

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Windham County will expand statewide

In the interest of serving more children in Vermont with mentors, Youth Services is transitioning its successful Big Brothers Big Sisters program into a statewide organization in July.

“Presently there are 70 community and school-based Big Brothers Big Sisters matches in Windham County with more than triple the number anticipating being served state-wide by the new structure,” explained Russell Bradbury-Carlin, Youth Services’ Executive Director.

“In this move to serve more Vermont young people living in difficult circumstances we are making every effort to ensure that quality mentoring services continue to be delivered in Windham County,” said Bradbury-Carlin, who described a year-long process they have undergone, with milestones, guided by a transition committee made up of Youth Services board members and BBBS Advisory Board members.

The new entity serving the Green Mountain state will be named Big Brothers Big Sisters of Vermont and Youth Services’ current Director of Mentoring, Kimberley Diemond, will be its Executive Director.

Bradbury-Carlin stated, “I have every faith that Kimberley will be a great leader and I have full confidence that the transition will be seamless for the Bigs, Littles and the many community organizations that Big Brothers Big Sisters of Windham County partners with.”

Bradbury-Carlin said that mentoring is an essential part of all Youth Services programs, from its transitional living program to court diversion. Staff or volunteers often work one-on-one with young people living under difficult circumstances, or in

Jeff Woodward



Big Brother Steven and his “little” Dreshawn

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BrattRock Youth Rock Festival returns September 23

Planning is underway for this year’s BrattRock—The Brattleboro Youth Rock Festival on Saturday, September 23 at the 118 Elliot Street event space.

Now in its second year, the festival’s mission is to provide a venue for musical youth from Brattleboro and the surrounding region to connect, learn, perform, inspire, and be inspired. Youth Services is the fiscal sponsor of BrattRock. Events and activities emphasize both educational and performance opportunities. Participation is free and open to youth under age 20 who are musicians, or who have an interest in music or the music industry.

Last year’s inaugural event included workshops offered by local music professionals and live performances by 14 area youth bands on two different stages which drew an audience of over 400 spectators. 🌸

New lounge offers quarterly musical opportunities

The BrattRock Lounge is a new once-a-quarter Sunday gathering, next in early August, for youth at the newly renovated performance space at the Brattleboro Boys & Girls Club on Flat St. from 3-7 pm. Activities feature music-related workshops, discussions, and demonstrations followed by a youth open mic. Musicians and non-musicians are welcome. Workshops are free, and registration is open to youth ages 18 and under.

Youth musicians and bands are invited to register online for both the lounge and the rock festival at brattrock.org. Sponsorship and volunteer opportunities are also available. Contact brattrock2016@gmail.com. 🌸



BBBS of Windham County will expand statewide

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small groups. He expects his organization to maintain a close working relationship with the new entity, especially in regard to its Windham County matches.

“One of the strengths of Youth Services has always been the wide range of prevention, intervention and development programs we bring to the families and young people we serve. We expect to continue to refer at-risk children who could benefit from a mentor to apply to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Vermont as well as continuing to innovate with our proprietary programs,” Bradbury-Carlin stated.

Part of a national organization, there are over 350 Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies across the country, approximately 50 of which operate with the assistance of a sponsoring agency, which best describes the mentoring program’s long and successful relationship with Youth Services.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Windham County was one of

the first programs that Youth Services launched after it was founded in 1972 as a community nonprofit. Over its more than 40 year history together, there have been close to 2000 matches made, some lasting a few years and others a lifetime. Their newest program is Bigs in Blue, a school-based program that pairs elementary students with local police officers.

National research demonstrates that “mentoring”—pairing a caring adult volunteer with a young person for a mutually rewarding friendship—is an effective method of addressing all sorts of youth-related issues, from combating drug and alcohol use and violence to getting along better with their families and peers. Youth mentored by the program are 46% less likely to use drugs and 27% less likely to use alcohol than their non-mentored peers.

For information on volunteering, call Big Brothers Big Sisters at (802) 257-0361, email info@bbbsvt.org or visit www.bbbsvt.org.

32nd Annual Youth Services Golf Tourney and Helicopter Ball Drop supports safety net for area youth

Youth Services invites area golfers to participate in its annual golf tournament at Brattleboro Country Club on Wednesday, July 26, 2017. This is the 32nd year that Youth Services has organized this tournament to support the safety net for youth in our community, making it one of the longest-running charity tournaments in the area.

