

2023



Sunrise Family  
Resource Center  
Strengthening Families

ANNUAL  
COMMUNITY  
REPORT

**"IN EVERY PERSON THERE IS A SUN,  
JUST LET THEM SHINE."**

-SOCRATES-

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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

To the Sunrise Community,

You hold in your hands our Annual Report, and I am very proud of the details that you will find within. I hope that you will take pride in this document, as well: whatever your connection may be to Sunrise, your presence is a meaningful part of something special.

In the pages that follow, you will see details of an organization with healthy and stable financials, a generous (and much beloved!) donor base, a similarly generous and just as beloved volunteer cohort, innovative and dedicated staff members, successful and inclusive programming, and story after story of the impacts Sunrise has on the families who remain where they have always been: at the center of everything we do.

As board chair, I had the pleasure of joining for a portion of Sunrise's Parent Child Center Peer Review visit in April. Every three years, Sunrise opens its doors to PCC directors, state partners, and other officials to provide a tour of facilities, an overview of programs and services, and a forum for gathering "commendations and recommendations" from guests to help guide the next three years. As will come as a surprise to no one, the materials were remarkable. Distilled into fewer than a dozen pages were details on Sunrise's recent growth, new grant activity, social capital initiatives, family advocacy and support, child development, and high school completion. To those of us in attendance, the presentations from our executive director, our program leads, and most of all from our families, made clear that Sunrise is a source of abundant support and success.

Our constellation of buildings along Union Street continue to bring energy, activity, and joy to the neighborhood. Cheers to the year we had, and here's to the year to come!

**Jonathan Cooper**  
Board Chair

Pictured from left to right:  
Kerry Krawczyk  
Linda Bow- Treasurer  
Jonathan Cooper- Chair  
Sharon Cave- Secretary  
Peter Lawrence- Vice Chair  
(missing from picture) Larry Cole





## A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Sunrise Community,

We've been busy this year filling gaps in community resources, knowing more will always be needed. It's rewarding when we find innovative ways to make a true difference in the lives of families. Sunrise has always been able to identify these needs by listening to those we partner with, families, community agencies and statewide efforts. We also hosted our tri-annual Parent Child Center Peer Review where we heard from staff, parents, and colleagues how we can continue to grow by staying true to our areas of strength and expertise, prevention and resiliency.

As stated in our spring newsletter, housing has been a particular challenge. We've added another housing case manager to our staff. With Act 76, we are adding a second child care subsidy specialist to accommodate the increased number of families that will now qualify, making child care more affordable for Vermonters. Sunrise is home to the statewide implementation of Parents as Teachers home-based services program. Another new position. Our Brain Lab Playgroup, which facilitates serve-and-return interactions between parent/caregivers and their infants and toddlers began this month. We've been hosting Family Engagement activities, called Passport to Fun! More changes to come as our staff continues to grow along with our services.

When you hear about health and equity efforts removing barriers for people and families, transportation should come to mind. Without transportation, the simplest tasks in life become insurmountable. Access to food, doing your laundry, getting your child to the doctor, and holding a job add layers of stress to any situation. Our Families on the Move Grant has allowed us to help with car repairs, purchase tires, help pay for driver's education, licenses, and insurance. Car ownership and having safe, reliable transportation allows families access to everyday freedoms so many of us take for granted, thus creating a more equitable playing field. This innovative program began at the beginning of this year and will end in May 2024, unless we secure other grants and donations.

Will you please join our efforts as we strive to help families become their best selves? We know that our community is made stronger by having healthy, contributing members. Please consider donating today. We depend on our wonderful supporters! Thank you.

