



Child Care Resource

Annual Report 2005-2006

Changing Lives Everyday - A Case Study

by Carmen Grace

"I only go from paycheck to paycheck. . . [I am] likely to forget about Christmas this year. . . I feel like a horrible mom. . ."

These are excerpts from a letter received from one of our Subsidy clients asking for extra help. Growing up in a troubled home, Melissa has been coping with distress her whole life. Her father abused her physically and emotionally into early adulthood, and her brother began to pick up some of his father's habits. She has been coping with this trauma, but not always in the healthy ways. Over the years, she had seen many counselors, but was never able to develop a strong relationship with one. Her personal relationships were always held at a distance. Several years ago, she finally found a boyfriend, Ed who helped her to face her demons with an outlook towards improving their future together, and later, the future of their daughter, Savannah. With Ed's support, Melissa began to see a counselor regularly, and to accept the scars. While Melissa struggled with her past experiences, and fought to control her anxiety over the future, Ed was incarcerated for carrying a registered weapon in a Zero Tolerance Zone. Without a solid support system, or foundation of encouragement, Melissa's newly-forming sense of self crumbled. Her family offered to help, but at the price of a constant barrage of insults and told-you-so's. Furthermore, Savannah, missing her daddy, was aggressive, and at two years old, began to express signs of depression. This, more than anything, showed Melissa the depth of her own desolation.

I am likely to forget about Christmas this year. . . I feel like a horrible mom. . .

Hitting Bottom

Melissa first contacted CCR in September 2005, and, based on her service needs, Subsidy was able to qualify Melissa for full subsidized payments. This meant she was still responsible to pay \$32 each week to meet the full amount charged by her provider. It was late October, 2005 when, in tears, Melissa called her Subsidy caseworker to plead for help paying the difference between her provider rate and the subsidized payments. She felt like she was at the edge of a cliff, yet was unable to see the path leading to the bottom. She just needed someone to help her see the steps she could take to safety. Step one was to be certain Savannah was gaining the most benefit during her time in child care.

A CCR Referral Specialist helped identify the child care setting that would best meet Melissa's and especially Savannah's needs; interaction with other children, and a confident and positive adult available. (Continued on page 7)



Savannah & Melissa at Miss Josey's

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If you would like to learn how you can help make a difference in the lives of children in Chittenden County, please call 863-3367 x 17

Save the Date!
Tuesday, Oct. 24
5:30 - 8:00 p.m.
Hampden Inn, Colchester
**CCR Celebration
22 Years of Making a Difference**
for details please visit
www.childcareresource.org

www.childcareresource.org
181 Cambridge Street, Williston, Vermont 05495
Child Care Resource





Joan Lenes has been a member of the Child Care Resource Board of Directors since 2003. She is currently serving her first year as Board President.

From the President of the Board of Directors Joan Lenes

Child Care Resource is a unique organization. We are often important in a family's life for the intense years when they need child care for their young children. After that immediate need is no longer necessary, CCR may not seem to be so essential for that family.

That is not the case at all! Child Care Resource covers a wide range of community needs with its programs ranging from direct assistance with the child care search to working with providers, offering educational trainings, as well as working with businesses and their employees. We are also on the cutting edge working with food programs, subsidy, advocacy and consulting with families. We have enhanced all these important programs by adding the hands-on experience of owning and operating a child care center.

Heading into our 22nd year, Child Care Resource is a leader in the field of children and families, and is seen as a model agency locally, statewide and nationally. It is for these reasons and more that I feel committed and proud to be volunteering for Child Care Resource and serving as its board President. As individuals and as an organization, we achieve the purpose of our mission every day.

2005-2006 Financial Resources

Revenue		Expenses	
Federal and State	\$846,210	Personnel	\$905,531
CCFP Provider Reimbursement	\$325,464	Operating	\$698,372
Corporate & Foundation (WF Rcs)	\$110,576	Total Expenses	\$1,603,903
Fees	\$262,783		
Fund Raising	\$ 47,710	Net Income	\$22,590
Other	\$ 33,750		
Total Revenue	\$1,626,493		

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Kathie Mercia, Director of Subsidy, Resource and Referral, proudly displays the Quality Assurance Program certificate awarded to Child Care Resource in March.

