

ANNUAL REPORT 2016



1-800-800-4005 | www.VermontFamilyNetwork.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ellen J. Zeman
Chair

Craig Giles
Vice Chair

Tom Stretton
Treasurer

Laurie Gunn
Secretary

Abigail Adler, M.D.

Kristen Bigelow-Talbert

Tammy Carroll

Katie Cuttitta

Lanie Kanat

Kim Keiser

Jennifer McDonald

Katie Flanagan Mobley

Kristin Prior

Charlotte Safran

Olivia Smith-Hammond

Kay Van Woert

Shelly Waterman

Beth Wilson

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL

Pam McCarthy
President/CEO

Holly Brooks
Vice President of Operations

Rachel Boyers
*Director of Children's Integrated
Services – Early Intervention*

Lisa Maynes
*Director of Family Support –
Health*

Karen Price
*Director of Family Support –
Education*

Dianne Levasseur
Finance Manager



Pam McCarthy, President/CEO of Vermont Family Network with Ann Moore

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Supporters,

This has been a very full year for Vermont Family Network, empowering and supporting the families we serve throughout the state. We are excited to share some highlights of our Family Support and Children's Integrated Services Early Intervention (CIS-EI) Teams' work. From July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, we have served 1072 families and 232 professionals through our statewide Family Support information, referral, and assistance, totaling 4,380 contacts. CIS-EI staff have served 473 children in Chittenden County with supportive home visits and developmental education.

We have served an increasing number of New American families in Chittenden County this year, and were recognized in June for this unique family-to-family support work with a \$25,000 S. Whitney Landon Award from the Turrell Fund.

VFN continues to build strong partnerships around the state to support families of children with special needs and the professionals who serve them. These partnerships allow us to increase our ability to reach families where they are, and to ensure that their voices are represented when important decisions related to disability, special education, and healthcare reform are being considered.

Our 18 Board members, more than half of whom are parents of children with special needs, strongly support the advancement of our mission. The Board has identified three strategic themes for the next three years, and the FY16 Annual Report is a testament to these choices:

1. Program Recognition and Influence: High quality, impactful work
2. Management: Well-run non-profit (infrastructure, organizational culture, staff capacity)
3. Resources: Supporting family needs equitably state-wide

We appreciate your support for great outcomes for children with special needs of all ages throughout the state. We welcome you to volunteer in VFN's outreach, events, Board, advocacy opportunities at the Legislature, and more. Together, we will continue to create measurable impact as Vermont's "go-to" resource for families of children with special needs.

Thank you again for your commitment to our organization and the people we serve. We hope that you will enjoy our 2016 Annual Report, and that you will contact us with questions and/or feedback at 1-800-800-4005, or pam.mccarthy@vtn.org.

From the heart,


Pam McCarthy, President/CEO


Ellen Zeman, Board Chair



The Ostrout Kids

“VFN was amazing and was able to put things in terms I could understand and helped everything go smoothly. I’ve seen how bumpy and difficult it can be so I was very grateful for VFN’s help.”

PARENT

FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM

VFN’s Family Support Program continues to help many families who are navigating the complex health and special education systems. Our efforts to do this work are supported by Federal grants as the Family-to-Family Health Information Center and the Parent Training and Information Center. Both of these grants have recently been awarded a new cycle of funding. The complexity of these systems often leaves families in need of assistance with understanding laws, parental rights, and how to collaborate with a wide variety of professionals who are part of their child’s teams. Our staff is skilled and ready to support Vermont families.

Our grant funding continues to allow us to offer families opportunities for respite, conference, and training experiences, and we collaborate directly with Children with Special Health Needs at the Department of Health to

provide funding for medically necessary services and products that are not otherwise covered. We work directly with schools and the Vermont Agency of Education to help facilitate parent engagement in all tiers of education and disseminate information to families through workshops, webinars, and printed materials.

Family Support is a vital part of Vermont Family Network’s mission. We listen to families and offer resources, support, and growth opportunities. Families of children with special needs return to us several times throughout their children’s lives and we are ready to assist however we can. Our goal is always to empower families with knowledge and experiences that will help them to move forward with confidence. As experienced parents of children with special needs, our staff is uniquely qualified to achieve this goal.

