



# ANNUAL COMMUNITY REPORT 2024

Celebrating 55 Years of  
Support to Bennington  
County Families

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

To the Sunrise Community,

With more than one dozen programs reaching lives from newborns into parenthood, Sunrise's Annual Report is always filled with a great deal of information about a remarkable organization... and its incredible staff who make it all happen.

I hope that you'll take the opportunity to review details in the document, but as board chair I am happy to report that the organization enjoys good financial health, benefits from productive relationships with local and regional sponsors, and works with the fourteen other Parent Child Centers across the state to advocate for the resources necessary to develop and expand its innovative programming. This year, we have invested in physical improvements, office equipment, professional development, and other short-term and long-term considerations that put us on solid footing today and prepare us for the future.

Many of you joined us at Sunstock in March, when we toasted to 55 years with an evening of summer sun inside Little City Cider Company, with winter flurries just outside! The mood was festive, as it should have been, for there have been many reasons to raise a glass to Sunrise over the years.

Sunrise succeeds because it places families at the center of its mission. In so doing, families are able to rely on Sunrise to help set goals, build skills, make plans, and celebrate milestones. And these families can also rely on Sunrise to help with setbacks, with sorrow, or with any of the other challenges that make their way to our doorsteps. This organization, in other words, is about life, and the never-straightforward task of living.

To life, to living... and to Sunrise.

With thanks,  
Jonathan Cooper



Board Members (left to right)  
Jonathan Cooper - Board Chair  
(insert), Peter Lawrence - Vice Chair,  
Sharon Cave - Secretary, Linda Bow  
- Treasurer, Kerry Krawczyk, Patti  
Randall, (missing from picture) Larry  
Cole





# A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Sunrise Community,

We've all heard the saying that the only constant in life is change. Many of us living in Vermont love the changing seasons, with fall being a favorite for countless people due to its burst of color, milder days, and cooler evenings. Life at Sunrise is no different. We consistently experience changes in staff, programming, and how we conduct business. However, we also have staff and programs that have been with us for decades, anchoring us in our mission and keeping us rooted in our values as we continue to evolve.

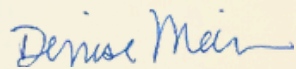
A key focus for us is relationships—both building and maintaining them. We have a long history of cultivating strong relationships with families, agency partners, and the larger community. I am fortunate to frequently hear from community members about the wonderful job we do, how important our work is, and how families—and, as a result, our communities—are better off because of the great work Sunrise does. Often, this is work that goes "unseen," but the bottom line is that what we do matters—a lot.

At the start of this year, we set out to strengthen and expand our community connections. Over the past several years, we have successfully extended our reach by hosting Summer Jam, becoming the fiscal agent for the Warm the Children Program, embedding Social Capital programming into our services, and offering activities such as our felting workshops, which bring together different generations. In addition to our long-standing relationships, we have established more intentional partnerships with Turning Point and the Caring Dads Program, formalized through memorandums of understanding. We have also increased outreach and pop-up services with the Southwestern Vermont Supervisory Union and Greater Bennington Community Services and are growing our relationship with the Bennington Cultural Center. Project Alliance, a group of community leaders collaborating to build a healthy, safe, and thriving Bennington community, has expanded our opportunities to strengthen relationships. This has been great for everyone in our community and is a primary reason for our collective success.

We are also excited to announce that Sunrise will soon be home to the **Dolly Parton Imagination Library**, taking over the amazing work started by Nicole Campbell's Shires Kids. We are thrilled about this merger and happy that Nicole will continue as a volunteer.

I hope you enjoy reading some of our highlights from this year. Despite the ongoing challenges we face daily, we remain incredibly proud of the high-quality work we do and the growth we have achieved in recent years. Sunrise will continue to make positive changes in the lives of families! Our biggest goal for the coming year is to purchase a van for transporting high school students and for outreach services. Your kind donations go a long way in helping us break down barriers for children, youth, and families. Please consider making a donation today.

Most Sincerely,



Denise Main  
Executive Director



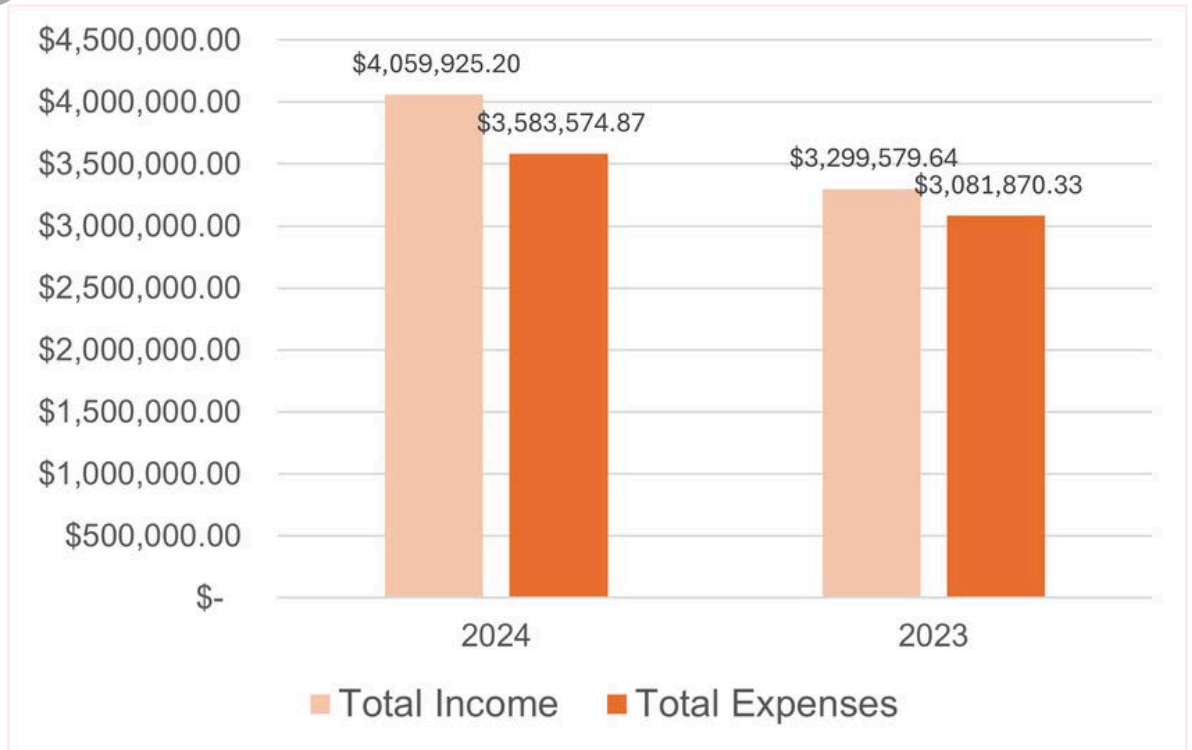
*~ Our report this year  
is dedicated in loving memory  
of June Cooper ~*





# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

## 2024 vs. 2023 Income/Expenses



\*Unaudited

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

- Elks National Foundation Community Investment Program awarded by Bennington Lodge of Elks
- M&T Bank
- O'Neill Foundation
- Stewarts Shop
- United Way of Rutland County
- Town of Arlington
- Town of Bennington
- Town of North Bennington
- Town of Pownal
- Town of Shaftsbury
- Vermont Agency of Agriculture
- Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children
- Vermont Buildings and General Services
- Vermont Community Foundation
- Vermont Children's Trust Foundation
- Vermont Department for Children and Families
- Vermont Department of Health Equity Grant
- Vermont Foodbank
- Vermont Park Access Fund



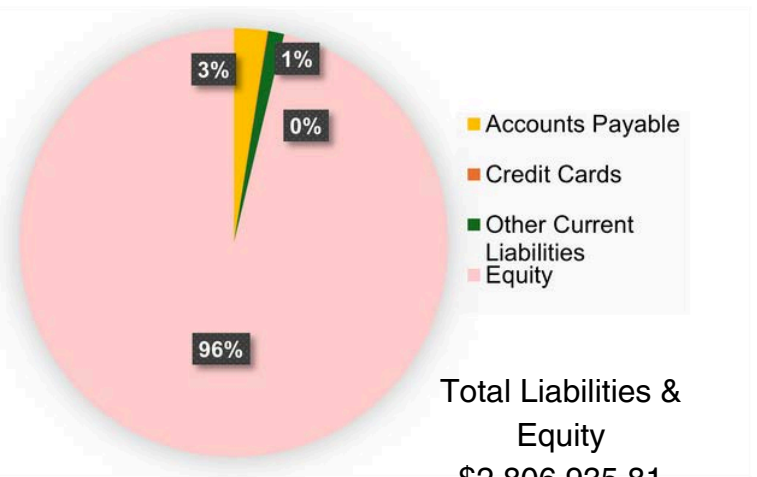
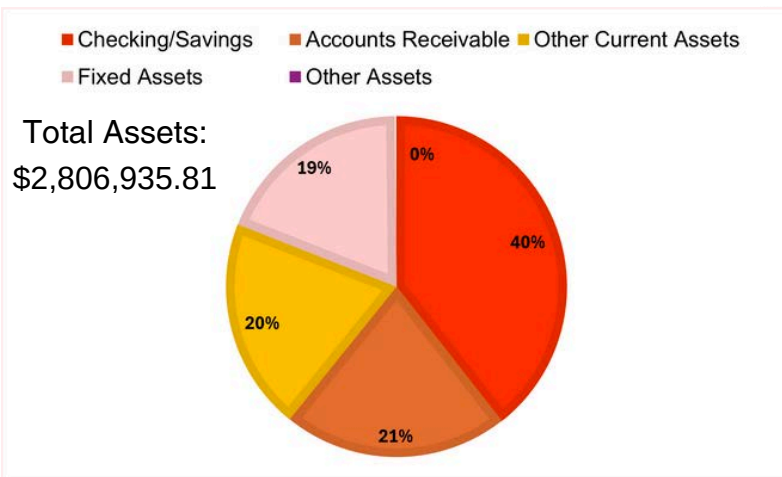
# 2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Current Assets	Checking/Savings	\$1,106,230.82
	Accounts Receivable	\$ 600,856.36
	Other Current Assets	\$ 565,156.75
	Fixed Assets	\$ 529,808.16
	Other Assets	\$ 4,883.72
Total Current Assets		\$2,806,935.81
Current Liabilities & Equity	Accounts Payable	\$ 70,387.29
	Credit Cards	\$ (2,001.91)
	Other Liabilities	\$ 33,669.84
Total Current Liabilities		\$ 102,055.22
Total Current Equity		\$2,704,880.59
Total Current Liabilities & Equity		\$2,806,935.81

