducing stress.

Throughout the year, UCS participated in community events organized by others. We were a sponsor of Bennington's Pride Parade, in support of the LGBTQ+ members of our community. We joined community partners for a suicide prevention awareness walk. We also took part in an exhibit at Southern Vermont Arts Center that was dedicated to challenging assumptions and stigma around mental illness and what it looks like, through photographic portraits accompanied by subjects' stories.



“Community engagement ensures that individuals, families and our community partners have access to our agency’s resources. We are a collective of professionals with a wealth of knowledge. People’s willingness to share their expertise through live events and webinars connects us with our community, and our community with each other.”

—Heidi French, Director of Community Relations and Development



Help is here 

WALK AND TALK FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS

EVENT PARTNERS:



Suicide prevention awareness

United Counseling Service (UCS) and Southwestern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC), led a community-wide charge with “Walk and Talk for Suicide Prevention Awareness.” The event was held last fall at the pavilion of the Vermont Veterans’ Home in Bennington. Participating organizations included the Alliance for Community Transformations, Bennington Police and Sheriff’s Departments and Rescue Squad, RISE Vermont, and the Vermont Suicide Prevention Center.

UCS Executive Director Lorna Mattern observed, “We have experienced an increasing trend in death by suicide over the past 20 years, and we must be open in our dialogue to bring more awareness to the causes and cures for this troubling pattern.” UCS Medical Director Alya Reeve, MD, agreed, “Suicide is a risk for so many, especially veterans and teens. We hope our message of help and hope reached the veterans, students, and the entire community: You are not alone.”



Aquaman Water Stop Sponsors



Bennington Banner

Manchester Journal

140 adults and **55** kids participated in the day’s events

UCS Superhero 5K

Superheroes took to the streets for the second annual UCS Superhero 5K. The 3.1 mile route began and ended at the Bennington Recreation Center, along a route that included a portion of Main Street that was closed to traffic. A cheering crowd welcomed runners as they raced to the finish line. The Kids’ Dash, led by members of the Bennington Police Department, immediately followed the 5K, with kids as young as 3 participating.

Business and community sponsors and countless volunteers added to the success of the event. Event proceeds benefit UCS’s Client Wellness Fund, which promotes clients’ wellbeing through activities like exercise, workshops and field trips.

Defender Sponsors

Hickok & Boardman
Janitronics
MSK Engineering & Design
Northeast Delta Dental
Southwestern Vermont Health Care
VNA & Hospice of the Southwest Region

Champion Sponsors

Elm Street Market
GVH Studio, Inc
Heritage Family
Federal Credit Union

Community Sponsors

Northeast Benefits Management
Martin and Deborah Munoz
ParaMed Plus, Inc.

Putting his best foot forward

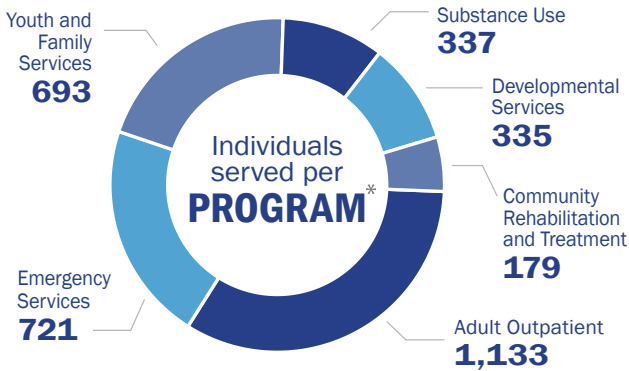
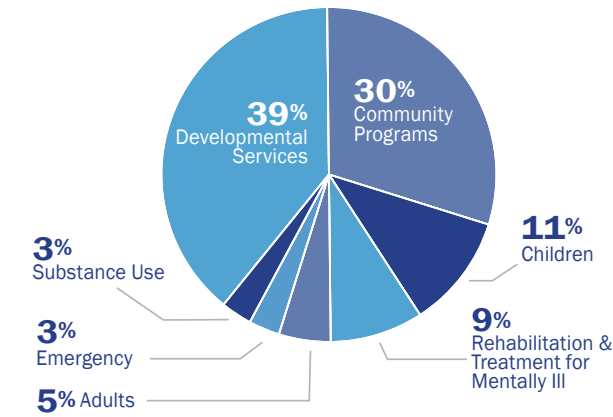
Larry struggled with substance use for 16 years, finding himself in and out of the hospital repeatedly over that time. Two years ago, deciding it was time to pull himself together, he reached out to UCS and began his recovery—maintaining his sobriety ever since. Last year, Larry joined Put Your Best Foot Forward, a partnership created by UCS along with Rise VT and Northeast Trails. The group program was designed to serve those in recovery, meeting twice a week to walk, run, and hike throughout Bennington County. The 10-weeks of group activities culminated in the UCS Superhero 5K on a beautiful November day. Some of the group participants volunteered at the event, but Larry chose to run—and, out of numerous competitors, placed third in his age group.

