



40 YEARS!
Northeast Kingdom Youth Services
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Celebrating
40 YEARS
 1975-2015

Northeast Kingdom Youth Services

NEKYS creates opportunities within communities for individuals, youth and families to strengthen positive life skills and develop resiliency in the face of adversity.

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OCTOBER 2015

Director's Message

There is a chill in the air and the leaves on the trees are changing color as summer turns to fall. Soon the temperatures will drop and the snow will begin to fly. Some look forward to this time of year with thoughts of foliage, tourists and winter sports. However, there are many in our community who know that soon, the struggles they face every day could become unbearable. It's difficult for most of us to envision what it means to have no place to call home. Imagine having such sharp pain in your belly that causes you to double over because you haven't eaten anything today, you can't remember if you ate yesterday and you have no idea if you'll eat tomorrow. Imagine being afraid to fall asleep at night because you don't know who's out there who may want to rob you or worse. Imagine carrying all your belongings wherever you go. Imagine having no one with whom to share your life, your hopes, your dreams, your future. Imagine having only worry and fear as your constant companions every day. This is a reality for those who are homeless.



From March first through September first, we had 26 unduplicated local youth who identified as being homeless. The 12th Annual Walk is our fundraiser that supports at-risk and homeless youth in our community. Can we count on you to help us support local youth to end this cycle? Working together, we can make youth homelessness a thing of the past in our community. The youth of our community depend on all of us working together to help them cross the threshold into a future filled with promise, hope and stability. Ending homelessness in our community is an obtainable goal and one we are committed to achieving in the near future. If you're ready to have a lasting impact in the life of a young person, please consider generously supporting the NEKYS 12th Annual Walk and imagine knowing you've made it possible for a young person to close their eyes at night without fear. Imagine!

Constance Constance S. Sandahl, Executive Director

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NEKYS has been offering vital supportive services and opportunities for youth and families since 1975.



Kindness is always in style. Mary Lou Webb decorates NEKYS front window.

Calendar of Upcoming Events:

NEKYS 12th Annual Walk for Homeless Youth

Saturday, October 17th 2015
 Registration at 9:00 a.m.
 Walk Kick-off at 10:00 am
 The Walk will be held at the North Congregational Church, 1325 Main Street, Saint Johnsbury



The Learning Kitchen

The Learning Kitchen classes are designed to improve food security for families with limited budgets. In a series of six lessons, participants engage in hands-on cooking and nutrition education activities that focus on balancing and planning meals, stretching food dollars to maximize nutrition, shopping strategies and cooking techniques. Classes start Thursday, October 15th and end Thursday November 19th and will be held at North Congregational Church in Saint Johnsbury Vermont. Classes will run from 2:30 to 4:30. Contact: Sarah Sanville (802) 748-8732 or sarahs@nekys.org

Month of November

Homeless Youth Awareness Month

Each year more than 1.6 million youth are homeless at some point and that number is increasing (The National Center on Family Homelessness).

Nonprofit Awareness Month

This month we take time to honor the integral role nonprofits play in our lives.

National Survivors of Suicide Day-November 21, 2015

A day when the friends and family of those who have died by suicide can join together for healing and support.

Month of December

National Homeless Persons Memorial Day: The Longest Night of Winter

On the longest night of winter, December 21st, 2014 we remember those who have died without a home and recommit ourselves to ending homelessness in our community.

Residents of East Haven, Hardwick, Kirby and Lyndonville

NEKYS is currently seeking town meeting signatures for the above towns. Please stop by NEKYS and give us your signature!

"Frozen and Alone" Documentary Viewing at NEKYS' 12th Annual Walk

"Frozen and Alone," a documentary created by NEKYS staff, volunteers, and youth will be shown throughout the day of the Annual Walk at North Church on October 17th. Nine amazing individuals who were currently experiencing homelessness agreed to share parts of their stories with us. The film is 26 minutes long and depicts struggles homeless people in our community are facing and the current housing crisis.

Many of the youth we work with are either directly affected by homelessness or know someone who is. It is a hard reality for many to know there are people in our area sleeping under the bridge, in vehicles, or buildings during the harsh Vermont winter.

The eye opening documentary has been shown at the Vermont Suicide Prevention Symposium, our local community health team and other local agencies. This project was made possible through a grant from the Center for Health and Learning.



Northeast Kingdom Youth Services receives grant from the Merchants Bank Foundation to support its Outdoor Adventure Programs

Northeast Kingdom Youth Services (NEKYS) received a grant from the Merchants Bank Foundation. The support will allow NEKYS to continue to offer the Outdoor Adventure Programs for local youth. The **NEKYS' Outdoor Adventure Programs** strive to improve the lives of at-risk youth by increasing their resiliency and decreasing risk factors contributing to drug and alcohol use, suicide, school dropout, teen pregnancy and violence. Outdoor activities include kayaking, canoeing, hiking, swimming, mountain trekking, survival skills and shelter-building. The programs are transformational experiences that nurtures youth to achieve more than they ever thought possible. It gives them the skills to successfully overcome the challenges of their present circumstances and move toward brighter futures.