Most Sincerely,

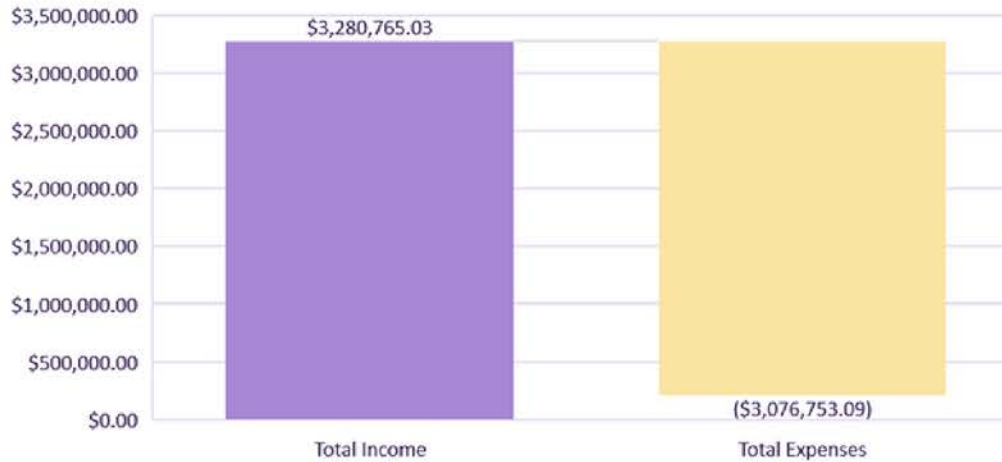
Denise Main  
Executive Director





# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

## Income & Expenses (July 2022 - June 2023)



\*Unaudited

Current Assets	Checking/Savings	\$745,911.44
	Accounts Receivable	\$588,532.40
	Other Current Assets	\$533,926.69
	Fixed Assets	\$454,398.15
Total Current Assets		\$2,308,268.06
Current Liabilities & Equity	Accounts Payable	\$80,228.12
	Credit Cards	\$6,919.15
	Other Liabilities	\$6,233.90
Total Current Liabilities		\$93,381.17
Total Current Equity		\$2,214,886.89
Total Current Liabilities & Equity		\$2,308,268.06

\*Unaudited

## SPECIAL AWARDS RECEIVED FROM GRANTS, FOUNDATIONS, FUNDS, & TOWNS

- Vermont Community Foundation
  - Vermont Foodbank
  - Vermont Women's Fund
  - Town Fair Tire Foundation
  - O'Neil Foundation
  - Stewarts Shops
  - Vermont Department of Health
  - Vermont Children's Trust Foundation
  - Vermont DCF and Department of Housing & Community Development
  - Vermont Department of Labor
- Town of Arlington
  - Town of Bennington
  - Town of North Bennington
  - Town of Pownal
  - Town of Shaftsbury

## “THANK YOU!” TO OUR DONORS

Ronald & Doris Alderman  
Mountain One Bank  
Bank of Bennington  
Alan Benoit  
Michael Bianco  
Kevin & Sarah Bisaccio  
Mark & Darlene Blanchard  
Aaron Gilbert Renovation  
Robert & Lora Block  
Barbara Bluto  
Mark & Laura Boudreau  
Gail Boulger  
Madison Brewing Co Inc.  
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Margaret Briggs  
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Laurie Camelio  
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Lacey & Nik Chiorgno  
Katie Cleaver - Metalsmith  
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Michael Day  
Claude & Susan DeLucia  
Willaim Deveneau  
Ada Susan Diamond  
Todd Drury

G Richard & Bonita Dundas  
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Network for Good  
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Green Mountain Tile  
The Richards Group  
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Dean Hanson  
Caitlin Harrington  
John & Sharron Harrington  
Matt Harrington  
Kate Hayes  
Jean Haynes  
Moulton's Hearing Aids Inc  
Jennifer Holley  
Shea Home  
David & Diane Howard  
Jessica Howard  
Robert Hunter  
Deborah Jennings  
Brian Johanse  
Leon & Patricia Johnson  
Hunter Jurkovac  
David Keator  
Michel Kimball  
Richard & Greer Kobik  
David & Kerry Krawczyk  
Dianne Lamb  
Peter & Wendy Lawrence  
Maple Leaf Realty  
Bruce & Mary Lee-Clark

George & Janice Lerrigo  
Bennington Elks Lodge #567  
Steve & Cindy Love  
Fritz Ludwig  
Dolores Mahlmann  
Patricia Main  
Denise Main  
Victor Martine  
James Maxfield  
Burr & McCallum  
Joseph McGovern  
Stephine McGowan  
Mary McGuinness  
DB McKenna  
Don & Melanie McKenna  
Brian McKenna  
Kyle McLenithan Memorial Fund  
RK Miles  
Martins Mini Mart  
Jamie Monecchi /GFCU  
John Jr. & Jean Mook  
Anne & Wesley Mook  
Colleen Moore  
Gardner Motor Sports  
Robert & Nancy Muir  
Susan Mulligan  
Judy Murphy  
VT Mutual  
Nadine Wisner Neil Kenyon  
Shelly Neitzel  
Eric & Allison Nemi  
Janet Neuschafer  
Timothy & Amy Newbold  
Toyota Motor North America  
Mary O'Connell  
Honda of Keene  
Meg Outwater  
Linda Lee Paquin  
Nora Parsons  
Armand & Jean Patnaude