These days, Larry spends much of his time working on his house and raising his two young children. He continues to enjoy running. “The best thing about completing the training and finishing the 5K was that I learned no matter how hard things are, you just keep going, putting one foot in front of the other until you reach your goal.”



Larry with running coach Andrea Malinowski

Use of Funds by Program



*Some individuals are served by more than one program

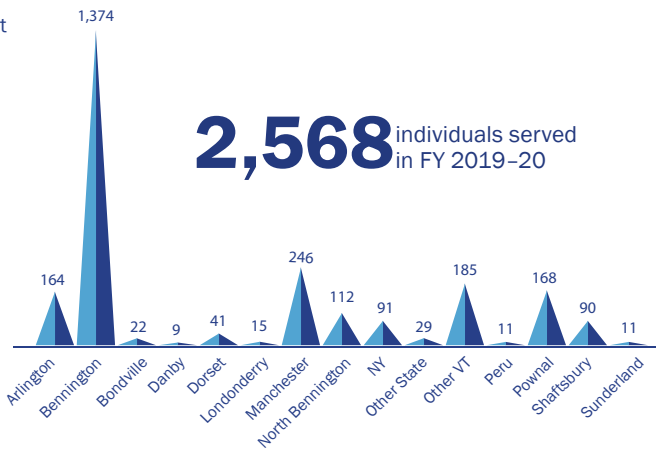
Budgeted Income for Fiscal 2019-20

Medicaid	\$ 14,945,442
Fees & 3rd Party Payments	\$ 441,504
Vt. Alcohol & Drug Abuse Division	\$ 569,965
Vt. Dept. of Mental Health	\$ 1,172,341
Vt. Dept. of Developmental Services	\$ 117,569
Other State Contracts	\$ 540,620
Local Revenue	\$ 1,296,248
Miscellaneous	\$ 476,451
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 19,560,140

Budgeted Expenses for Fiscal 2019-20

Salaries	\$ 9,723,014
Fringe Benefits	\$ 2,231,453
Other Personnel Costs	\$ 4,200,830
Operating Expenses	\$ 2,033,426
Travel & Transportation	\$ 351,339
Building Expenses	\$ 1,020,078
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 19,560,140

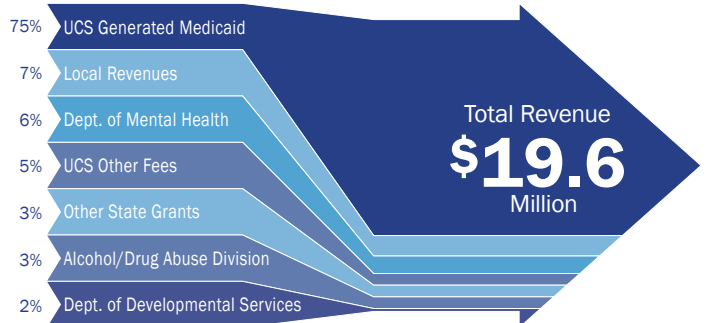
2,568 individuals served in FY 2019-20



“The Finance Division works diligently

behind the scenes so that our front-line staff can focus on serving the community. None of our jobs have been easy during the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are all in this together and helping each other one day at a time.”