\*Unaudited

## Total Assets

## Total Liabilities & Equity



\*Unaudited



# “THANK YOU” TO OUR DONORS

Ronald & Doris Alderman  
Rich Allen  
Amazon  
Bank of Bennington  
Ann Barber  
Rich & Carol Barbiéri  
Barr Charitable Trust  
Nancy Pearlman & Al Bashevkin  
Linda Bennett  
Bennington Community Market  
Bennington Elks Lodge #567  
Bennington Friends  
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Kevin & Sarah Bisaccio  
Mark & Darlene Blanchard  
Robert & Lora Block  
Barbara Bluto  
Raymond Bolton  
Mark & Laura Boudreau  
Linda & Adam Bow  
Charles & Marilyn Boyle  
Gary & Debbie Briggs  
Margaret Briggs  
Robert & Judith Brower  
C.L. White Glass  
Laurie & John Camelio  
Casella/Tam  
Coggins Toyota of Bennington VT  
Stephen Coggleshell  
Howard & Gail Cohen  
Judith Cohen  
Community Bank  
Meg Cottam  
Craftsmen Collective  
Edward & Pam Cross  
Patricia Culp  
Bethany Davis  
Michael Day  
Mark & Theresa Demasi  
Ada Susan Diamond  
Linda Donigan  
Peter Donovan & Nancy Scattergood  
Richard Dundas  
Earl's Service Station  
Tim Foley  
Keith Ford  
Clinton & Margaret Freeman  
Tiffany & Matt Gaghich  
Charles & Christine Gingo  
Alex Goodfriend  
Jon Goodrich  
Greater Bennington Peace &  
Justice Ctr  
Greater Heights Tree & Land Mgmt.  
Green Mountain Pediatrics  
Barbara Gross  
Audrey Guimarra  
Susan Hall  
Hannaford  
Caitlin Harrington  
Carol Haupt  
Kate Hayes  
John Hearst  
William & Marcia Hendery  
Heritage Family Cares Foundation  
Ann Herrick  
Jennifer Holley  
Robert & Cora Mae Howe  
Kaman Composites  
Katie Cleaver Metalsmith  
Neil Kenyon & Nadine Wisher  
Jennifer Kern  
Kelly Kimball  
Kimberly Farms  
Peter King  
Robin & Leonard Kipp  
Richard Kobik  
Peter & Wendy Lawrence  
Bruce & Mary Lee-Clark  
George & Janice Lerrigo  
Little City Cider Company  
Sarah Livingstone  
Warren & Suzanne Lizotte  
Danielle Longtin  
Lundgren Subaru of Bennington  
Charitable M&T Charitable  
Foundation  
Dolores Mahlmann  
Denise Main  
Patricia Main  
Dawn Martinez  
Tom & Lorna Mattern  
Joseph McGovern  
Stephanie McGowan  
Brian McKenna  
DB McKenna  
Don & Melanie McKenna  
Anne & Wesley Mook  
Mount Anthony Country Club  
Robert & Nancy Muir  
Susan Mulligan  
Judy Murphy  
Andrew Myers &  
Felicia Blockburger  
Mary O'Connell  
Sean-Marie Oller  
Meg Outwater  
Rose-Marie Pelletier  
Christopher Perotta  
John Poggi  
Andrew Beckerman  
& Carol Poppe  
Dr. Louis & Kristin Propp

“I support Sunrise because in my career as a probation officer I saw that Sunrise provided much needed services to families in our community that need it the most. I have confidence that good work is being done.”

~Annual donor, Chris Perrotta



# “THANK YOU” TO OUR DONORS

Charles & Linda Putney  
Barbara Raskin  
Dorothy Rogers  
Peter Rubin  
Heather Ryland  
Charles Salem & Sarah Dahl  
Oreste & Joyce Santacross  
Second Hand Rose  
Michael & Lynn Sedgewick  
Brenda Snow  
Jane Sobel  
Stark Hose Fire Company  
The Pharmacy  
The Richards Group  
The Scarlett Creation  
The Yoga Place  
Kathleen Thompson  
Beth Tofel-Grehl  
Fair Tire Foundation  
Triffic Nails  
& Beauty Connections  
Tri-State Federal Credit Union  
Unitarian Fellowship Bennington  
Vermont Country Store  
Michael Wajda  
Wassick Tire Service  
Patrick Winburn Esq.  
David Wohlsen  
Rachel Wolgemuth  
Lori Yunger  
Diane Zappone



## “THANK YOU!” TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Aaron Longtin	Jane Gardner
Larry Cole	Patricia Main
Pam Cross	Megan Oxendine
Linda Dean Farrar	Armand & Jean Patnaude
Mark DeMasi	Lori Pinsonneault
Cathy Dickie	Skip Thomayer
Matt Gaghich	Kathy Thompson
Kerry & Dave Krawczyk	Tom Weyers

## “THANK YOU!” TO OUR YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

Samuel Boyer  
Adelyn Mattison  
Kenley Morse  
Taylor 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. The 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 so honored to present this year's Bonnie Prentiss Memorial Award to Mindy Shoestock. This award is very special, because our peers choose who they believe is most deserving. Mindy is deserving of this award, because she is the first point of contact for everyone coming into Sunrise. Staff, families, and community members are greeted by an upbeat, smiling Mindy! She takes time with everyone that comes through the door. Whether you need access to the pantry, diapers, dealing with a staff need, Mindy takes the time to get things done.

Mindy lends a helping hand wherever she is needed. She might be doing outreach at a motel and slinging hot dogs. She might be helping with planning parent education events. She might be decorating for Sunstock or loading up supplies for Summer Jam. Whatever she is doing, it is done with a smile!