Child Care Referral Service Achieves Quality Assurance Certification

QAP is short for Quality Assurance Program of the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. A mouthful to say, so we just say QAP. What is QAP? It is a national, voluntary, quality assurance system for community child care resource and referral programs (CCR&Rs). The Quality Assurance Program is designed to ensure that families across the country have access to consistent, high-quality consumer education and referral services. Being quality assured means that our staff has gone through a comprehensive nationally-administered service evaluation process. On March 31, 2006 Child Care Resource was awarded full QAP certification. Congratulations to Kathie Mercia, Director of Subsidy, Resource and Referral, and to her hardworking staff, for this important achievement!

Words of awareness

Griffin: "My Dad works in his office making money for me and Owen."
Owen: "Yeah, for college."



Continued from cover page

Savannah enrolled at Josey McDonald's Registered Home in January, 2006. Josey's activities allow the children to express themselves creatively, and the smaller setting allows Josey to more personally interact with Savannah. Though the setting was more conducive to Savannah's developmental needs, the copayment increased to \$38 each week.

Asking for Help

For step two, Melissa's Subsidy caseworker recommended writing to the State of Vermont regarding her challenges, and added her own observations on the impact a little extra help would have for this single mother. It was found that in order to help Melissa and Savannah catch up, develop a strong routine, and begin to improve their future, the most effective way the State could support them was to relieve the stress on Melissa to cover the copayment. The State awarded Melissa extra coverage that paid full payments to Savannah's child care provider.

"Her favorite activity is painting," according to Miss Josey.

Looking Ahead

Step three—Melissa has been able to analyze the past year, and she is impressed with how far they've both come. In the short time Savannah has been attending, Josey has noticed a major improvement in her vocabulary, and her ability to explain herself aloud. Minor changes in her surroundings have helped combat her early signs of depression, and in developing her complex-motor skills, vocabulary, and self-confidence. "Her favorite activity is painting," according to Miss Josey.

After developing a strong relationship with her Subsidy caseworker, Melissa is now working with a certified counselor. She is beginning to accept the role of good-guy and bad-guy that many single parents must take on. She takes Savannah to see her father as often as possible, and Melissa and Ed are planning to exchange vows in August.



Savannah with Miss Josey's daughter Emma

Carmen Grace is a Subsidy Caseworker at Child Care Resource



Ellen Drolette, CCR Board Vice President, makes Toy Van visits as part of her mentoring role.

New Toy Van

It's the Toy Van! Children all over Chittenden County have excitedly welcomed the Child Care Resource Toy Van to their programs since 1992. After 14 years, the old Toy Van could no longer visit children. So a new Toy Van has been purchased through a generous grant from the IBM Global Work/Life Fund. **The Toy Van lends high quality child care materials on a rotating basis.** It is staffed by child care experts who can provide consultation on a variety of child care issues when visiting a child care program. All child care programs in Chittenden County - centers, school-age programs and registered in-home child care programs - are eligible for Toy Van visits.

CCR by the Numbers 2005-2006

2.8%
is the average vacancy rate
for Chittenden County
accredited childcare slots

829
children, families, and
providers received
consultation services

2,833
total children were
served by CCR
per month

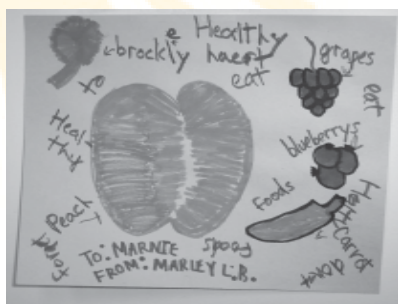
75%
of children served live in
low or moderate income
families