—Jill Doyle, Director of Finance



PPP Loan

In the spring of 2020, United Counseling Service applied for and received a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan through The Bank of Bennington. PPP was a federal program designed to provide a direct incentive for small businesses to keep their workers on payroll during the COVID-19 crisis. The funds allowed UCS to cover staff salaries and keep our entire workforce in place.



“Our expansion will increase the opportunities for young children and their families.

It is our commitment to provide opportunity and improve the future of the Bennington community.”

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

We Are Here for You,

right from the beginning, starting with
the youngest members of our community.



Board of Directors

- William Baldwin, *President*
- Nathaniel Marcoux, *Treasurer*
- Kathy Clark, *Secretary*
- Stephanie Eames, *Policy Council Representative*
- Theodore Bird
- Jessica Smith-Harlteben



Rec Center expansion: increasing access and services

Governor Phil Scott, local dignitaries, and representatives of Vermont's congressional delegation broke ground for an early childhood center that will provide much needed childcare for infants, toddlers and preschool children and improved facilities for the community.

The center, which is being constructed as an addition to the existing Bennington Recreation Center on Gage Street, is a joint project of the town of Bennington, United Counseling Service, Bennington County



Architect's rendering of the expanded facility

Head Start and Early Head Start, and the Rec Center. In addition to childcare space, it will feature a multi-purpose room, a community cafe, and a new entrance with a lobby and elevator. The project includes the

creation of 25 parking spaces and the installation of a sprinkler system throughout the building. The facility will be ADA-compliant.

It has been shown that parents who can depend on childcare that is safe, nurturing, and educational are more productive and reliable members of the workforce. According to UCS's 2018 *Let's Grow Kids* report, 78% of infants and 53% of toddlers likely to need care in Bennington County do not have access to high-quality programs. The new Early Childhood Center will allow for an increased capacity of up to 18 infants and toddlers.

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: Preparing 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



ReadyRosie

This year (prior to the pandemic) we added a new tool for our families with the launch of ReadyRosie, an online, evidence-based parenting curriculum. The program uses a combined approach of providing rich parenting content at home and participation in interactive workshops online, empowering children and families to learn and build capacity in the comfort of their own homes and with their peers.

After we were forced to close our onsite facilities due to COVID-19, participation skyrocketed to 134 users. We provided workshops via Zoom, and teachers were able to meet virtually with families, exploring and discussing content together online.

Classroom teachers also created closed Facebook groups, providing families with much-needed extended opportunities to interact and connect with teachers and each other.



School Readiness

This year, our school readiness goals look different than ever before, reflecting the impact of COVID-19 on our learning community.

On March 17, 2020 at the behest of the state, our children, families and staff abruptly transitioned from onsite, center-based learning to virtual learning. It was a challenge for all, but our teachers, staff, and families rose to the occasion, doing their very best to juggle and make things work.

The Vermont Agency of Education eliminated the spring Final Progress Checkpoint for students enrolled in pre-kindergarten programs. This report reflects data from our midpoint progress and is not reflective of the full school-year of data that is normally reported.

As of February 2020, the Winter/Midpoint progress showed:

The Head Start current disability rate for the group is 19.8% of all preschoolers have an IEP and receive IEP services.

The Early Head Start current disability rate has increased to 21 of 48 children or 43.8% of infants and toddlers have an IFSP or One Plan and receive Early Intervention services.