## “THANK YOU!” TO OUR DONORS

Nancy Pearlman  
Green Mountain Pediatrics  
Rose-Marie Pelletier  
Christopher Perotta  
Nancy Scattergood & Peter Donovan  
Stephannie Peters  
Beverly Petrelis  
Theodora Petrelis  
Beverly Petrelis  
Robert Pezzulich  
Greg & Lori Pinsonneault  
Susan Plaisance  
Leo & Susan Plante  
Sinicon Plastics  
John Poggi  
Green Mountain Power  
Dr. Louis Propp  
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Kathleen Thompson  
Town Fair Tire Foundation

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Beth Tofel-Grehl  
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Michael Wajda  
Michael Weeden  
Patrick Winburn, Esq.  
Rachel Wolgemuth  
Sperber Tool Works Inc.  
Terry Yavanski  
Pat Zemianek

*"I donate to Sunrise because I know that the well-being of children and families in our community is at the heart of everything they do."*  
-Sunrise donor

## “THANK YOU!” TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Archie Budnikas  
Larry Cole  
Pam Cross  
Art Kilburn  
Kerry Krawczyk  
Jim Livingstone  
Bob Kalinowski

Whitney Kalinowski  
Megan Oxendine  
Connor Simonds  
Ethan Simonds  
Tim Simonds  
Kathy Thompson  
Tom Wilder





## BONNIE PRENTISS MEMORIAL AWARD

Beginning in 2008, Sunrise employees have nominated one of their peers, annually, to be presented with The Bonnie Prentiss Memorial Award. This award was created to honor the memory of Bonnie Prentiss, Sunrise's beloved Early Care & Education Teacher, who died of cancer in 2007. Staff members select a colleague that they believe best embodies the qualities that Bonnie possessed.



I am honored to present this year's Bonnie Prentiss Memorial Award to one of Sunrise's Early Care and Education teachers, Danielle Longtin. Danielle has been with Sunrise since 2017, and has cared for many young children, nurturing their growth and development. In addition, she has built trusting relationships with the children and their families. She has also recently stepped up as Interim Director of the Early Care and Education program.

Danielle's co-workers would describe her as "ambitious, motivated to better our center, and having a heart that is so big. She is personable, honest, and kind in her work and outside of it. She really wants what's best for children and the agency as a whole." Another co-worker describes her as "patient, flexible and welcomes opportunities for guidance and growth." A parent of a child who attends the ECE program highlights Danielle as a "loving provider with a tender approach."

Lastly, I want to thank Danielle for tending to the Sunrise Garden!

*-Written by 2022 Bonnie Prentiss Memorial Awardee, Tiffany Racicot*



### NEW STAFF

Left to right: Gretchan Sausville- ECE Floater, Amanda Evangelisto- Parent Educator, Mindy Shoestock- Administrative Assistant, Christina Sample-CIS SFVT Family Support Worker, Alisha Gully- Transportation Coordinator, Venece Babson- ECE Teacher's Assistant, and Heidi Ewing- Learning Together Program Teacher.



## SUNRISE SHINING STARS

“In the age of social media where real connections are lacking and motherhood is too often done in isolation, playgroup is as equally necessary for and enjoyed by both the parents and the children. So thankful for this group, and so thankful to have found our tribe.”

*-Playgroup parent*



Learning Together Program graduate, Jaydn Randolph, MAUHS Class of 2023.



“As a program participant of Sunrise over the years, I have worked with different programs through Sunrise. To name a few...car repairs, Making Meals and Memories, CIS Passport to Fun!, working with CIS workers, being a part of the Sunrise Advisory Council and Families at the Center, the community picnics, Early Care & Education child care and childcare financial assistance, Parents as Teachers events, I received a car seat, and attend Coffee Club and more.

I believe that Sunrise staff's diligence, compassion, and resourcefulness, helped me to become the stronger and more knowledgeable parent I am today. Even when I had a child born with some disabilities, Sunrise has been there for me with empathy and resources that helped my child to grow and become the beautiful person she is today. Here is a before photo at Sunrise child care and then a today picture, as she has become a beautiful flourishing child. Thanks for all Sunrise does for my family and I.”

