



Sunrise Family Resource Center

Strengthening Families

APRIL
2025



Spring Newsletter

BENNINGTON
COUNTY'S PARENT
CHILD CENTER



Find us online at  sunrisepcc.com, and follow us on Facebook!



PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S POSTAGE PAID
BENNINGTON, VT
PERMIT NO. 73

SUNRISE'S MISSION

Sunrise works in partnership with individuals, families, and community members to provide a variety of supports and services. These services promote the growth and development of individuals and families through encouragement of strengths, expansion of opportunities, and support in times of stress.



Empowering Transportation Independence



In 2024, for the 3rd year in a row, Sunrise received grant funding from the Vermont Women's Fund (VWF) to support local women in overcoming their transportation barriers. By giving them cars, this program has empowered women to take control of their lives. In January 2025, we gave away the last 2 cars from the VWF grant. Going forward, we hope to find more funding to help more women achieve transportation independence.

"Having a car is a dream come true, and it will have a profound impact on my life, allowing me to attend classes, take care of my girls' appointments, and travel out of town whenever necessary. Without a car, life was a struggle, but thanks to Sunrise, my family's circumstances are now improving in ways we never thought possible, and I'm grateful to have gained the independence to get around on my own terms." - AM



A CIS Success Story

When I first started working with the family, H was in an abusive/toxic relationship. She faced many challenges with parenting her two young children, while also struggling to manage her own mental health needs. She made the difficult decision to leave her boyfriend, to protect her children from continuing to witness their unhealthy relationship. After the breakup, she and her children moved into a DV family shelter. During this time, H made many positive changes for herself and her family. One year later, H is in a much better place both physically and mentally. She meets with a therapist weekly and has seen improvements with her mental health. She now has her own apartment and has managed her finances/bills completely on her own. This has been a huge accomplishment for her, since she's never been in control of her own money. Although the family has faced many obstacles over the last year, they have made many positive changes and have grown stronger together. - Christina S., CIS Support Worker



Dear Sunrise Community,

We are buzzing with the sounds and activities of Spring! Everything from our Week of the Young Child events in the Early Care and Education Program (ECE), “It Takes a Village,” a caregiver/parent support group at the Bennington Community Market to our most recent Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library Dance Party fundraiser, we have been busy as bees.

Since I last wrote in our Annual Community Report, we have purchased a 2022 Honda Odyssey mini-van that was on our wish list! We’ve seen an increase in classroom attendance in our alternative high school program for pregnant and parenting teens and youth, which is our number one priority. Our ECE have been able to do field trips, and staff can travel together for upstate meetings and events. We love our new van, and we are making good use of it!

This year, we are focusing our energy on raising the \$30,000 needed to cover the wholesale books and mailing costs for Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library that we took over in November. We are casting our net out wider than ever with the hopes of enrolling more children into the program while increasing the love of books, reading, and learning. We currently send books to well over 800 children throughout Bennington County, each receiving a book delivered to their home monthly until their 5th birthday. We would like to have 1,000 children enrolled by the end of the year.

Won’t you please join us in making this a reality with a donation today? Please know how much we value your support and donations each year. We wouldn’t be able to grow and meet the needs of our community without you!

Happy Spring!



Denise Main
Executive Director



Mail checks to 244 Union Street, Bennington, VT 05201
or donate securely online at: sunrisepcc.com/make-a-donation.php

SUNRISE'S SPRING HAPPENINGS

Basket Bingo

On March 19, 2025, Sunrise held our first ever Basket Bingo fundraiser! So many community members came out to show their support and play bingo!



naeyc
Week of the Young Child® **vtayc**
Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children
APRIL 5 - 11, 2025

Sunrise celebrated with themed events all week long for Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday, and Family Friday! We were very grateful to have received a grant from VTAEYC that made these events possible.



DPiL Dance Party • April 12, 2025



Sunrise threw a Dance Party to benefit Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Bennington County!

The event took place at Mount Anthony Country Club and featured live music from the Prescription!

It was a night full of fun and celebration!



Join Dads & Kids Create!