CHILDREN'S INTEGRATED SERVICES — EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

VFN's Chittenden County Children's Integrated Services – Early Intervention Program (CIS-EI) is part of Vermont's statewide system of coordinated services for pregnant women and young children. CIS-EI serves children ages 0-3 years old with developmental delays or health conditions which may lead to developmental delays and provides coordinated services in natural environments, such as homes and early care and education programs where children without disabilities also participate. CIS-EI staff help parents or caregivers integrate play-based developmental interventions that are interesting and functional into the daily routines of their children.

In FY 16, CIS-EI served 473 children/families (a 25% increase over the past five years), received 388 referrals (a 13% increase over the past five years), and served 18 children in our intensive Early Start Denver Model (ESDM) Autism program. Due to increasing caseload and documentation pressures, we have had to make the difficult decision to eliminate this intensive autism support in order to serve all CIS-EI eligible families in FY17. We continue to advocate for increases to funding for all CIS services across the state, including these specialized autism services.

We are happy to announce that all of our Developmental Educators have completed their Certification in Early Intervention through the state of Vermont. This certification process assures the quality provision of early intervention services to families by professionals

in the field of early intervention. Most of our Developmental Educators hold a bachelor's or master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education and have teaching licenses with endorsements in birth to six. The Early Intervention Certification is important, as it will:

- Establish a consistent set of standards among a diverse group of professionals with varying formal education and experiences.
- Assure families with infants and toddlers of the quality of personnel providing them with EI supports and services.
- Support on-going personnel development for new and seasoned practitioners.
- Build a bridge to billing Medicaid.

This past year our staff received professional development in many areas including: Mandated Reporting, Home Visit Safety, Drug Identification, HIPAA/Confidentiality, Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood Educational Settings, Trauma Informed Practice and a Framework for Engaging Families in EI.

CIS-EI FY 2016 FAMILY SURVEY OUTCOMES

- 82.7% reported that early intervention services have helped them know their parental rights.
- 88.5% reported that early intervention services have helped their family effectively communicate their child's needs.
- 85.7% reported that early intervention services have helped their family help their children to develop and learn, exceeding the state standards.

“CIS-EI is amazing. I had no clue what was wrong with my child and was losing hope. They supported and educated us passionately.” PARENT



Father and son at first annual Family Fun Day.



“One of the many unintentional yet fantastic opportunities that was presented because of Fragile X was the opportunity to meet wonderful people through VFN.”

KANAT FAMILY

A STORY OF SUCCESS

Fragile X. Fragile what? A genetic counselor called us with our son's test results and told us the he had Fragile X Syndrome. That comment was followed by a long list of things that he would never accomplish nor understand. He was only 3½ years old, our daughter was just born, and we were devastated. A mutation of the Fragile X gene is the most common inherited cause of cognitive impairment and autism. His life is impacted by a broad spectrum of emotional and behavioral involvements including autistic challenges, high anxiety, hyperactivity, avoidance of eye contact, attention deficits, speech problems, sensory issues, seizures, and more.

He was always a very happy child and prior to his diagnosis we tried to ignore some of his idiosyncrasies – there is something very powerful about denial. Yet, denial did not serve us well. We felt completely alone. We eventually accepted our situation and began working together as a team. We devoted a lot of time to learning more about Fragile X. We made new friends and other relationships went by the wayside. We knew we needed to connect with others to help us navigate our new world.

We started looking locally for support and found Vermont Family Network (VFN). Jan Hancock was our first contact at VFN and she was very supportive and reassuring; she helped us see the many ways that VFN could help guide us and support us as we settled into our new life with a family member who requires constant support. Through our early connections with

VFN we learned how to become better advocates and share our story and our needs with others in the community, at the state level and at the federal level. In addition to working with others who have Fragile X, we advocate for others who are also in need of support. VFN encouraged us to reach out and share our story with students involved in the University of Vermont Family Faculty program (including medical, nursing, special education, health science, and counseling students). We participated in the Vermont Leadership Series and gained more ideas, made more connections, and grew to become better advocates for those with uncommon needs. One of us (Lanie) now serves on VFN Board of Directors. We both coordinate the Vermont Fragile X Community Support Network with another family in Vermont with Fragile X in their lives. Our involvement with the National Fragile X Foundation allows us to feel more hopeful with our lives and comfortable engaging with others. Our neurotypical daughter is involved with Sibshops through VFN and has become an advocate for others who have challenges. Her compassionate nature continues to grow as she watches us work with others and devote our time to requests and offers that come to us through VFN.