"The Merchants Bank Foundation is thrilled to award NEKYS a grant to help support the Outdoor Adventure Programs. These programs are vital for the youth of our community to help develop leadership skills and to give the youth valuable tools to help overcome adversity." *Martha J Davis, Vice President/ Regional Banking Manager of Merchants Bank.*

Merchants Bank believes in caring and sharing with the people and communities they serve. They show their support by donating to non-profit organizations, sponsoring community events and volunteering in local communities. Established in 1849, Merchants Bank is Vermont's largest and sole remaining statewide independent bank. Consumer, business, municipal and investment customers enjoy personalized relationships, sophisticated online and mobile banking options and 32 branches statewide. Merchants Bank (Member FDIC, Equal Housing Lender, NASDAQ "MBVT") and Merchants Trust Company employ approximately 300 full-time employees and 40 part-time employees statewide, and have earned several "Best Places to Work in Vermont" awards. American Banker ranks Merchants Bank a "Top 200" in America among 851 peers. www.mbvt.com

The Merchants Bank Foundation, established by Merchants Bank as a non-profit, donates money to charities that serve the communities of Vermont.



NEKYS' Executive Director Constance Sandahl, NEKYS' Outdoor Adventure Programs Coordinator, Gary Burnham, Cara Benjamin, Outdoor Adventure Programs Peer Leader, and Martha J. Davis, Merchants Bank.

JUMP Mentoring Program- First Annual Rubber Duck Race

On August 21, 2015, the JUMP mentoring program held a Back to School Pool Party for the community, mentors and mentees at Powers Park in Lyndonville. Immediately following, JUMP hosted the first annual Rubber Duck Race fundraiser at Lyndon Town School. 100 ducks were sold at \$5 apiece. They were dumped into the river and the first 10 finishers received prizes, which had been donated by local businesses. Both events were successful and the JUMP team would like to thank the many people and businesses who donated prizes, money and time. We have learned that Powers Park would like to host the Pool Party again next year. We look forward to the second annual Rubber Duck Race!

The JUMP Mentoring Program at Northeast Kingdom Youth Services provides mentors to youth in grades one through eight. In a school setting, matches meet for one hour a week for an entire school year and many continue to meet for multiple years. Matches spend time together talking, eating lunch, playing games, doing arts and crafts, woodworking, photography, riding bicycles, playing soccer or simply hanging out.

◀ *Left to right, Karlee LaCross, Courtney O'Dell, and Chase Sanville*



Ben & Jerry's Vermont Community Action Team awarded NEKYS' Outdoor Adventure Program with a \$1,500 grant. Ben & Jerry's support programs that make a difference in under-served populations including at-risk youth from low income communities.



Left to right, Tanika Salls, Noah Alleire, Walker Wright, Denny Gao, and Caitlyn Frost enjoying another day in the great outdoors.

Northeast Kingdom Youth Services receives grant from the Vermont Women's Fund to improve the lives of young women in Vermont.

Northeast Kingdom Youth Services (NEKYS) is pleased to announce it has received a grant from the Vermont Women's Fund at the Vermont Community Foundation. The support will allow NEKYS to offer the GLAM (Girls Learning (that) Aggression Matters!) program. GLAM will provide young women with an open and safe forum for discussion of healthy relationships and how to identify and effectively intervene when witnessing violence and aggression. GLAM will be delivered in a small group setting. The program is offered in partnership with Umbrella, our community's lead organization in addressing issues impacting women and girls.

"I'm pleased to express Umbrella's commitment to the GLAM project and anticipate a safer, more supportive community will result from our partnership. Any opportunity our organization has to work with youth about the importance of healthy, respectful relationships is a welcomed endeavor." Renee A.K. Swain, Executive Director of Umbrella.

Vermont Community Foundations' Green Mountain Fund awarded NEKYS' Outdoor Adventure Program (Hardwick area) with a \$1,000 grant. The Green Mountain Fund supports opportunities that will benefit the children and families in the grant making region.



Cara Benjamin canoeing on the Green River Reservoir.