*-Jamie Bivens (child shown in photograph to the left)*



“I have been participating in Families at the Center for about six months. I have received a lot of information that has increased my knowledge about the different things our community has to offer and ways to make the best of my life living in the Bennington area. I am regularly able to apply the knowledge that I receive from Families at the Center to my everyday life.

“I was told my case was ending and that means you won't be coming over anymore. I'm going to miss you so much. I don't want you to stop coming over. You have helped us so much and I thank you so much for that.

My family was also a recipient of a car through Sunrise, and it has helped me to be able to continue my volunteer work at Sunrise, get my children to and from events and ultimately helped to make a better life for my children.”

*-Megan Oxendine (pictured at FAC on the left)*

I hope we see each other in passing because you are truly the best! Never forget that!”  
*-17-Year-Old FAP Participant*





## SUMMER JAM

Sunrise held our second annual free family day, “Summer Jam” this past June 2023. The Vermont Arts Exchange and Sunrise invited many community partners to join us and there were booths with family-friendly activities, big trucks to explore, a bike course, Copsicles, a musical exploration event, and more!



## CIS PASSPORT TO FUN!

Sunrise was awarded a grant to strengthen family engagement opportunities specifically within the Children’s Integrated Services (CIS) Program with a focus on ages birth to three years. Sunrise and CIS staff embarked on a CIS Passport to Fun! journey in July 2023. The excitement, connections, and overall fun at these events was amazing. This program is a monthly experience where families enjoy a free meal, connect with other families, and are provided with free activities to enjoy. The events will last through the end of November 2023, where families will be provided with an opportunity to provide feedback regarding possible future events and a chance to obtain an incentive for attending these events. The attendance at the events has been great, with an average of 66 participants at each event we’ve held, thus far. The first event took place at the local Splash Pad, the second at Lake Shaftsbury, and the third at the Manchester Recreation Center.



## PARENTS AS TEACHERS, HOME VISITING

Parents As Teachers (PAT) has been a component at Sunrise since 2017 with Group Connections being offered on a monthly basis. Group Connections covers various topics around healthy child development, in a parent education or parent-child interaction format.

Thanks to a grant through the Vermont Department of Health, in collaboration with Children’s Integrated Services (CIS), Sunrise has expanded PAT services to include home visiting. Tiffany Racicot was hired and is fully trained in the PAT curriculums for families with children up to six years old, and pre-natal as well. PAT is an evidence-based model with four essential components: personal visits, child and caregiver screenings, resource networking, and group connections. Referrals are made through CIS (referrals can be found at [dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/partners/cis/forms](https://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/partners/cis/forms)). Tiffany is able to carry as many as eighteen families on her caseload, and currently has eleven families enrolled, since just beginning in September 2023.





## SUPPORT, HOPE, & NEW BEGINNINGS

“When I began working with the Family Advocacy Program (FAP), my daughter and I were living with my now ex- boyfriend. I had been in this unhealthy, toxic relationship for three years. I was not originally from this area, so everything I had (housing, transportation, “friends”), were through my relationship with him. He was controlling and coercive. We felt trapped, without any real way out. Sunrise’s Youth Development Coordinator who was working with a family member, became aware of my situation, and suggested a FAP referral. As soon as I connected with my Sunrise Family Advocate, we began working on a plan for me to become more independent. With the help of the Family Advocate, I obtained Reach Up benefits, I made a connection with PAVE (I had never heard of Reach Up or PAVE prior to working with FAP), and I got a job. These were all positive steps. However, we were still stuck in this toxic living situation with an abusive person. PAVE helped me with housing and voucher applications. With the help of Sunrise’s Transportation Coordinator and the Vermont Woman’s Fund, I was able to obtain my own vehicle!! At that point, I felt for the first time that I could actually do this; that I could get out of this really dangerous situation we were in. I obtained a storage unit and began to move some of our belongings out. My daughter and I were subjected to further abuse and harassment from my ex and his family. Finally, in early April I was able to obtain emergency housing at a local motel. While it was not ideal, for the first time in three years we had housing, transportation, and a source of income independent from my ex. Such a relief. We felt safer than we had in a long time.