All fathers and father figures are invited to attend with their child (1st grade and up).

Stay tuned for more sessions throughout the Summer & Fall!

**VERMONT
ARTS
EXCHANGE**
48 MAIN ST. NO BENN.



Whole Family Approach to Jobs

In January 2025, Megan Oxendine, Sunrise's Resource Coordinator, traveled to Beverly, MA to attend the Whole Family Approach to Jobs conference. This 5-state convening gathers nonprofits, business leaders, and legislators from New England to discuss sustaining jobs and helping families gain economic mobility. Megan was honored to open the conference with a speech and participate as a parent leader.



Megan with Elaine Zimmerman, Regional Administrator for the Administration for Children and Families

“The most important thing for a parent is their voice being heard, and actively listening to what our needs and wants are for the better of our families. The most important lesson that I have gathered throughout my journey of being a parent leader is building social capital (finding your true support system) and helping teach other families how to navigate our forever changing systems. As a parent we understand what works and doesn't work for our families. ... This is about bringing everyone together and fully seeing the parents, the work and all of the in-betweens in these forever changing times.”
- Excerpt from Megan's speech

Learning Together Program, or LTP, is an alternative high school completion program for pregnant and parenting youth, up to the age of 24.

Interview with a LTP Student

Talk about your experiences here at Sunrise.

It has been amazing because it is fun coming here and learning. I am able to talk to a group of safe people about my problems. It feels good having a support system.

What is the main difference between LTP compared to a normal high school program?

It is flexible and more lenient than a regular high school, because there are emergencies in life and my school understands that. If my son gets sick, I can go get him or stay home to take care of him. It's a lot easier in the mornings because of the 9 am start time. I'm not as stressed or rushed dropping off my son at childcare, and I'm able to get to school on time.

How has LTP impacted your life outside of school?

I have friends that are moms too, and it's nice not to feel so lonely in parenting. Sunrise has connected me with other resources outside of school in the community.

What would you like to do once you graduate?

I would like to start working at UCS at the North Bennington Childcare Center. To be able to do that I need to graduate and have my high school diploma. I look forward to graduating this June!



A Letter We Received From a Family

When an unexpected incident occurred in our family and we were asked to take on custody of our two young granddaughters, we didn't realize how challenging that would become. We would like to thank you for your part in the healing process for us and our family members.

We appreciated your efforts (in conjunction with DCF) to provide the finances that enabled the girls to attend the Here Wee Grow Playschool in Manchester. With our daughter-in-law, working her Japanese job remotely (as possible) while also dealing with the requirements of the court, and with us taking care of the girls for many hours (day and night) we were all close to a crisis state due to fatigue, plus the added strain of cultural and language misunderstandings. The childcare program gave us adults time to do necessary things and get some rest. It gave the girls the opportunity to learn and grow in a safe environment while our daughter-in-law got the help she needed. (And it definitely reduced the building stress on our marriage!)

Additionally, our daughter-in-law participated in the Family Advocacy program with the goal of improving her parenting skills and dealing with anger issues that affected the children and the entire family. We saw an improvement in her attitudes and actions with the children as a result of the individual meetings with Christine (FAP Family Advocate) at the home and online group sessions. In a letter that she gave us before she left to return to Japan with the girls, she wrote: "I have learned many valuable lessons and am determined to never repeat such mistakes and strive to be a good mother."

Our daughter-in-law and granddaughters returned safely to Japan, where the youngest is happily involved in a preschool program while the oldest is now in Kindergarten. (We hope they will be able to quickly regain confidence in speaking Japanese after being here in the US for a year.)

Thank you again for the work you do to promote healthy relationships and restore families.

Gratefully yours,
A Manchester family

We bought a van!



In February 2025, Sunrise purchased a 2022 Honda Odyssey mini-van. We use it to transport our LTP students to class, take field trips with our ECE, and for staff to attend upstate trainings and use around town.



Unihog

WILD ADRIATIC

May 24, 2025

A fundraiser concert to benefit Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Bennington County, VT

Doors open: 6PM

Music starts: 7PM

SCAN TO PURCHASE TICKETS