Generosity Abounds in the Northeast Kingdom

We thank all the friends of NEKYS for their generosity and caring

Gifts in Support of NEKYS

Albright, Elizabeth and Peter
Anderson, Donald and Katherine
Belyea, Mike and Jean
Bossom, Naomi
Caplan's Army Store
Cass, Reed and Christine
Community National Bank
Eddy, Bill and Pam
Ellis, Gay
Foley, Rita and Jill Kelleher
Frost III, Harold and Beverly
Hopkins, Kay
Kitchel, Sen. Jane and Robert
Landry, Frank and Rosalie Vear
Montpelier Broadcasting
Newell, James and Sally
Passumpsic Savings Bank
Piper, Kathryn and William
Pollak, Emil and Elaine
Reis, Gerald W.
Roy, Albert and Joyce
Roy, Joyce and Albert
Russell, David and Patricia
Sicard, Jeanne and Richard
Swainbank, Daniel and Mary
Tom Breslin Community Center
Uihleinin, Julia and David
Webster, Patricia

Wells, Rod and Terry
Williams, Russell and Lois
Wollrath, Joan
Ziobrowski, Thomas and Beth Williams
Zuccaro, Edward and Carol

In-Kind Gifts

31 Bags
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All Around Rental
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Applebees
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Buck, Denise and John
Cabot Creamery Cooperation, Inc.
Cady's Falls Nursery
Center Tower
Circus Smirkus
Clark's Trading Post
Echodale Farm Sugarhouse
Farm-Way
Flynn Center for the Performing Arts
Gold Crown Lanes
Great Corn Maze
Kingdom Gymnastics
Kingdom Trails
Lyndonville House of Pizza
Lyndonville Redemption

Meadowbrook Pavillion
Miss Lyndonville Diner
Montshire Museum
Munchkins Daycare
New England Patriots Charitable Foundation
Northeast Kingdom Processing
Pampered Chef
Powers Park
Q-Burke
RecFit
River of Life Camp
Roush, Keith and Ann
Samadhi Cushions
Santa's Village
Shelburne Farms
Somers Family Farm
St. Johnsbury Fire Department
Tanner, Laura
The Common Man
The Farmers Daughter
Tree Corners Scoop Shop
Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
Village Kids Boutique
Yoga with Sherri

Memorial Gifts for Doug Willey

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Birkenhead, Ryan

Butterfield, Robert
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Jarvi, Lauren
Larkin, Dianne
Power, Carol and Colleen Swett
Shannon, Craig
Swartz, Robert and Pat
Thibault, Vicky
Warren, James and Lisa
Waystack Frizzell Trial Lawyers
Wilde, David
Wyand, Dan and Mary

Summer Central Scholarship Program Gifts

Building Bright Futures
Amerigas
Anonymous
Authier, Michelle and Craig Dreisbach
Bixby, Elaine and David
Lyndonville Rotary Club
McFaul, James and Elizabeth
Mentes, Margrethe
St. Johnsbury Rotary Club
We try very hard to list all our generous donors. If you don't find your name please give us a call.

Youth in Transition (YIT) Program Hosts Pregnant and Parenting Group

Northeast Kingdom Youth Services (NEKYS) YIT program staff learned that many of the young adults they work with were concerned about the lack of pregnant and parenting education and support in the community. These young adults reported the primary community focus was on prevention, with little emphasis placed on providing services for young people who are already pregnant and/or are parenting.

With the support of The Vermont Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, the YIT staff set about creating a youth empowerment project by developing a pregnant and parenting group. Staff created an informational survey, which was completed by 15 young adults to gather ideas of what the youth wanted from the group. The staff then tailored the group around the interests expressed.

The Pregnant and Parenting Group met for nine sessions. Nine healthcare providers facilitated each session. Topics included: preparing for the arrival of their baby, healthy well-being and mental wellness, breast and bottle feeding, how to choose a daycare and daycare subsidies for parents, the WIC program and infant/toddler CPR, healthy relationships between partners and between peers, and the SMART team presented for addicted pregnant moms on how to stay healthy. All the participants received a car seat and many items to assist with the care of their child.

The group of 14 young adults was successful and a final survey showed that the participants had a stronger understanding and connection with local area services. They also reported making connections to peers that are parenting or pregnant.



Left to right, Patrick McLaughlin and Jillian McLaughlin from Lyndon Fire and Rescue teaching car seat safety to group.



Left to right, Amanda Newman, Trinity Newman, and Chris Newman practicing car seat safety.

The Summer Central Scholarship Program a Huge Success!

The Summer Central Scholarship Program at Northeast Kingdom Youth Services had a successful summer helping income eligible families in Caledonia and Southern Essex Counties fund summer camps or programs for their kids. Summer Central provided scholarships to 65 youth, for a total of \$5,830. All funding for Summer Central comes from donations and fundraising. Many of the recipients attended Powers Park, while others went to Coutts Moriarty, River of Life and St. J RecFit Track program. NEKYS exceeded their goal this year and would like to thank all of those who made donations, sold calendars, donated prizes and attended fundraising events. Without you, Summer Central would not have been such a success!



Waylon and Wyatt Stacey enjoying another day at Powers Park