She has cute little nicknames for staff. "Chef W"-John Winchester, "Double Last Name"-Christine LaCroix Coulter, "Bacon"-Danielle Bacon, "Shep"-Amy Shepard, and some more colorful, yet fun greetings. Mindy is great for staff morale. She is kind to everyone, fun and helpful.

Sunrise is lucky to have you, Mindy. You are incredibly deserving of this award, and I am happy to present this award to you on behalf of the staff at Sunrise.

*~ Written by 2023 Bonnie Prentiss Memorial Awardee, Danielle Longtin*



### STAFF ANNIVERSARIES

10 YEARS:

Tiffany Gaghich

### NEW STAFF

Left to right: Tara Haskoor - ECE Cook, Shelbi Kinney - FSH Case Manager, Kristina Mattison - Parent Educator, Jade McLellan - CCFAP Specialist, Megan Oxendine - Resource Coordinator, Brandon Ruggles - Cleaner, Victoria Stubel - CCFAP Specialist, Katherine Tiffany - Social Capital Coordinator, Zoey Thomayer - ECE Teacher



## FOCUS ON FAMILY

Bonnie and Zach were referred to the Family Advocacy Program (FAP) in July 2022, about a month after the birth of their first child, Isaiah. DCF was involved around concerns for the parents' ability to care for Isaiah, and a safety plan was developed. The family worked with FAP and Children's Integrated Services (CIS) sustained home visiting/nursing program, voluntarily and consistently. Their motivation to provide the best possible care to their new son was clear early on. They complied with the safety plan until they were notified there were no more restrictions around their contact. DCF exited the scene after a few months of involvement. Bonnie and Zach continued to work with services. Their FAP worker helped them understand child development and how to nurture their son's growth and safety through the Parents As Teachers (PAT) curriculum.

At time of referral, the family was living in a studio apartment (picture no bedrooms, but one room and a bathroom), with no working stove/oven. The space was overcrowded for anyone, but for a child who would soon need room to crawl, and explore, this was not even close to ideal. Dad needed to leave his job due to physical/medical issues. He applied for SSI, which took a good deal of time to obtain. Both parents would eventually earn disability payments as their sole income. The family was enrolled in FAP for one full year. They enrolled their son in the Early Care and Education (ECE) program at Sunrise with assistance from childcare subsidy. They continued working with the Sustained Nursing program, their son was assessed for and was found eligible for Early Intervention services, and they started attending periodic offerings at Sunrise (PAT group connections, Parent Education). As FAP services looked at closing with the family, CIS family support childcare opened for some continued support.

The family found a two-bedroom apartment, just around the corner from their old studio apartment. Their son, who has been their greatest motivation, now had room to crawl and then quickly walk.

In early February of 2024 the family welcomed another healthy beautiful boy, Makeino! They continue childcare for Isaiah and have decided to keep the new baby at home for his first year of life. There has been no further DCF involvement. They continue to work with service providers. They worked to correct a vision issue and ENT issues that impacted Isaiah's speech development. They are now enrolled in the Parents As Teachers home visiting program, both parents are involved with Families at the Center, they come to community picnics and CIS events, Making Meals and Memories, and they continue to work with their nurse home visitor.

Zach says that attending groups has been the greatest help for them. This is where they learned infant CPR, and gives them piece of mind, in case emergencies arise with their children.

Bonnie says that having someone to ask questions of is most helpful for her. Both of her boys were "choking" whenever they tried new foods. She learned that it's not uncommon for children to have this response when they are trying new textures in foods. Struggles still come up, as it does for any family with growing children, but they know that they have support whenever they need it.

Bonnie and Zach's world continues to revolve around their children, and each other. They practice what they learn and have become a significant part of the Sunrise family.

*~Written by Lori Yunger*







## NEW RESOURCE COORDINATOR

The Resource Coordinator is a new position that was created to coordinate concrete supports Sunrise offers for families. Megan manages our pantry, which is stocked with healthy non-perishables, fresh produce from local farms, meats, dairy products, household items and cleaning products, as well as personal hygiene products. These offerings come from partnerships with the Vermont Foodbank, Stewarts Shops and ACT. You can find Megan in the kitchen cooking up meal kits for easy access for families. Sunrise receives a robust amount of in-kind donations from local businesses and community members. Megan coordinates the donations we receive and distributes to families who benefit from these generous contributions. In September, Sunrise partnered with area businesses for a diaper drive which was very successful. We received needed supplies of diapers, pull-ups and wipes for our community diaper bank that distributes over 650 packs of diapering products annually.



## MORE VERMONT FAMILIES QUALIFY FOR CHILD CARE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Beginning October 6, more Vermont families qualify for financial assistance to help pay for regulated child care, preschool, and afterschool care. The Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) helps Vermont children access high quality care by covering some or all child care costs for eligible families. The program currently serves over 9,000 children across the state.

Families in the program pay a weekly family share. Family shares range from \$0 to \$425 per week based on family size and income. The State then pays the program the CCFAP state rate minus the weekly family share amount.

Under new CCFAP eligibility guidelines more Vermont families qualify for the program. The highest income eligibility level has increased to 575% of the federal poverty level (FPL), up from 400%. So, this means a family of four can earn up to \$179,400 annually. The FPL is a measure of income that determines a family's eligibility for programs. This change is the second and final income eligibility increase implemented as a result of Act 76. Income guidelines for the program increased in October, opening eligibility to more Vermont families.