New this year, the event will kick off with a free bag lunch picked up from registration between 11 and noon. The shotgun start for the Scrambles format tournament has been moved up from 1 pm to noon. Following the tournament there will be a banquet, sponsored by G.S. Precision.

The tournament’s Hole-In-One Contest prizes are sponsored by Brattleboro Subaru and include: 2017 Subaru Forester; a Kindle Fire HDX; a \$500 Visa Gift Card; and Nike Irons. Prizes will also be awarded for low gross and low net game scores, as well as for the Longest Drive and Closest to the Pin for both men and women. Mulligans also will be on sale, and the traditional putting contest will take place during the tournament.

A special feature at this year’s tournament is a Helicopter Golf Ball Drop at the close of the tournament, in which the owner of the winning golf ball collects \$3000 cash. A ride in the Renaud Bros. Inc. helicopter, piloted by Mike Renaud will be auctioned live.

Individuals do not need to be part of the tournament to buy golf balls, priced at \$100 each, nor be present at the drop to win the cash prize. Buckets of golf balls will be dropped from 20 feet on the fairway at the Brattleboro Country Club. A maximum of 100 balls, now available for purchase, will be sold, making the odds of winning high.

Pacesetters Sponsors are G.S. Precision; Brattleboro Subaru; and The Richards Group. **Sustaining Sponsors** are Brattleboro Savings & Loan; Clear ChoiceMD Urgent Care;



Edward Jones Investments; H & R Block; New Chapter; River Valley Credit Union; Swiss Precision Turning; TransCanada; Twombly Wealth Management; Vermont Country Deli and VSECU. **Patron Sponsors** are Brattleboro Retreat; C.E. Bradley Laboratories; Chroma Technology; Crispe & Crispe; David Manning Inc.; Green Mountain Tents; Trust Company of Vermont; and Rolls Royce Nuclear. **Associate Sponsors** are Cota & Cota Oil Co; Downs Rachlin Martin, PLLC; Hazel Restaurant; True North Granola and W.W. Building Supply.

All proceeds from the tournament, which annually grosses close to \$20,000, will help support Youth Services’ programs.

To buy a golf ball for the drop, visit www.youthservicesinc.org/ball-drop.

To register for the tournament, call Youth Services at (802) 257-0361 or visit www.youthservicesinc.org/golf

Youth Services celebrates new Bellows Falls location

Youth Services recently opened a new office at 22 Bridge St. to better serve the young people and families of the Greater Bellows Falls region. Last year over 200 young people from Athens, Grafton Saxtons River, Westminster, and the Bellows Falls areas received services from Youth Services, including 10 young people who spent 4-6 months in its Transitional Living program housing for homeless or unsafely housed youth while they gained employment and other independent living skills.

Youth Services has operated a satellite office in Bellows Falls for 20 years, previously at Parks Place on School Street, with at times up to four full-time staff. Before then, Brattleboro-based staff provided all the services for area youth, including full-time student assistance counselors at Bellows Falls Union High and Middle schools with an emphasis on substance abuse prevention.

Out of the new office, Bellows Falls-based staff members Michelle Sacco and Janice Berube offer case management for ages 16-22, job skills training and transitional living skills for area young people living under difficult circumstances. JUMP (Just Us Moms Program) and the Diaper Bank Collaborative serve young parents. This year alone, Sacco and Berube trained 106 high school students in healthy relationships and STD and Pregnancy prevention using the evidence-based Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) curriculum.

Youth Services Court Diversion board will continue holding panels in Bellows Falls. The Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) program will also serve youth ages 13-22 who have been adjudicated in Family Court, are on probation, are at risk of a truancy filing, have Youthful Offender Status, or require additional support.

Youth Services' RAMP mentoring program at Bellows Falls Union High School is laying the groundwork to recruit new participants, mentors and site visit locations for when school starts next September.

"We are pleased to have a sustained presence in the greater Bellows Falls area and enjoy close partnerships with the area's



Russell Bradbury-Carlin addressed attendees at recent open house.

nonprofits, social services and schools," stated Russell Bradbury Carlin, Youth Services Executive Director. "The office on Bridge Street gives us higher visibility in the community and we hope many more young people and families seeking assistance walk through our doors as a result."