I connected with BROCC, and I attended the renters 101 class sponsored by Sunrise. There I was able to connect with a landlord in town. Soon after I received a housing voucher, and my daughter and I were able to move into our own apartment!! I’m not sure where I would be without the services I received from Sunrise, and frankly I don’t want to think about it. I am just so grateful for the support and services I received from the agency.”

-J.L.



The above family story is a prime example of how our “Families on the Move” program is serving families in the community in positive, meaningful ways. Sunrise was awarded a Health Equity grant through the Vermont Department of Health, in late 2022 and work began in early 2023. This pilot program addresses systemic barriers that local families face surrounding their transportation needs. Sunrise is pleased to announce that this program is now open to the greater community, county-wide. Families are invited to apply for assistance to help with costs associated with driver’s education, driver’s permits and licenses, registrations and inspections, vehicle repairs and maintenance, tires, and car insurance. Anyone in the community is welcome to apply, even if they are not currently receiving services through Sunrise.

Sunrise’s Transportation Coordinator, Alisha Gulley, shared that, “As the Transportation Coordinator, I have observed firsthand how the ‘Families on the Move’ grant has made a positive impact on the families who have utilized it. There is a desperate need for reliable transportation in rural areas like ours... This grant has been an immense support to our most vulnerable community members and a welcome addition to the resources available in our area.” To support “Families on the Move” and/or to help fundraise to purchase more vehicles for those in need, please consider donating today!



## CONCRETE SUPPORTS & SOCIAL CAPITAL

"I would like to let you know how grateful I am for you. If it wasn't for you and Sunrise, my family and I wouldn't be where we are today. We have a warm place to call home, we are no longer homeless thanks to y'all... You are genuine and truly care about people and I love that about you. I would recommend everyone to work with you... Now my son is back in school, he works, he makes music, and he is doing well. You two were my family's rock when we needed it the most. You will never know how much we appreciate y'all... You will always hold a special place in our hearts for all you have done to make things possible for us."

-Jill Gates



Alyssa Jobin ("AJ") and her family have been accessing Sunrise and its various services since April 2022. When she was first referred to Sunrise, she was residing at a local motel after moving back from Troy, NY. Alyssa was raised in the area and could not wait to settle down into her own place to raise her children. Alyssa reports that initially, she needed a lot of help as she was not really sure how to access community resources. She stated that the staff at Sunrise "made sure I was safe and cared for even when I didn't know how to do that for myself".

During her time working with Sunrise, Alyssa has accessed several programs including the Family Advocacy Program (FAP), Family Supportive Housing (FSH), Families on the Move (FOM), as well as the diaper bank and food pantry. She says that these services were "extremely helpful in achieving my goals".

During her work with FAP, she received assistance in filling out paperwork, help with transportation to various appointments for her and her children, and having a caring ear when she needed to talk. While working with FOM, she was able to get help studying for and passing her Permit and Driver's License tests. She continues to work with the FSH program and has been able to secure her own apartment where she and her children still reside. Alyssa shared that she is ready to begin taking classes at the Tutorial Center this October, to get her High School Equivalency Diploma. She has future plans to attend college with a focus in Business.

"With the tools and help provided by Sunrise I was able to see my worth and what I wanted for my life. They helped me achieve it. Don't be afraid to ask for help and use the services that are out there. There is good in everyone and sometimes you just need help to see it within yourself"- Alyssa Jobin





## **DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY PARTNER SERVICE AWARD**

I wish to nominate **NSK Steering Systems of America, Bennington, VT** for the Community Partner Service Award. During the holiday season of 2022, NSK stepped up to support families in Sunrise's Adopt a Family Program when another company backed out. This happened due to Sunrise's connection to NSK through staff member relationships. When Matt Gaghich mentioned the program to Robin Kipp she eagerly went to task to get approval from NSK management to support this program. NSK supported six families which included 9 adults and 19 children, a total of 28 individuals for the holiday season. They put a creative spin on their method for NSK to select individuals to buy gifts by hanging a paper ornaments on their breakroom tree with the individual's likes and wants for gift items. Gifts were delivered to Sunrise wrapped and ready to be distributed. The feedback from NSK was that their staff enjoyed supporting Sunrise families during the holiday season, spreading joy and kindness. They requested this be an annual collaboration and look forward to the next season. Thanks to NSK staff support, Sunrise was able to expand their reach of support this year for our Sunrise Adopt a Family program, supporting the most families we have ever been able to. NSK also continued collaboration with Sunrise by joining us as a community partner at Sunrise's 2nd Annual Summer Jam in June 2023. Three staff members came and distributed free popcorn to families in attendance. In past years, Sunrise hosted bowling fundraisers for three years. Each year NSK sent teams made up of their staff and family members to support Sunrise's fundraiser event. NSK's ongoing support to Sunrise is appreciated and they are always willing to step up anyway they can to support local families.