To apply for CCFAP, families must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Age of children: 6 weeks to 13 years (19 years for those with special needs),
- Reason for care: Must have an approved reason for needing child care, like work or training
- Income guidelines: Must meet Vermont's income guidelines
- Residency: Must be a Vermont resident
- Asset limit: Have less than \$1 million in assets



# DOLLY PARTON IMAGINATION LIBRARY

Sunrise Family Resource Center is happy to announce that it has officially taken over Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Bennington County, a beloved initiative that has provided books to over 2,000 local children since its inception by Shire Kids in 2019. This transition marks an exciting new chapter in our collective commitment to fostering early childhood literacy and promoting a love of reading among young children in our community.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, founded by the country music icon in 1995, has been a transformative early literacy program, providing high-quality books to children from birth to age five. Under the stewardship of Shire Kids, the program reached thousands of families in Southern Vermont, delivering the joy of reading directly to their homes.

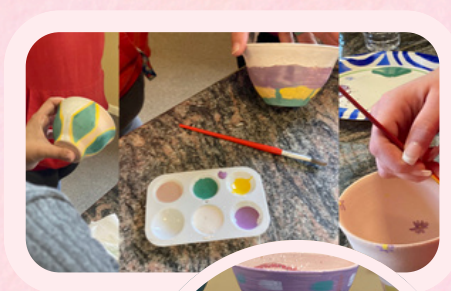
"We are immensely grateful to Shire Kids for making such a positive impact on our community by establishing the Imagination Library here," said Denise Main, Executive Director of Sunrise Family Resource Center. "We are excited to carry the torch forward and ensure that this incredible program continues to thrive, expanding access to even more children and families in Bennington County." Sunrise Family Resource Center plans to build on the foundation laid by Shire Kids, integrating the Imagination Library into its extensive array of family support services.

Each month, enrolled children will receive a carefully selected book tailored to their age group, nurturing their love for reading and supporting their early development. "We are thrilled that Sunrise Family Resource Center is taking over this important program," said Nicole Campbell, Executive Director of Shire Kids. "They have a strong commitment and history of supporting families, and we are confident that they will continue to inspire children and families through the power of books. I'm very excited for the Imagination Library to be in their capable hands." Nicole Campbell will continue as a volunteer, to handle the administration of the program each month.

Registration for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is open, and families can easily sign up online or email Nicole Campbell at [nicole@shirekidsvt.org](mailto:nicole@shirekidsvt.org) for assistance.

To show your support for the Imagination Library in Bennington County, please make a donation to Sunrise Family Resource Center with 'Imagination Library' in the note.

*~Written by Nicole Campbell*



## FAC AND EMPTY BOWLS

In October, Families at the Center (FAC) brought families together to meet Sarah Blizzard from Greater Bennington Community Services (GBCS) and learn more about their services and the upcoming Empty Bowls event, which will be held on November 3rd. To celebrate the Empty Bowls project, FAC families each painted their own handmade ceramic bowls, which will be glaze-fired for them to use at the Empty Bowls Soup Night or at home in their kitchens. We saw beautiful creativity and loved hearing families get excited about the bowls they were designing! Getting their hands dirty and seeing their project through to 24 beautifully completed bowls provided participants with a great source of inspiration and excitement. We can't wait to see their finished glazed bowls at November's Families at the Center meeting!

*~Written by Katherine Tiffany*



## WARM THE CHILDREN

In the third year as the fiscal agent for Warm the Children (WTC), over 700 applications were received. The WTC committee includes Sue Plaisance - Bennington Banner, Sarah Blizzard - GBCS, Kara Pallman - Economic Services, Richard Fox - Mission City Alliance, and Denise Main and Katherine Tiffany - Sunrise. Those who need warm winter clothing can also visit the Winter Closet at Mission City Alliance. Donations are still being accepted for this year's WTC.

Ronald & Doris Alderman  
Rita Allard  
Anytime Fitness  
Bank of Bennington  
Karen Barney  
David Beckley  
Jo Berry  
Darlene Betit  
Kenneth & Jane Betit  
James Betts MD  
Nelson Blanchard  
Barbara Bluto  
Raymond Bolton  
Stacy & Laurie Boxer  
Gary & Debbie Briggs  
Margaret Briggs  
Jay & Karen Burnell  
Lynn & Rene Cassano  
Judith Cohen  
Anne & James Cormier  
Ted & Linda Crawford  
Richard & Deborah Cutler  
Eagles 1861  
Gary & Judy Forrest  
Lynn McCann Founteneau  
Joseph & Linda Gauthier  
Carolyn Graves  
Green Mtn Girls  
Reverend Thomas &  
Barbara Gross  
Hamlin House  
Hawkins House  
Jean Haynes  
Darlene Hazelton  
Jennie Hogan

Dawn Hulburt  
Adelaide Jaquith  
Deborah Jennings  
In Memory of Jane Julian  
Jim & Marjorie Kaat  
Kaman Composites  
Bruce & Madeline Kennedy  
Katherine Langlois  
Nora Larsen  
Francesca Laurenzi  
George & Janice Lerrigo  
Candace Lewis  
Mahar Funeral Home &  
Cremation Services  
Dolores Mahlmann  
Cynthia & Steve Mangsen  
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Maureen Sprague &  
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Karen & Dave Mellinger  
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James & Colleen Monahan  
Mary Lou Monroe  
Colleen Moore  
C Morris  
Mount Anthony Primary Care  
Muller Family/Fidelity Charitable  
Edith Myers  
National Veterinary Assoc  
NE Federal Credit Union/VESCU  
David & Joanne Palmer