Percent of children meeting/exceeding age-level expectation:

Social and Emotional Development 85.2% of infants and toddlers
• 76.6% of three-year-olds • 79.5% of four-year-olds

Language Development 79.7% of infants and toddlers • 69.5% of three-year-olds • 78.6% of four-year-olds

Literacy Development 93.7% of infants and toddlers • 42.5% of three-year-olds • 62% of four-year-olds

Mathematics 88.6% of infants and toddlers • 53.3% of three-year-olds • 78.3% of four-year-olds

Approaches to Learning 86.1% of infants and toddlers • 74.7% of three-year-olds • 77.8% of four-year-olds

Physical Development 86.2% of infants and toddlers • 83.8% of three-year-olds • 80.6% of four-year-olds

Scientific Reasoning 93.5% of three-year-olds emerging and meets age-level expectation • 97.5% of four-year-olds emerging and meets age-level expectation

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



Providing Essential Services during COVID-19

We provided childcare to essential workers, primarily those working in the health services field at the onset of COVID-19. We provided childcare weekly to seven children, ages 0-4, who were previously enrolled at one of our sites. Ours was one of only two Head Start programs in the state that were able to provide essential worker childcare.

United Children's Services Head Start Program Fiscal 2019-20

REVENUE

US Department of Health & Human Services	\$ 2,636,055
State/Local Contracts	\$ 1,674,171
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,900
Total Revenue	\$ 4,312,126

EXPENSES

Salaries	\$ 2,288,697
Fringe	\$ 545,664
Other Personnel Costs	\$ 406,796
Operating Expenses	\$ 629,979
Travel & Transportation	\$ 127,569
Building Expenses	\$ 305,654
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$ 7,767
Total Expenses	\$ 4,312,126

In the 2019-20 school year, Bennington County Head Start and Early Head Start programs served:

Early Head Start:

59 children enrolled / **54** families served
98% average monthly enrollment
(100% for nine months, 83% for one month)

Head Start:

141 children enrolled / **134** families served
97% average monthly enrollment
(100% for nine months, 71% for one month)

65.5% of enrolled children received **medical exams**.
33.5% of enrolled children received **dental exams**.



Head Start participated in the Vermont Arts Exchange Village Parade in North Bennington in April. It was a way to bring community members together in a safe, physically-distanced way.

100%

of UCS board members contribute.

Together, we are building a stronger community. Thank you!

\$1,001 and up

Anonymous
Barec Charitable Fund
Judith M. Buechner
William and Linda Drunsic
in memory of Bob Drunsic
The Prentice Foundation, Inc.
Virginia Steel*
Vermont Community Foundation
Constance West
White Light Foundation

\$501-\$1000

Austin Chinn
Claudia and Peter Kinder
Charitable Fund
of the Vermont Community
Foundation
Peter and Lisa Hillman
in memory of Gregory S. Hillman
Jim and Natasha Mindling
Sunshine Fund
Langdon Wheeler and Kathy
Metcalfe

\$250-\$500

Ben and Jeanne Brumaghin
Juliette Combe Larson
Dorothy A. Danforth
*in memory of Nicholas
Danforth, M.D.*
Hayden Plumbing and Heating Inc.
Lorna and Tom Mattern
Scott Olsen
Alice and Ross Sandler
in honor of Joanna Mintzer
Town of Winhall
Jess and Rosalinda Weiner

\$101-\$250

Anonymous
Leslie Addison and Jim Sullivan
Bill and Ruth Botzow
Burr & Burton Class of '65
*in memory of Judy Pennock**
James Clune
John and Lisa Cueman
Brian and Jan Cunningham
Wade and Roberta Devlin-Scherer
Jane and Stephen Duda
Eleanor G. Dyett
in honor of Sue Pierce
Christopher and Kristy Elwell
in honor of Elizabeth R. Elwell
Dorothy Griffith
*in memory of Judy Pennock**
Jean Haynes
in memory of Julie Haynes Held
Stuart and Colleen Hoskins
Interprint, Inc.
in memory of Julie Haynes Held
Richard and Ann Jackson
William and Janis Ketterer
Sara King Devries
Ellen D. Kouwenhoven

in memory of Gerrit Kouwenhoven
Patricia Lapham
Kathi Marcoux
*in memory of Judy Pennock**
Michael S. McKenna
David and Gail O'Brien
in honor of Jill Doyle
Ralph and Mary Provenza
Robin Tarnas and Barbara Raskin
in memory of Dr. Herbert Raskin
Mike and Jillian Veitch
Aaron Warner
in memory of Archie Warner