There are many ways community members can get involved in the Youth Services Bellows Falls operation, according to Bradbury-Carlin. "We are seeking Host Homes to provide emergency shelter for homeless and runaway youth; we need volunteers to share their time, skills and life experiences with young mothers in our JUMP: Just Us Moms Program; and we welcome donations of diapers and wipes to the Diaper Bank Collaborative," he said.

Bradbury-Carlin explained that Youth Services is always looking to collaborate with area businesses on training its clients in job skills while its RAMP mentoring program at BFUHS is seeking area professionals to share their career trajectories with the high school participants.

For more information about Youth Services in the Greater Falls Region, contact (802) 460-0398 or email michelle.sacco@youthservicesinc.org 🌱



Transforming Lives, Inspiring Futures

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Youth Services provides transformative programs in prevention, intervention and development for young people and families in Windham County communities.

URGENT NEED: Foster Homes for Young People

Do you have a spare bedroom this summer or during the school year? Maybe you have thoughts about trying fostering? Youth Services is helping the Department of Children & Families locate new foster homes (temporary and longer term) for 10 local teenagers who will lose their long-term placement (for reasons beyond their control) this July and August.

These high school students will be attending camp, volunteering or be employed during the summer months; attending school during the academic year and supported by a case manager. You could be their hero! Zach, for example, is a personable 17-year-old young man who is a rising senior at BUHS. He is employed in town this summer. The program pays a daily stipend to cover expenses (room and board, clothing, transportation, etc.) For more information, contact Sarah Croitoru at Youth Services (802) 257-0361 x119 or email info@youthservicesinc.org 🌱

Youth Services tackles truancy in Windham County schools

Youth Services' Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) program recognizes that many young people entering the criminal justice system have underlying factors that might lead to their criminal misconduct. The organization works with youth ages 13 through 22 who have been adjudicated in Family Court, are on probation, are at risk of a truancy filing, have Youthful Offender Status, or require additional support.

According to Youth Services' Executive Director, Russell Bradbury-Carlin early intervention is key to addressing the reasons that kids aren't showing up for school or have started to get in trouble with the law. "With early intervention we can reduce the likelihood of future involvement in the justice system," he explained. "Sometimes, by offering individual or group coaching in conflict resolution, anger management, and other skills, we can help the young person and their parents turn around the situation," stated Bradbury-Carlin.

Jocelyn York, Youth Services' BARJ Coordinator is an integral part of the School Success Program, a collaboration between Youth Services and Windham Southeast Supervisory Union. The program focuses on truancy intervention for students age 13-18. The program works primarily one-on-one with students, but also includes work with families and other involved community providers.

"Our BARJ coordinator looks at all areas of a student and family's life that contribute to or can help solve the problem."

"Jocelyn works from a different stance than the traditional "Truancy Officer", Bradbury-Carlin stressed, "acting instead as a supportive helper with a positive, proactive and less punitive approach that builds the necessary skills and understanding needed for student and families to make a long-term commitment to education. She looks at all areas of a student and family's life that contribute to or can help solve the problem."

York's supportive case management focuses on reducing stresses at home that might be related to money or work problems, housing issues, health needs, and/or transportation.



Jocelyn York focuses on early intervention.

She works to identify and develop the skills and interests of the young person.

York explains, "We link youth and their families with other community providers that can meet their needs. By getting my clients involved with other established community supports and activities outside of the school, I can help them reduce their life stressors and focus more clearly on what they need to do to get through school. When necessary, I also may help a student switch to another school or academic program that may better fit their needs than the traditional K-12 system."

According to Bradbury-Carlin, the outcomes of this collaboration are increased school attendance, improved relationships in family and school, improved life satisfaction and self-esteem, increased parent involvement, and improved access and use of resources.

To find out more about Youth Services Restorative Justice programs, call Youth Services at (802) 257-0361 or visit www.youthservicesinc.org 

New Youth Development Director promoted from within



Christine Linn

Youth Services recently welcomed Christine Linn to the position of Director for Youth Development. In this role Linn ensures that all the programs she supervises meet the changing needs of youth in Windham County as well as the requirements of the grants and contracts that partially fund this work. She is also responsible for ensuring that every young person has the adult support they need to complete their education, learn independence and contribute to our community.

Linn started with the agency nearly three years ago as a therapeutic case manager where she helped youth ages 16 to 23 build life skills in core areas of housing, education, health and employment in the transition to independence and self-sufficiency. In addition to her one-on-one work with clients, Linn played a key role in the very successful Young Mom's program in Brattleboro in conjunction with the Early Education Services.