It was the early and ongoing connections with VFN that allowed us to develop more clarity about our role, aspirations, and future. We are comforted knowing that our future challenges will be helped with the continued support of this community of friends.

Marin, Ryan, Lanie, and Leslie Kanat

“I think all aspects of the program have been extremely helpful for my son. All of the people he’s worked with have been amazing and I can’t imagine what we would do or would have done without them.”

PARENT

NEW WORK OF NOTE

For the first time, VFN hosted a workshop strand dedicated to youth at our annual conference in 2016. Over 60 young people signed up for these workshops! Presenters included participants from the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL), Vocational Rehabilitation Transition

Counselors, and five young people, who shared their experiences transitioning out of high school. Youth learned about self-advocacy, career programs, and the importance of planning and goal setting. We were very excited to help youth and families learn of new resources.





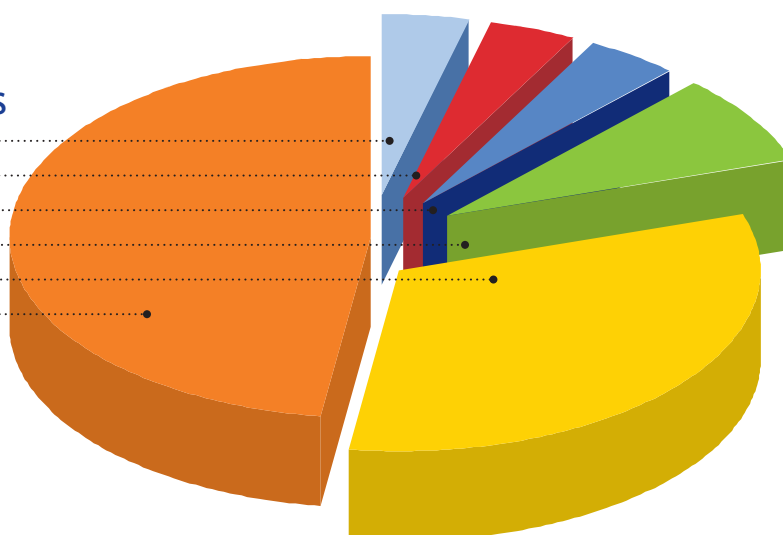
“I want to thank you for helping my family access the Flutie Fund. What a blessing to receive this grant. My son was recently diagnosed with a spectrum disorder and will be using this money to pay for Social Thinking sessions with his SLP.” PARENT

LISTENING TO THOSE WE SERVE

Funding was again one of the top reasons families contacted us. We were able to distribute to families a total of \$72,448 for critical expenses or costs associated with their lives as parents of children with extraordinary needs.

FUNDING ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES

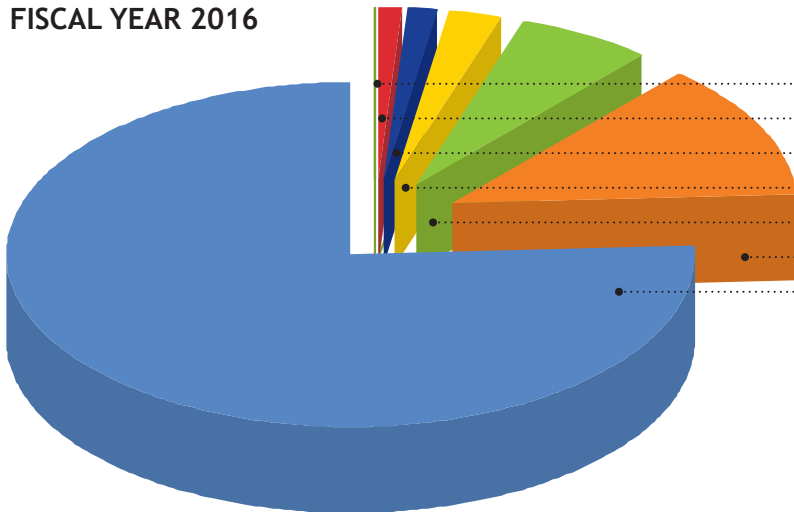
Parent Education Opportunities: \$2,745
 VFN Conference Scholarship \$2,795
 Recreation for Child: \$3,180
 Crisis Funding: \$5,680
 Respite: \$23,400
 Medically Necessary Uncovered: \$34,648
TOTAL EXPENSES: \$72,448