Up to \$100

Anonymous
Gerald Albert
Rita Allard
in memory of George A. Allard
Alan Bashevkin and
Nancy Pearlman
Lois Miller Beardwood
in memory of Penn Reed
Jack and Pat Bennett
Ellen Perry Berkeley
Jo and Craig Berry
*in memory of Judy Pennock**
Bolio Propane Service, LLC
Raymond and Ruthie Bolton
*in memory of Judy Pennock**
Roger and Julia Bolton
Michael and Catherine Brady
Robert and Jennifer Bushee
C.L. White, Inc.
Rick Carroll and Dianna Leazer
*in memory of Jonathan G. Hoyt**
The Catamount Retired Teachers
Group
*in memory of Judy Pennock **
Kenneth and Lila Cestone
Charles and Kathryn Chamberlain
The Cichanowski Family
*in memory of Judy Pennock**
Terese and Michael Comar
*in memory of Jonathan G. Hoyt**
Marlyn Couture
in memory of Kimberly Couture Rist
Richard and Debbie Cutler
*in memory of Judy Pennock**
Loretta M. Davignon
in memory of Julie Haynes Held
Mark Davis
in honor of Joanna Mintzer
Scott and Melinda Dickie
*in memory of Jonathan G. Hoyt**
Paul and Kelly DiIonno
Dean Dixon
Jeremy H. Dole
Patricia J. Dupree
John and Mary English
Judith and David Estes
*in memory of Judy Pennock**
Janet Fabricius
Donald R. Ferrell

in honor of Joanna Mintzer
Stacy Fielding
Danielle Fogarty
Fraternal Order of Eagles
Virginia Freeman
Heidi and Jon French
John and Kathy Frost
*in memory of Judy Pennock**
Walter and Dana Gilbert
Audrey Giumarra
Ruth Goldstone
Louis and Marie Guariniello
Richard and Judith Haight
Henry and Kathy Hall
John and Bonnie Halpin
in honor of Joseph O'Dea
Marilyn and Jim Hand
Hannaford Supermarkets
Elaine Harwood
Huc H. Hauser
Darlene J. Hazelton
John Hearst
Andrew Hildick-Smith and
Claire Jacobus
David and Shirley Hosley
in honor of Jeffrey Casey
David and Diane Howard
in memory of Julie Haynes Held
Donna Hoyt
*in memory of Jonathan G. Hoyt**
William LeGard Hoyt and
Kassidy Page
*in memory of Jonathan G. Hoyt**
Phyllis A. Hutton
in memory of Julie Haynes Held
Hugh A. Johnson
Mary H. Johnson
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*in memory of Jonathan G. Hoyt**
William and Tammy Lorette
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*in memory of Judy Pennock**
Theresa Wood
*in memory of Jonathan G. Hoyt**
Sandy Young
in memory of Julie Haynes Held

*Donation to United Children's Services

COVID-19 Donations of Goods

We are grateful to all who provided much-needed items at a critical time.

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 13
Beverly and Kenneth Beahn
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Joe Danner
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Green Mountain Mask Makers
David Katrick
Miranda LaCroix

Northeast IS
Jackie Prue
Southwest VT Career Development Center
Surgical Masks of Vermont
Maty Willette
Kathy Williams
Robert Zink and Volunteers
Valerie Zwiercan



The BARN SALE could not take place due to COVID, but the committee is busy behind the scenes planning a spectacular return in 2021.



UNITED COUNSELING SERVICE

BUILDING A STRONGER COMMUNITY

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

Youth and Family Services

314 Dewey Street, Bennington, VT 05201

Head Start/Early Head Start Main Office

2 Park Street, North Bennington, VT 05257

(802) 442-3686

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

59 River Road, North Bennington, VT 05257

Head Start/Early Head Start

97 School House Road, Pownal, VT 05261

UCS Residential Facilities

Autumn House Group Home

Bank Street Independent Living Complex

Gatling House Group Home

South Street Group Home

Union Street Group Home

United Counseling Service

100 Ledge Hill Drive

P.O. Box 588

Bennington, VT 05201