Linda Lee Paquin  
Mildred Pierce  
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Gail Eleanor Smith  
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Strong Family Revocable Trust  
In Memory Janet Hoard  
Alan & Jean Taylor  
The Richards Group  
Thurber's Garage  
VFW Post 1332 Riders  
VT Country Store  
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Lynn Williams  
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Patrick Winburn Esq.  
Rachel Wolgemuth  
Mary Young  
Diane Zappone  
Pat Zemianek  
Barbara & John Zuk

“THANK YOU” TO  
OUR DONORS





## LOUIS PROPP RETIRES

Dr. Louis Propp retired from the clinical consultant position he held since the start of the Family Advocacy Program, 38 years ago. We want to thank Louis for his many years of dedication to Sunrise and to children, youth and families in our community. Louis is a very compassionate person, and we have been fortunate to have been guided by him. Six years ago, Louis began providing consultation with our Children’s Integrated Services staff as well. We wish him all the best in his retirement. We welcomed Jenna Caslin, MSW as our clinical consultant in the Spring.

*~Written by Denise Main*

### HOW HAS THE FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM IMPACTED YOUR FAMILY?

“I feel like the biggest changes has been my attitude towards life and what I need to do to put myself in a better position for my children” *~FAP family*

## FAMILIES ON THE MOVE

Amy received her car in early October with grant funding through the VT Women’s Fund. She was able to access start up fees and costs while she transitions financially to car ownership through our Families On The Move funding.



“I am so grateful for this beautiful gift that my family will love and will allow us to be able to get around much easier. It will be nice using the car to drive my children to school, and childcare. It will be so much easier using the car to get to work, grocery shopping, and other things we would normally have to take the bus for. Thank you Sunrise from the bottom of our hearts.”

*~Quote from The Sanderson Family.*

## LEARNING TOGETHER



“The news about the Learning Together Program has spread this school year throughout our community. We have 10 students enrolled and more are interested in the program. Our students are working hard this year in our classroom and within other programs. One student is taking advantage of the Dual Enrollment program between the high school and Community College of Vermont and getting a jump on their college credits. Another is taking classes at Southwest Tech in the cosmetology program. Our students are striving for better futures for themselves and their children. They use our wrap around services here at Sunrise and are supported on their journey through life and their education.”

*~Written by Heidi Ewing*



# PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY TO “STRENGTHEN FAMILIES”

In January, Sunrise partnered with Lundgren Subaru of Bennington as part of Subaru of America’s Operation Warm. Shoes and socks were gifted to 110 children.



Sunrise & Vermont Arts Exchange offer “Dads Group” for father figures and their children to have hands on fun in the studio!



Thank you to Vermont Parks Forever for providing 140 single day admission passes for Sunrise Families!



As members of Project Alliance, Sunrise staff sit on community teams and joins other community partners for pop-up community outreach events.

Sunrise partnered with Bennington Coalition for the Homeless, Turning Point Recovery Center, and United Counseling Services to bring the film “Just Getting By” to the community and raised awareness around food insecurity and homelessness.

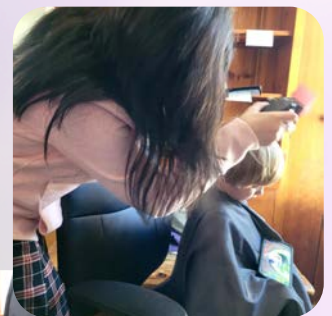
“I have loved watching the returning participants hone in their skills and new participants learn; and the way the group members support each other. That is so rewarding.”

~Lind Dean, Needle Felting Workshop Facilitator



“It’s very calming and relaxing, it collects your energy.”

~Needle Felting Workshop Participant



Local hairstylists, Olivia Jomaa, Alyssa Parent, and Marcy Sprague volunteered to provide back to school haircuts to 16 children.

“Thank you so much for the impact you’ve made with this family. I can’t overstate what a relief it is. There are so many times that I feel like I’m running in a hamster wheel and will never make anything change for kids. I was hitting a wall because the level of care we provide isn’t intense enough to meet family needs like you are able to do..” ~Community Partner about our Family Advocate



## CELEBRATING 55 YEARS

In March, Sunrise celebrated 55 years of support to the Bennington County community with a fundraising event at Little City Cider Co. Although it was a snowy, winter night outside, inside was warm with summer Woodstock vibes. Donations from local businesses helped make a night of celebration, fun and filled with memories.



**“THANK YOU”  
TO OUR  
SPONSORS!**

### **The Grateful Dead Sponsorship Level**

~ Heritage Family Credit Union

### **Janis Joplin Sponsorship Level**

~ Earl's Service Station

~ Tri State Area Federal Credit Union

### **Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young Sponsorship Level**

~ Coggins of Bennington

~ Lundgren Subaru of Bennington

~ The Craftsman Collective

~ The Pharmacy, Inc.

~ The Vermont Country Store

~ Kathy Thompson & Archie Budnikas

~ Wassick Tire Service

### **Monetary & In-Kind Sponsors**

~ D.B. McKenna & Co., Inc.

~ Family Footwear

~ M&T Bank

~ Second Hand Rose

~Denise Sklepowiz

~The Scarlett Creation



## SUMMER JAM

We kicked off Summer in June with our 3rd annual Summer Jam was hosted at Lower Willow Park. Despite the rain, we welcomed over 200 adults and children. Families enjoyed music from Dan Costello & Dragon's Breath, disc golf tutorials, family friendly activities from 15 community partners, as well as hula hoop and clogging demonstrations. Our additions to the day's events made a well-rounded day that was enjoyed by people of all ages.