*-Written by Tiffany Gaghich*

## **DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**

I wish to nominate **Beth Tofel-Grehl** for the Individual Community Service Award. Beth has been our long time Child Care Financial Assistance, CIS Specialized Child Care Financial Assistance, and Childcare Referral Grant monitor. Her determination and tenacity to support staff here at Sunrise and across the state is remarkable. Beth has always been dependable, and we trust her to respond every time we reach out for support! Staff will often call on behalf of families for guidance and to develop a plan. When files are reviewed staff are provided with feedback that is both positive and constructive. During the Bright Futures transition to CDDIS Beth was helpful and supportive, she was often our voice and leader when coordinating regional and state meetings. Beth has been a supporter of Sunrise, the staff, and families, she knows us well and her voice matters with our state partners. We are happy to see Beth at our annual meetings, peer reviews and the occasional fund raiser or celebration. She is one of the state partners that consistently attends and travels a distance to get here.

*-Written by Kelly Belville and Ashley Paquin*

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## INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

I wish to nominate **Tammy Russo** for the Individual Community Service Award. Tammy is a trusted and reliable family services worker, who has built close relationships with countless families in Bennington, even with families that have been difficult to engage with.

Tammy can be counted on as a valuable resource even if she is not necessarily involved as the DCF FSW. Tammy is knowledgeable about many things, including substance misuse, and is willing to share her expertise when asked. We can always depend on Tammy to follow through when she has committed to a task.

Tammy has an awareness of safety for herself and her community partners and is willing to buddy up on home visits when safety is a concern or to help strengthen relationships with families.

*-Written by Christine LaCroix-Coulter and the Family Advocacy Program Team*

I wish to nominate **Maureen O'Reilly**, Vermont Legal Aid, for the Individual Community Service Award. Maureen O'Reilly is an attorney at Vermont Legal Aid representing low-income families facing legal problems. Beginning in 2022, a single mom with four children was facing eviction. The stress for the family was unbearable and the case was heading to court with no chance of resolution. This inevitably would lead to homelessness for a mom and her children. The family and case worker contacted Legal Aid and we were fortunate and thankful Maureen was assigned to the case. Maureen quickly engaged with the case workers, the family and plaintiffs' lawyer. A strategy was developed, and she kept in constant contact with caseworkers and family. When I say, kept in contact, Maureen would return phone calls and emails most times within minutes. She also visited the family via traveling to Bennington multiple times. Throughout this stressful time, she was always concerned and consistently checking in with the family and case workers, regarding the family's wellbeing.

This was a long road of ups and downs, an emotional roller coaster and a very difficult time for the family. I know If were not for Maureen's knowledge and hard work the eviction would have moved forward making this family homeless. It's because of Maureen's involvement, strong representation of this family that the case was dismissed, and the family remains housed! She is not only an exceptionally brilliant lawyer, she is a compassionate, caring person who is so deserving of so much praise and recognition. I can only imagine how many other families she has helped! She is an

unsung hero! It is because of Maureen's diligence, compassion, and strong work ethic I nominate her for this award.

*-Written by Rick Morse*

## COMMUNITY PARTNER SERVICE AWARD

I wish to nominate **The Bike Hub** for the Community Partner Service Award. The Bike Hub offers a program whereby folks in the community who have need, can obtain a bicycle, along with a helmet and lock, for no charge. I have had a number of youth on my caseload access this service, and have been so impressed by The Bike Hub's professionalism and level of caring. Exercise, fresh air, and transportation are so important to us all. This service, and the Bike Hub team, make it possible for those who are financially challenged to have access to such a valuable resource. We are also working towards partnering with the Bike Hub through our Families on the Move program. We in Bennington are fortunate to have such a community minded organization in our midst, and it is my pleasure to nominate them.