"Christine brings with her knowledge of the organization balanced with a real understanding of the needs of the youth we work with," said Russell Bradbury-Carlin, executive director of the youth-serving nonprofit. "Her work ethic, commitment, and devotion to our clients are known to all here at Youth Services and the management staff will look to her as a key member." 

Youth Services' Spring Whodunit?

Gala featured a sold-out crowd for a wedding and a murder

The spring gala was a chance to crash a wedding and support a great cause: Youth Services! Held in both the church and grange of Dummerston Center the agency employed the talented actors of Vermont Theatre Company to direct the festivities.

In between the wedding dinner, silent auction of the “gift table” wedding cake, champagne toast and dancing to the tunes of The Butterfly Swing Band, clues were revealed, accusations were made, and fun was had by all! The evening of mystery, intrigue and live music will benefit Youth Services' critical safety net for area young people. 🌸

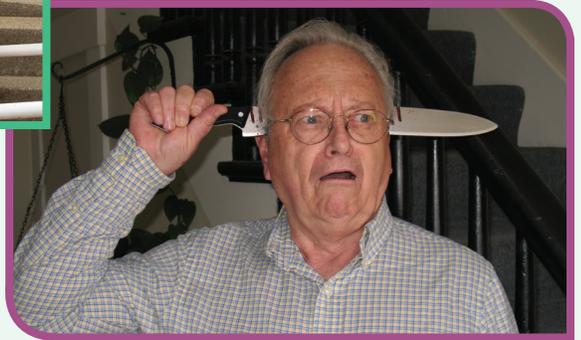
Photos by Michelle Frehsee



Vermont Theatre Company provided the entertainment, together with The Butterfly Swing Band.



The Dummerston church and grange hosted the event.



Board member David Brown chaired the event.

Career Summit held for Windham County sophomores

More than 200 tenth graders attended a Sophomore Career Summit recently at the Latchis Theatre to explore career interests and gain information directly from the business community in small group with panel discussions composed of local professionals. Core organizers were staff from Youth Services, Vermont Student Assistance Corporation and Southern Vermont Area Health Education Center.

Each student attended two pre-selected workshops representative of the 20 career pathways being explored. The focus of the panels range from political and legal careers, to renewable energy, public safety, construction trades, forestry or advanced manufacturing, to name a few. The day concluded with a keynote speaker and a panel discussion on post-secondary options.

“From my work with high school-aged young people I knew that the tenth graders could benefit from more exposure to a variety of career paths,” explained Youth Services’ Susan Lawson-Kelleher, Workforce Development Coordinator who directs the RAMP career-focused mentoring program in Brattleboro and Bellows Falls high schools.

According to Susan Lawson-Kelleher, it has been a huge year-long collaborative effort between the school systems, area organizations with interest in youth and workforce education. “The hope of many involved is that this will become an annual event. Businesses and area professionals are also excited to have a chance to shape the career directions of area students,” explained Lawson-Kelleher. 🌸



Youth Services Charitable Gift Annuity provides for loved ones

When Cheryl Wilfong's father in the Midwest passed away leaving her a generous inheritance, Cheryl thought long and hard about how the money she received could be invested to make a difference in her adopted community of Windham County. She wanted to support organizations, like Youth Services, which helps people living in difficult circumstances. At the same time she wanted to honor the community service of her partner of 25 years, Bill McKim, a long-time Big Brother with Youth Services' mentoring program, and provide him with an income stream, should she predecease him.

Cheryl decided to purchase a Youth Services' gift annuity which would provide Bill with a fixed annuity payment for life that he could count on every year. After their death, what was left would become a gift to Youth Services' Endowment Fund, ensuring that the agency would continue as a safety net for area children living in difficult circumstances.

“Whatever remains in her Youth Services' gift annuity account when Bill passes will be used to support Youth Services, rather than to provide profits to a commercial insurance company.”

“For us, or for any couple who gets together in middle age, the charitable gift annuity is a way to ‘take care’ of my spouse, without leaving money to any children from previous marriages, who are already comfortable financially,” explained Wilfong. “The Youth Services Charitable Gift Annuity solved my knotty problem—one that many second marriages or in this case third, will recognize!”