**LEAD SPONSOR  
BANK OF  
BENNINGTON**

## **DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD**

I wish to nominate Turning Point Center and Margae Diamond for the Community Partner Service Award. Under Margae's leadership, our community has witnessed tremendous growth within this important agency. We all know the impact that substance misuse can have on an individual, their family & friends and the community at large. Margae has the vision and energy to make real and significant changes for those impacted by the grip of substance misuse. She has grown this agency, grown their presence in our community and created an entire outreach program to meet people where they are at. Connections and relationships are at the heart of her vision. She is also a great educator willing to attend all sorts of community and agency events and activities. She has a wonderful team that she is generous in sending out into our community, dealing with tough issues beyond substance misuse such as housing and homelessness, even though housing is not in their wheelhouse. She does it anyway, being fully aware of the correlation between the two concerns. She's a member of Project Alliance as well as other committees and brings a strong voice of "getting things done". She's a mover and shaker and it's our great pleasure to recognize her leadership with this nomination.

*~Written by Denise Main*

## **DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY AWARD**

I wish to nominate Nick Cave of Foxcave Solutions LLC, for the Individual Community Service Award. Nick has consistently provided stellar support, guidance, advocacy and more for us as we continue to expand/update our IT infrastructure. From the very first visit almost 5 years ago Nick was an integral part of our initial IT lift-and continues to be today. His knowledge and expertise were invaluable as we navigated our first ERate application. Overall he has contributed greatly to our ability to expand our programming to better meet the needs of the families we serve.

*~Written by Cynthia Thomayer*

## **DISTINGUISHED INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY AWARD**

I wish to nominate Skip Wilkins of Earl's Service Station for the Individual Community Service Award. I believe Skip is an excellent candidate for the Community Service Award. Skip has gone above and beyond in his support of the Families On The Move program. On multiple occasions he has volunteered his time to drive out of his way to look at stranded vehicles for us. He responds to texts and phone calls outside of business hours and is always there to answer any questions regarding vehicles with full honesty and kindness. I believe Skip is a vital community member and that he cares deeply for the families who reside here. The Families On The Move program has thrived due to his support and expertise.

*~Written by Alisha Gulley*



## INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY AWARD

I wish to nominate Laura Boudreau from the SVSU for the Individual Community Service Award. In her role as Assistant Superintendent to the SVSU, Laura goes above and beyond in her efforts to be inclusive of the larger community. Laura clearly has a vision of supporting students and learners of all ages to ensure that they have the opportunity to live up to their full potential. She makes herself readily available and identifies gaps in systems, is willing to pull us all together and create what needs to be created. Laura's facilitation and dedication to the Unaccompanied Youth in our area is impressive to say the least. She is leading the Unaccompanied Youth Task Force towards tangible outcomes. Laura continues to grow this task force with crucial community partners, has been successful in accessing start up funds, and has been a role model for her own staff by encouraging their engagement and enthusiasm for this project. We are all on board with her! It's with much respect and admiration that we present Laura with this nomination for her dedication and passion for Unaccompanied Youth in our district.

*~Written by Denise Main*

I wish to nominate Shannon Daugherty from DCF for the Individual Community Service Award. For years, Shannon Daugherty, DCF supervisor, has been supporting Youth Development Program youth with offering her vehicle to be used at the Department of Motor Vehicles for license tests. She takes time out of her busy schedule to meet at the Department of Motor Vehicles, stays through the duration of the test and congratulates the youth when they pass. Because of Shannon, multiple young adults now have their license who wouldn't otherwise, with not having trusted adults with vehicles in their lives. For these young adults, having their license has meant they have been able to get jobs, earn money to purchase their own vehicles, and even go away to college on their own with a sense of independence.

Shannon dedicates her time and vehicle to these youth and young adults, who she sometimes does not even know, and it is so very much appreciated and deserves recognition. Beyond this, Shannon also maintains a relationship and communication with youth and young adults who have aged out of her own caseload and offers support and guidance on her own time. This is well above Shannon's job responsibilities and further exemplifies Shannon's care and devotion to the young people she works with. Thank you, Shannon, for everything you do.

*~Written by Caitlin Harrington*

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I wish to nominate Sherry Davis from Economic Services for the Individual Community Service Award. Sherry goes above and beyond, every day, with her clients. Sherry treats everyone with dignity and respect and looks at each family as a unique entity. Economic Services, like all agencies, has specific policies and procedures that they need to follow. Sherry does this while looking at individual needs and what best serves her clients. She is a pleasure to work with. She communicates with service providers and families in a timely and respectful way. She follows through with everything she says she is going to do and practices transparency with teams as a whole.

*~Written by Lori Yunger*

## INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY AWARD

I wish to nominate **Matt Granger** for the Individual Community Service Award. Matt Granger moved to Southern Vermont in 2001 and immediately felt a connection to our unique and diverse population. Only two years following his move here, he began his impactful work within the community. Matt served as an EMT on the Arlington Rescue Squad from 2003-2011 and then as a First Responder from 2012- present. He was also a positive role model in the lives of many local youth as he coached organized sports including little league baseball and soccer for several years. In addition, Matt served as Scoutmaster for the Arlington chapter Boy Scouts from 2012-2018. In his free time, Matt owns a local small business. One of the wonderful things this business does is to collect gently used items which he attempts to find new homes for, rather than discarding them. Recently, I was working with a family who was forced to move from their long-time home. When they left, they had very little and did not have funds to purchase or replace items they lost. One call to Matt and he was able to gather furniture for them which he delivered and helped move into the family's new apartment at no charge. Later, the family would tell me they don't know what they would have done without his generosity and assistance. Matt has made many outstanding contributions to our community and has had a positive impact on so many through his leadership and selfless acts. It is because of Matt's compassion and hard-working nature that I nominate him for this award.