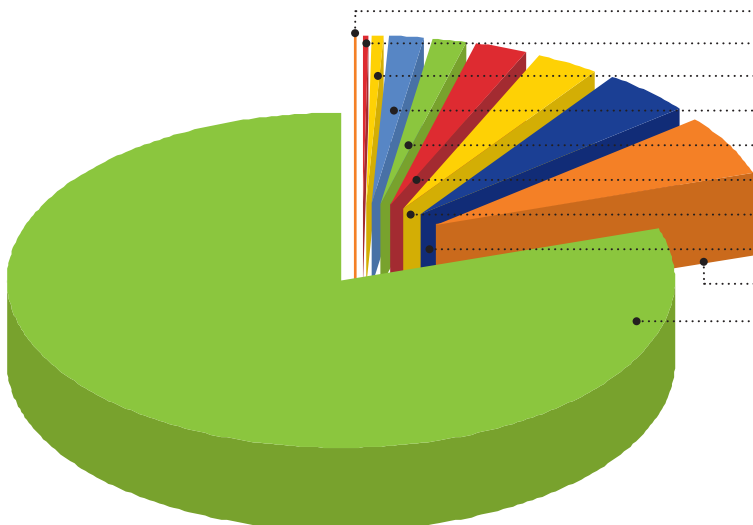
REVENUES AND EXPENSES

FISCAL YEAR 2016



FY 2016 REVENUES

Miscellaneous: \$934
 Landon Award: \$25,000
 Foundation Support: \$39,022
 Direct Public Support: \$59,888
 Fee for Service: \$158,214
 Federal Grants: \$321,425
 State Funding: \$1,893,070
TOTAL INCOME: \$2,497,553



FY 2016 EXPENSES

Miscellaneous: \$962
 Staff Development: \$7,947
 Marketing/Fundraising: \$9,128
 IT Supplies & Support: \$39,472
 Supplies/Copy/Print: \$40,761
 Travel: \$59,435
 Money Given to Families: \$74,055
 Program Related: \$107,815
 Facilities: \$133,953
 Salaries & Benefits: \$1,910,225
TOTAL EXPENSES: \$2,383,753