*-Written by John Winchester*



## INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

I wish to nominate **Becca Pratt**, Supervisor at the Department of Economic Services for the Individual Community Service Award. Many of the families we serve at Sunrise are involved with the Department of Economic Services or might quickly need to be involved with Economic Services. Economic Services is tasked with providing for basic needs, ranging from Reach Up and Food Stamp benefits, to emergency heat and electricity assistance, to emergency housing needs. It's a big job, and this agency is a hugely important resource for those of us working with families in need. Becca has been an invaluable resource for many of us at Sunrise, as we attempt to navigate the various applications, regulations, qualifications, and other potential barriers to the services that our families often desperately need. Becca is reliable and accessible; she returns calls and emails in a timely manner. She is extremely knowledgeable. What I most appreciate about Becca is her calm demeanor; this is such an asset when dealing with families who are facing dire situations. Becca's efforts make it much less of a challenge for us, as we work to assist families in accessing needed services in a timely manner. I'm so pleased to recognize Becca for this Community Service Award.

*-Written by John Winchester*

I wish to nominate **Charlie Murphy**, Vermont Center for Independent Living for the Individual Community Service Award. Charlie Murphy is a participating navigator in Families at the Center. Charlie has never missed a single meeting, responds to all emails and phone calls in a very timely manner, and works effortlessly to make sure families he's working with participate in programming to the best of their ability. Charlie is a pleasure to work with and it's clear that he cares very deeply for the families that he works with at Vermont Center for Independent Living. I'm thankful to have met Charlie and for the opportunity to partner with him for Families at the Center.

*-Written by Katrina Hastings*

I wish to nominate **Lisa Loomis**, SFVT Sustainable Nursing Home Visitor for the Individual Community Service Award.

Lisa has provided amazing service to families since she joined the CIS team in March of 2020. We know her to provide a positive attitude and personal touch to the weekly CIS Intake Meetings and the families she works with. She values the individual needs of families and strives to help families achieve all goals. Lisa will take the lead and knows when families need a safe and neutral space and communicates with everyone on the team. Her attention to detail and passion for supporting all families within Bennington County is an asset to the families she serves and the CIS team. As the need increased for more diaper banks within the community, she helped establish one of the Bennington Diaper Banks now housed at VNA and Hospice of the Southwest Region. She quickly became an advocate to help increase funding for the Junior League of Champlain Valley Diaper Bank and encouraged all CIS staff and community partners to write letters to the legislatures to advocate for more funding. The Junior League of the Champlain Valley Diaper Bank held monthly diaper pickups in Burlington, and as a leader, Lisa took the initiative to bring diapers to all the local agencies. She also played an integral part in the effort to address the formula shortage in our area. We greatly appreciate her ongoing efforts in our community.

*-Written by Danielle Bacon and Kelly Belville*



I wish to nominate **Bob Kalinowski** and his daughter, **Whitney Kalinowski** for the Individual Community Service Award. Sunrise would like to thank both Bob and Whitney Kalinowski for their generous support in addressing worker safety over this past year. Bob is a retired VT State Trooper and Whitney is a Victim's Advocate at the State's Attorney's office. Bob and Whitney both attended our Safety Retreat Day in March and Bob presented lots of eye-opening strategies for workers to use while on the job and in their personal lives. He and Whitney trained staff in self-defense moves and allowed time for us to try them out. This was all personalized to Sunrise and the type of support work we do with families. Bob also came and spoke to our Leadership team with his recommendations and suggestions on what staff may carry with them as distractions if they ever do find themselves in situations that were uncomfortable or dangerous. Then, they came back to provide additional self-defense training for interested staff. They did this with humor, grace, and just the right amount of sarcasm, all free of charge! It is my understanding that they do this for other agencies as well simply because they know and care deeply for the community in which they live. It's with great pleasure and gratitude that Sunrise makes this nomination.