5,554
participants in professional
development workshops
hosted by CCR

2,125
children per month were in
child care subsidy and/or
nutrition programs

Food to Grow On

How many parents have heard, "I don't want this" as their child makes a face and pushes away the broccoli on their plate? How many parents on a tight budget may not purchase fresh fruits and vegetables if their child might not try them? This year Child Care Resource received grants from the USDA Community Foods Projects and the IBM Global Work/Life Fund to offer a hands-on program that makes vegetables and fruits a fun part of a child's day, and encourages children to make healthy food choices. Led by Project Manager, Marnie Pine, participating child care programs learn about serving locally grown, fresh foods and along with the children, plan and plant a small vegetable garden. Parents have a chance to attend *Cooking for Life*, a class focused on buying and preparing nutritious, low-cost meals. Twenty programs around Chittenden County are involved in this two-year project.



An art sample from the Community Foods Project, where children learn about healthy fruits and vegetables through hands-on activities.

Child Care Resource

Our Mission

We commit to strengthening the well-being, development, and education of children in Chittenden County by providing consultation, education, and resources to families, and professionals who care for and educate our children, businesses, and communities.

Elizabeth Meyer
Executive Director

Kathie Mercia
Director, Subsidy, Resource & Referral

Andrea Viets
Director, Williston Children's Center

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**From the Executive Director
Elizabeth Meyer**



Finding Our Center

Twenty-one is a "coming of age" year, and something magical happened for us as this agency came of age. It had been brewing since Child Care Resource embarked on a journey into the heart of child care with the 2004 purchase of the Williston Child Care Center, now called the Williston Children's Center. Through the year it seemed that almost everything that could go wrong did go wrong. Sometimes, each week was a struggle.

In spite of seemingly constant change, children continued to play and grow and amaze. Our center staff captured this in images and words. As this became part of our consciousness, the challenges got easier and the importance and joy of what we were doing at the center radiated throughout Child Care Resource. Our mission turned inside out. The child care center became more than just another program. It symbolizes the center of our mission and the heart of our work.

During the year, we achieved some critical milestones in our traditional program areas as well:

- Through the dedication and hard work of our Referral staff, we achieved national Quality Assurance Certification for our child care referral services. This certification recognizes the high quality of our work with parents and providers, as well as community involvement in child care planning and advocacy.
- Our Subsidy staff worked to their maximum capacity and beyond through the implementation of the Bright Futures Information System.
- We put our old Toy Van out to pasture this year and received a generous grant from IBM to purchase a new one. It's on the road again bringing new and different toys and equipment to programs all over the county.

As we move into the future, our roots in the daily work of early care and education influence all of the services we provide for our community. Our center is a small world in which the challenges and joys experienced by all of our clients play out each day:

- Parents finding and choosing child care and feeling confident that their children's needs are being met.
- Attracting and retaining qualified, dedicated staff and finding the time for professional development.
- Concerns for children whose behavior challenges our best skills.
- The tenuous economics of the child care business.

Like all 21 year olds, we are at the beginning of the exciting journey into adulthood. We look to the future with confidence — knowing more than we did a year ago, and understanding that there is always so much more to learn.

Williston Children's Center

By Andrea Viets



The Williston Children's Center was purchased by Child Care Resource, with the assistance of IBM, in August of 2004. CCR had several goals in adding this program to our agency: 1) the preservation of existing infant and toddler slots, essential to area families; 2) the development of a training model for area providers, including on-site observations, possible internships, and off-site mentoring by WCC staff; and 3) the opportunity to "walk the walk," learning more about the challenges and joys of operating a high quality child care by actually doing it.

The past two years have certainly been an education! We have learned first-hand about the challenges (the child care "trilemma" of affordable fees, appropriate staff:child ratios, and staff salaries; staff turnover; parent-Center communication; and simply the process of experiencing organizational change) as well as the joys (developing nurturing relationships between teachers, children, and parents; clarifying our mission and supporting practices; working successfully with challenging behaviors; and the simple pleasures of children's laughter and delightful perspectives on our world).

As we head into our third year, we are finding our way toward stability and growth. We have established

a core group of talented and dedicated teachers and are actively engaged in the team-building process. One of our teachers developed and led her first workshop, in partnership with our Program Director, at CCR's Annual Provider Conference this Spring.