TOP REASONS PEOPLE CONTACTED VFN

1

Education:
Parent/professional
communication in schools

Health:
Funding

2

Education:
IEP

Health:
Behavior

3

Education:
Parent rights

Health:
Respite

4

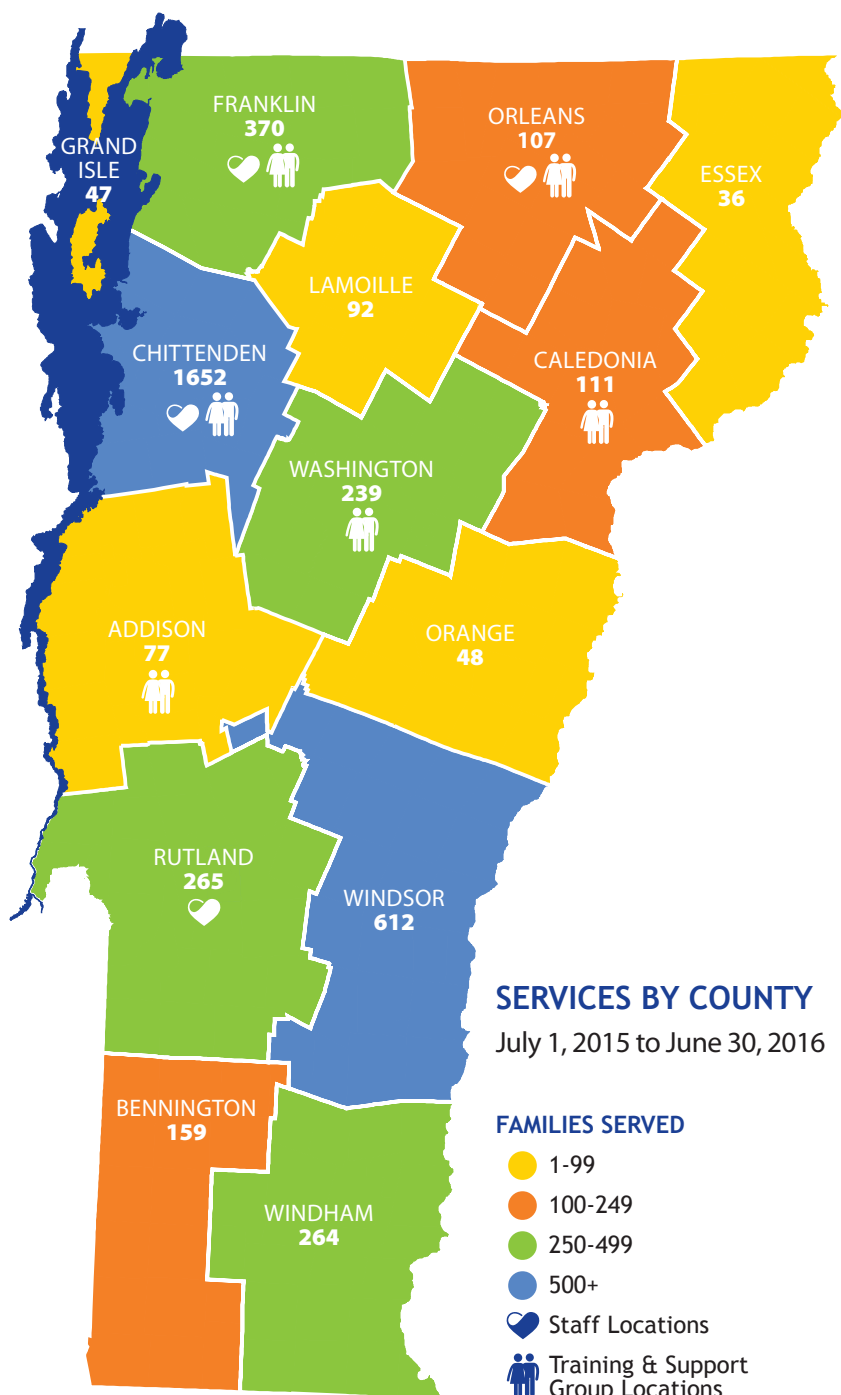
Education:
504 Complaint

Health:
Mental health

5

Education:
Special education
process

Health:
Disability-specific



VFN'S MISSION: TO EMPOWER AND SUPPORT ALL VERMONT FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

“I’m really inspired by all the people here.”

VT LEADERSHIP SERIES PARTICIPANT

DONORS

Vermont Family Network is grateful to all of our donors for their generous support. We would particularly like to thank the following sponsors that helped with our conference and fund-raising throughout the year. Thanks to their generosity, VFN has the flexibility to help families in ways that are not covered by state and federal grants. This support is vital to VFN's success.

Ashley Furniture HomeStore Williston
Belle's Café
Bio-Medic Appliances
Bouchard-Pierce
Center on Disability and Community Inclusion
& Vermont I-Team
Children's Integrated Services –
Early Intervention
Cornerstone Restaurant
Department of Disabilities, Aging and
Independent Living
Trader Duke's Restaurant
Franklin County Surgical Associates
Grazers Restaurant
Gringo Jack's Restaurant
Hannaford Williston
Howard Center
Let's Grow Kids
Leunig's Bistro
Main Street Landing Company
Mexicali Grill & Cantina

Nine East Network
North Star Leasing Company
Painting with Payton
Queen City Brewery
Selection Unlimited
Shelburne Vineyard
Simply Divine Café
TD Bank
The Three Tellers
University of Vermont
University of Vermont College of Nursing &
Health Sciences
Vermont Department of Health –
CSHN/MCH
Vermont Children's Hospital –
UVM Medical Center
Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council
Vermont Sleep Disorder Center
Vermont Teddy Bear Company
Windjammer
Zachary's Pizza

1091 likes on Facebook and 326 followers on Twitter
40 workshops and 14 webinars conducted
**80 siblings of kids with special
needs attended 10 Sibshops**

\$72,448 given directly to families to help them meet critical needs
Provided information and assistance 4,380 times
**37 parent scholarships awarded
to attend our annual conference**

473 children served by our Children's Integrated Services Early Intervention program in Chittenden County (including 18 in our Autism Team)

**Our Family Faculty trained 855 medical
graduate and undergraduate students, using
44 (unique) Parent Volunteers/Family Faculty**



600 Blair Park Road, Suite 240, Williston, VT 05495-7549

1-800-800-4005

www.VermontFamilyNetwork.org



www.facebook.com/VermontFamilyNetwork



twitter.com/VTFN



www.youtube.com/vtfamilynetwork