*~Written by Tonya Wilder*

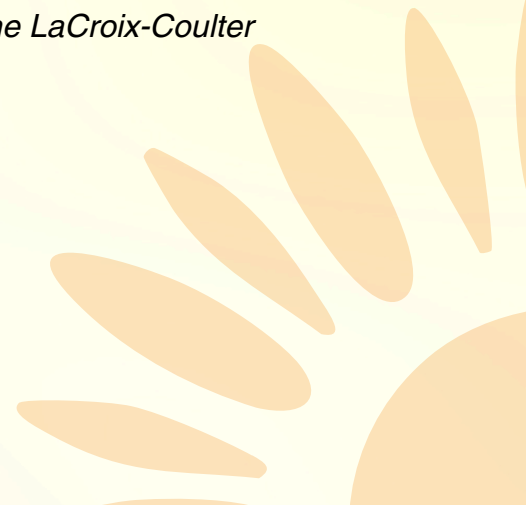
I wish to nominate **Dana Wesson** for the Individual Community Service Award. Dana was a GA Benefits Specialist during the winter of 2023 – 2024 and not only treated our mutual client family kindly and with respect during a difficult time, allowed them to call her directly to renew their GA housing benefit and also made herself available to them to check in for other motel opportunities. Dana made herself available to me as a community worker, which was above and beyond valuable. I appreciated her expertise, knowledge, kindness and patience. Thank you Dana!

*~Written by Christine LaCroix-Coulter*

I wish to nominate **Heather Hawkins** for the Individual Community Service Award. I had the opportunity to work with her the winter of 2023 – 2024, during a difficult housing situation when a family was being kicked out of a motel with no notice. I was put in touch with Heather who apologized to the family for the voucher mistake and put us on the right path. Not only that, but Heather also allowed me to contact her directly to renew the voucher, problem solve future voucher issues and even pick her brain on other issues relating to GA Housing. Heather also made herself available to the family and was clear and concise about what needed to be done. This is above and beyond in my opinion and I appreciate it so much. Thank you Heather!

*~Written by Christine LaCroix-Coulter*

"I have had the pleasure to work with Rick during a time of homelessness with two young children. Rick always had a listening ear and gave the best knowledge. He in turn helped us get on our feet, housed and continues his support. I am forever grateful to have him in our tribe." *~Family Supportive Housing Family*





## COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD

I wish to nominate Natalie Basil and GBCS for the Community Partner Service Award. Within her role as Executive Director of GBCS, Natalie Basil has given so much to our community. We all know about the Kitchen Cupboard, Health Clinic, Emergency Food and Fuel Services, cooking classes and more that have been ongoing for years. In addition, Natalie has added more programming, helping so many in our community. She recently brought the Remote Access Medical Unit to Bennington for the second time, providing medical, dental and vision care to 180 adults and 21 children! Over 40 Dental Providers saw 163 patients! 53 received vision care and 65 received medical care. This service has had huge success and has served so many in our community! Natalie also wrote a successful grant, and spearheaded a feasibility study for a Sanitation and Wellness Hub in downtown Bennington. We now have a blueprint for a building where folks would have access to bathrooms facilities, including showers, do laundry and learn more about community resources. As part of this same grant, Natalie spearheaded a second feasibility study on Homeless Youth, resulting in the Unaccompanied Youth Task Force, headed by the SVSU. Sunrise, along with other agency partners also sit on this task force. Natalie jumped right on board when Sunrise became the Fiscal Agent for the Warm the Children Program. GBCS always has a presence at our monthly meetings, they support volunteer shoppers along with other needed action items. It's with great pleasure that we recognize Natalie and the good folks at GBCS for their dedication and hard work on behalf of the Greater Bennington Community.

*~Written by Denise Main*

I wish to nominate Chef Marin, Doreen, Alice, Laura, Heather, Patty, Wendy, Sue, and JoAnne from MAUHS Cafeteria for the Community Partner Service Award for their hard work and cooperation with the Learning Together Program. Chef Marin and these kind and gracious women provide meals daily for our students. They are caring, positive, and a joy to encounter daily. It is obvious that these women love helping students and care about their well-being. Chef Marin will ask about the girls and how they are doing. Chef would surprise them with special desserts on occasion. The women are patient with our complicated lunch orders and it's a great pleasure to work with them!

*~Written by Heidi Ewing*

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“Thank you” to our Safety Committee for putting a focus on staff safety. The team spearheaded new safety measures, updated protocols and offered CPR & First Aid Training for staff.



"This was such a great day for us."  
~Family enjoys day at State Park



PAT provides parent engagement group connections that offer educational developmental interactions.



"When I get little again, I'm going back to Sunrise."  
~3 1/2 year old ECE Graduate, Kendall



Families enjoyed apple picking family engagement activity

Our ECE program was renewed for 5 years of NAEYC Accreditation!



Our Making Meals and Memories group enters its fourth year. As of September the program is now offered twice a month. One session is geared towards children 7 & up, the second session is geared towards children under 6.



Families enjoy summer fun and healthy meals at monthly Sunrise Community Picnics.