We have welcomed a number of new families, and have worked hard to improve our communication with existing families. We have clarified our mission and supporting goals (see below), which is strengthening parent/Center communication, increasing new enrollment, and improving our emergent curriculum practices.

As a result of engaging in our play-based, emergent curriculum, children develop

Our mission is to support and encourage the healthy growth and development of children, families, and teachers.



curiosity and a love of learning, respect for self and others, kindness and compassion, playfulness, and a strong sense of community. Children are encouraged to explore their own interests and passions, and to develop age-appropriate levels of self-care and independence, with the loving support of their teachers.



Words of wisdom

Andrea to Jackson as he jumps off the couch:
"Jumping is for outside."
Jackson: "I'm not jumping. I'm flying!"

Words of curiosity

- Ben R.: "I wonder if skunks can smell their own spray?"
- Micah, looking at the sprouting roots of bean plants: "Why are these beans hairy?"

Perhaps the most difficult lesson has been that child care remains a vastly undervalued and underfunded profession and service in our culture. Science has confirmed what we always believed, that the first five years are the most rapid and essential years of brain development in our lives - and yet teachers of young children are paid less than garbage collectors. Financial resources often limit choices for parents, and funding for our subsidy system is grossly inadequate. There are days when it is impossible to avoid being disheartened.



And yet - joy remains. It is equally impossible to avoid the new morning, and the potential for wonder. Read the words from our "big kids" on these pages, and feel the smile cross your face. Remember the scent of sun-warmed skin, the feel of dirt and grass between your toes, the sound of a baby's cry. Remember the sadness of missing your parent, and the joy of making a new friend. Remember the delight of learning to walk, jump, skip, and climb. Remember a teacher who loved you, who encouraged your curiosity and celebrated your discoveries.

Williston Children's Center and Child Care Resource are committed to the pursuit of excellence for young children and families. We choose to accept the challenges, knowing that this work is not only valuable and important, it is essential to our community's good health. We choose joy.

Andrea Viets is Director of the Williston Children's Center

Words of discovery
Ben G.: "I never knew they were so small." (upon his first meeting with newborn baby Kaiden)

No Way. The hundred is there.

--Loris Malaguzzi, Reggio Emilia, Italy--



The child is made of one hundred. . . the child has. . . a hundred languages. . . a hundred hands. . . a hundred thoughts. . . a hundred ways of thinking, of playing, of speaking. . . a hundred, always a hundred ways of listening. . . of marveling, of loving. . . a hundred joys. . . for singing and understanding. . . a hundred words to discover. . . a hundred worlds to invent. . . a hundred worlds to dream. The child has a hundred languages. . . (and a hundred hundred hundred more) . . . but they steal ninety-nine.

The school and the culture. . . separate head from the body. . . They tell the child: to think without hands. . . to do without head. . . to listen and not to speak. . . to understand without joy. . . to love and to marvel only at Christmas and Easter. . . They tell the child: to discover the world already there. . . and of the hundred they steal ninety-nine. . . They tell the child: that work and play. . . reality and fantasy. . . science and imagination. . . sky and earth. . . reason and dream. . . are things that do not belong together. And thus they tell the child. . . that the hundred is not there.



The child says: No way. The hundred is there.

Underhill teen volunteer brings rays of sunshine

What started as a minimal high school community service requirement turned into a long-term commitment to the staff and children at our center.

Alison Turkos, a high school senior from Underhill, has logged more than 200 hours at the Williston Children's Center this year, sharing her remarkably positive outlook on life, her easy laugh and her clear delight in the words and behaviors of young children.

Alison participated in all areas of caregiving - reading with children, taking photographs, observing and engaging in their play, activity planning, and everyday tasks. She is always greeted with a chorus of "Alison, Alison, play with me!" Instead of taking her 18th birthday off, Alison spent it at our center, happily announcing the milestone in child care terms by saying, "Now I can change diapers!"

Alison is loved and respected by everyone at WCC, and she is proof-positive that most teenagers are capable, compassionate, and contributing member of our community.