*-Written by Denise Main*

## **INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS**

I wish to nominate **Ashley Bridge** for the Individual Community Service Award. Ashley is the Community Food Access Organizer of Bennington County for the VT Foodbank. Over the past year and a half, I worked closely with Ashley on multiple projects, as well as sitting on the Hunger Council and Bennington County Food Shelf Sub-Committee with her. Ashley has been instrumental in bringing together community partners and families from the area to gather feedback about services and food insecurities. Ashley has brainstormed ways to help alleviate issues that were brought to the table and has offered tangible solutions to problems that arose. She helped Sunrise, along with Green Mountain Express and His Pantry, obtain grant funding through the VT Foodbank to purchase "Walk-to-Shop" Trolleys for folks to use while grocery shopping and visiting the laundry mats. She spent a day riding the bus and served as an advocate for community members, so they could take these trolleys on the bus! She also brought our Food Shelf Sub-Committee together so that Alliance for Community Transformations could complete the Bennington County Food Resources website, so it could be shared throughout the county. Ashley spent a day with our Sunrise Advisory Council, helped prepare a meal for the group, and spoke with these parents about food insecurities and navigating services in our area. Although her position is currently grant funded through the VT Foodbank, we hope to remain in contact with her and want her to know that her strong advocacy skills, empathetic personality, and passion to make a difference in our community, is inspirational and greatly appreciated.

*-Written by Sarah Livingstone*

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**Early Care & Education**  
A NAEYC-accredited **5 Stars child care program** for infants and toddlers ages 6 weeks through 3 years. We have **22 infants and toddlers in our classrooms**, playing and growing inside and outside with our dedicated staff.

We are open to the public, M - F, 8:30 am - 4:30 pm.

**Family Supported Housing** FSH reduces the incidence and duration of child and family homelessness by supporting homeless families with minor children needing to transition to, and sustain, stable housing through targeted case management, service coordination, and coordinated access to affordable housing. FSH provides intensive, **customized case management services to families.**

We have a community-wide Bed Bug Mattress Covers Bank, and Shopping Trolleys.

**Monthly & Weekly Offerings**

- **Housing Navigation**
- **Playgroups**
- **Parent Education Classes**
- **Parents as Teachers, Group Connections**
- **Making Meal & Memories**
- **Budgeting Class**
- **Resume Writing Class**
- **Coffee Club**

We are 1 of 15 Parent Child Centers in the state of VT.

**Youth Development Program** Sunrise serves youth, ages 14-23, as they **transition from foster care to independent living.** The YDP Coordinator works with individuals on **life skills** such as: cooking, budgeting, furnishing an apartment, driving, housing/job searches, applications for **post-secondary education, parenting,** and referrals.

We have a community-wide Diaper Bank and Menstrual Products Bank.

**Child Care Referral & Child Care Financial Assistance** Sunrise assists families in **finding child care** in regulated VT programs, registered/licensed Child Care Homes and licensed Child Care Centers. We also **help eligible families access funding to pay for child care** for children 6 weeks up to the age of 13 (or up until the age of 19 if the child has special needs).

We have a Sunrise Advisory Council made up of parents/caregivers from the county.

**Learning Together Program** A state-approved **alternative high school completion program** for pregnant/parenting youth up to the age of 24. LTP offers a **core curriculum, individualized instruction, and parenting/life skills education** in a supportive setting.

We have 4 buildings in downtown Bennington, on Union Street.

**Family Advocacy Program** An intensive, **home-based service for families at risk of having a child placed outside of the home.** FAP also works with families that are **working towards reunification** with their child(ren). Families may be referred by The Department for Children and Families (DCF) or members of the community.

We have a Pantry with food, household goods, clothing, shoes, toys, and books.

**Parent Education Offerings** Sunrise's Parent Educator supports and promotes parent education and activities throughout the year, such as county-wide **Playgroups, Brain Lab, Parent Education classes,** and **Parents as Teachers Home Visiting**



**Service Coordination** Referrals from the Agency of Human Services Field Director for complex cases where families or individuals have multiple needs and/or service providers; commonly served are **those at risk of becoming homeless or in need of housing.**

**Children's Integrated Services (CIS)** Sunrise is the fiscal agent for the Children's Integrated Services (CIS). We house the CIS Coordinator, Specialized Child Care Coordinator, and 3 Family Support Workers. These staff members **provide family support and home visiting to families with children,** prenatal through age 6. CIS also provides **consultation and education to child care providers.**

**Families on the Move** Sunrise received grant funding to create a pilot program, to support families on their paths to realizing **"transportation independence"**. Through this funding, we can assist with driver's education, permits and licenses, car registrations, insurance, gas cards, repairs, and maintenance.

Do you have questions? Give us a call at 802-442-6934, email us at [sfrc@sunrisepcc.com](mailto:sfrc@sunrisepcc.com), or learn more on the web: [sunrisepcc.com](http://sunrisepcc.com)