Learning that The Vermont Community Foundation managed Youth Services' charitable gift annuity program, Cheryl said

she was “sold”, as she had long admired the work of the foundation to support Vermont nonprofits and she knew of its reputation for strong management and sound investments.

Cheryl had the option to choose to have the annuity start payments now or in the future. Like commercial annuities, part of Bill's annual income will not be subject to income tax. Youth Services' gift annuity rates are competitive with those offered by commercial insurance companies.

When she decided to purchase a Youth Services' gift annuity, Cheryl received a few additional benefits. One is that she could use stocks or bonds that have appreciated in value to purchase her annuity, something that she couldn't use to purchase a commercial insurance annuity. She also qualified for a charitable deduction from her current income taxes, no matter when she decided to begin the annuity payments. The best result, though, is that whatever remains in her Youth Services' gift annuity account when Bill passes will be used to support Youth Services, rather than to provide profits to a commercial insurance company.

For more information, contact Youth Services Development Director at (802) 257-0361 or visit www.youthservicesinc.org 



Supporters Bill McKim and Cheryl Wilfong.

Pre-trial program gets boost from skilled coordinator



James Arana

Youth Services has hired James Arana as Pretrial Services Coordinator for the organization. This Pretrial Program was first started in 2015 after the passage of Act 195 by the Vermont legislature to address a judicial system overwhelmed by many cases best addressed outside of the courtroom.

According to Youth Services' Executive Director, Russell Bradbury-Carlin, the agency's Pretrial Program recognizes

that many people entering the criminal justice system have underlying factors that lead to the criminal misconduct.

“It is a voluntary program designed to screen for the presence of substance abuse or mental health issues to inform the criminal justice system about whether alternative paths to rehabilitation may be more effective than the traditional criminal justice system,” Bradbury-Carlin explained.

As Pretrial Services Coordinator, James Arana meets with individuals who choose to participate, and conducts a risk assessment and needs screening. He then shares an interpretive score of the results with the prosecutor's office and provides the individual with information about resources to help address areas of concern.

“The judge can use those results when determining bail and conditions of release, and the prosecutor can offer defendants the opportunity to participate in a Pre-charge Program that does not involve filing the case with the court,” Arana explained.

Arana is committed to working with the justice system to help people identify the underlying issues in their lives that cause self-destructive and/or criminal behavior, rather than focusing solely on punitive measures. “This program is in alignment with Youth Services decades-long work in restorative justice, which focuses on repairing harm caused by crime and dealing with the risks and needs of the person who commit crimes,” stated Arana.

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Rick Holloway of Chroma joins Youth Services Board



Rick Holloway

Rick Holloway, the Facilities and Equipment Manager of Chroma Technology since 2001, recently joined 18 other community members in serving on Youth Services' board of directors. Through nineteen programs ranging from restorative justice, to outreach, mentoring, transitional living and case management, the nonprofit agency helps Windham County young people and families thrive.

A self-described "high school drop-out with a GED and 20 years of addiction recovery," Holloway brings a unique and varied point of view to the Youth Services board, according to Rachel Selsky, board president, who said they are fortunate to have this youth advocate share his insights when they are developing strategic plans for the future of the organization. "Rick's deep understanding of the problems facing Windham County young people and families will be a tremendous asset to the board," Selsky predicted.

"Given my background and the changes I've made in my own life, I want to give back by helping youth find a way past the trials I faced."

Holloway first became connected with the nonprofit by giving tours at Chroma to Youth Services' participants in its workforce development programs. These initiatives seek to expose adolescents to potential employers and careers in the community.

Holloway also mentored individual Youth Services' clients in an entry level position at Chroma dedicated to exposing local youth to job skills over a six-month period. According to Holloway, it was the first job for many of them, providing the skills and a track record which led many to other employment.

"Given my background and the changes I've made in my own life, I want to give back by helping youth find a way past the trials I faced," explained Holloway.

In addition to the Youth Services Board, Holloway currently serves on the Rockingham School Board and the WNESU Board. In the past Rick was involved with Youth Services as part of the Bellows Falls Advisory Board to Youth Services. He also had served on the Rockingham Conservation Commission, The Saxtons River Recreation Area and the Saxtons River Fire Station Building Committee.

To learn how you can get involved with Youth Services or to refer a youth for assistance, visit www.youthservicesinc.org or call 802-257-0361.

Youth Services celebrates Vermont Youth of The Year awardee

Bellows Falls, VT--Alexis Harris, 21, of Bellows Falls has been awarded the Youth of the Year Award by the Vermont Youth Development Program and the Vermont Coalition of Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs (VCRHYP), two state entities working with community organizations such as Youth Services that serve young people in the state. The award was given this year to five young people in Vermont who have transformed their life in a positive way and have given back to their community while demonstrating resilience.

According to Michelle Sacco, Alexis Harris' case manager at Youth Services, her client has gone in five years from an angry 16-year-old homeless teenager who had very little support in her life from anyone to being a 21-year-old woman with a 3-year-old daughter who works every day to help others in need.

"If someone needs help, Alexis is the first one to drop everything to be there for them, including employers," stated Sacco who nominated Harris for the award. "Alexis was working two jobs, 6 days a week, often 12-14 hour days because she is not only a reliable, responsible and committed employee," explained Sacco, "but she wants to take care of herself and her daughter without any assistance!"

In Bellows Falls, Harris performed a myriad of jobs to help those who come to the Drop In Center: looking for assistance with applying for housing, childcare, Reach UP, transportation, and Medicaid, in addition to filling the food shelves.

According to Sacco, Harris started there as a volunteer and was recruited to fill a staff position because of her compassion and commitment to the people she serves.

In her nomination, Sacco recalled last year when Harris became a court-appointed guardian to a 17-year old girl who was facing serious drug charges. Harris took this girl in, gave her a home, made sure she made her court appointments, went to school, met with DCF and probation, got a job, had food and clothing and necessities, and stayed away from drugs and alcohol, according to Sacco.

Sacco marveled that Harris was so mature and responsible and focused that she could not only care for herself and her young daughter, but also this 17-year-old who needed a lot of support and supervision. And yet Harris did this and did it well. "This now 18-year-old is successful in large part from the love and care and commitment of a remarkable young woman who selflessly gave up her home, her time and often her sanity to be sure this young woman could be successful and safe," testified Sacco.



Alexis Harris



What kind of person would
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someone else's kids?

A very special person—like the members
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Bill Penniman & Betsy Gentile
Youth Services
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Transforming Lives, Inspiring Futures

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Change Service Requested

Pre-trial program gets boost from skilled coordinator *continued from page 6*

Arana consults with numerous other organizations, regional, national, and international. He is Senior Consultant and Trainer for MERGE for Gender Equality, Inc., where he focuses internationally on training men and women to work as allies in gender-based and family violence prevention. He is also Director of Youth Programming and Training for The Performance Project and the First Generation youth program in Western Massachusetts. He was co-founder of Men's Resources International, and served as associate director for ten years.

Arana worked as a prevention specialist and Program Director for Cooley Dickinson Hospital in Western Massachusetts. "James spent many years working directly with young adults struggling with anger and addiction issues giving him great insight into the clients in our pre-trial program," explained Bradbury-Carlin. "We are thrilled to have such a seasoned social worker in our ranks."

For more information on Youth Services Restorative Justice programs or to support these efforts with a donation, visit youthservicesinc.org or call (802) 257-0361. 

Youth Services celebrates Vermont Youth of The Year awardee *continued from page 7*

"In my work with Bellows Falls young people I do see resilience, I do see potential, I do see love and courage," Sacco explained, "but when I see on top of all that someone give up their time, their home, their independence, and their finances to help a young person in need and do so selflessly and with love and unending patience, I have to step back and smile and marvel and give thanks that I have been fortunate enough to not only know this person, but to have them as part of my life and my community," enthused Sacco.

This winter Harris came full circle, said Sacco, serving as a Resident Advisor for Youth Services' Shelter in Bellows Falls, in an unpaid, live-in position that deals with emergencies and day-to-day issues which arise with the shelter's population of homeless youth.

Youth Services' Bellows Falls office provides case management (for youth ages 16-22); Independent Living Skills support; Shelter and Host Homes; JUMP: Just Us Moms Program; Personal Responsibility Education Program; Runaway and Homeless Youth Hotline; Juvenile Diversion; Balance and Restorative Justice; RAMP Career-Focused Mentoring; and the Diaper Bank Collaborative.

For more information, contact Youth Services at (802) 460-0398, visit www.youthservicesinc.org or stop in at 22 Bridge St. in Bellows Falls, VT. 