



# Child Care Resource

## Annual Report 2006-2007

### A Grandmother's Story: Unexpectedly Navigating the Child Care System by Candelin Wahl

Four years ago, Gail and John Smith were typical active grandparents. They worked full time, had photos of their grandchildren in the living room, and often took the children for the weekend to give Gail's daughter Sarah, a single mother, a break. "We took them to the Granby Zoo, picnics and other outings." The Smiths looked forward to the overnight visits, and were also glad when the children went home afterward.

Then the unthinkable happened. Sarah had been in an abusive relationship with her estranged husband, and the violence escalated. She was killed by the father of her children in 2003, leaving behind a nine year-old son and two year-old daughter.

Amid the fog of grief in the months that followed Sarah's death, Gail's first concern was for her grandchildren. After initial

arrangements with relatives didn't quite work out, Gail and her husband decided to take Katie, then 2 1/2, to raise her permanently. Her older brother lives in the next town with his step-grandmother, which is a good situation for him. Gail, now 65, and her husband, 64, look back on those days. "Truthfully, at first I didn't want to do it. We had planned on retiring."

But instead of traveling or taking up a new hobby, Gail was faced with the immediate task of finding and paying for child care for Katie. She found a center in South Burlington and Katie settled in well. But it cost \$140 a week. The Smiths wanted to keep Katie in the center where she was happy, so they paid the tuition. But they started looking for financial assistance, which was a new experience for both of them.

#### Finding the G.A.P. Support Group

Fortunately, Gail had begun attending a local support group for people in her situation, Grandparents as Parents (GAP). Started nine years ago, the group meets weekly and is open to anyone. Besides providing emotional support for grandparents who are learning to parent all over again, members of the group often have practical advice to share about services available.

Gail was encouraged to contact Child Care Resource by group members, including Lynn Granger, who has been raising her own grandson. Lynn is a former board president of VKAP, and now its Coordinator. Lynn says grandparents are often in the dark about which programs or assistance they might qualify for. "When people are first beginning the process, they don't know where to turn, or even what they need," she explained.



While raising her granddaughter, Gail Smith is making a scrapbook to help keep her daughter's memory alive.

**"Truthfully, at first I didn't want to do it. We had planned on retiring."**  
*Gail Smith, a grandparent who came to CCR seeking help paying for child care.*

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- Contributions Made in Memory/Honor of**
- First Congregational Church of Essex Junction
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  - David & Cathy Bean
  - Dr. Lewis First
  - In Honor of Theresa McLeod
  - Mary T. Grace
  - In Honor of children and caregivers
  - Essex Hollow Playschool
  - In Honor of my mother
  - Mary Mitchell
  - In Honor of Sandy Doolley
  - Mary Barrosse Schwartz



Every child needs a hand to hold.



**Child Care Resource**  
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**FULL CIRCLE**  
A Message from Joan Lenas  
President of the Board of Directors

I am a firm believer that we are all connected and that human beings need one another. The richness one feels in life is often related to how one belongs to and connects into their community.

Beliefs that are important to us are often ideas that have been planted at an early age, or perhaps a situation in one's life has brought something to the forefront and we know it is an important part of who we are. In my life, I have always cared about issues of fairness and justice. I am drawn to people who see things this way, and I try to watch and learn from them.

A woman I always admired for her unyielding fight for justice is the late Vermont Senator Jean Ankeney. Her fight for children, fairness and equality has inspired me.

Decades ago, the senator from Chittenden County began the conversation about early care and education. It has been a long and very rocky road, with much work, discussion and debate since then.

Finally, the 2007 Vermont Legislature passed H. 534, the Pre-K funding bill, by a wide margin in both the House and Senate. In my first term as representative, I was fortunate to be able to vote YES, and join many of my colleagues in thanking Jean Ankeney for her vision.

As part of those connections, I am also proud of what has been done at Child Care Resource this past year. I believe this agency is truly part of the fabric that weaves us together, that helps us carry out a vision that began before our time, and will continue long into the future.

*Joan Lenas is currently serving her second year as Board President, and in November 2006 was elected State Representative serving District 5-2.*

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**Child Care Index  
Chittenden County**

**Cost & Availability Indicators:**

Basic needs budget monthly cost of child care for families with two young children – **\$1,062**

Basic needs budget monthly cost of rent and utilities – **\$983**

Basic needs budget - hourly wage needed to meet basic needs - **\$27.23**

Hourly wage at which State child care tuition assistance is no longer available - **\$14.92**

Yearly cost of accredited center-based infant care: **\$15,405**

Yearly cost of tuition at UVM: **\$12,030**

Infant care vacancy rate for accredited programs – **1.6%**

Rental housing vacancy rate – **1.4%**

Public elementary schools in Chittenden County = **29**

State regulated early care and education/out of school time programs in Chittenden County = **348**

Number of children attending elementary schools = **10,817**

Number of children attending early care and education/out of school time programs = **6,780**

Sources:

Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office. Basic Needs Budgets and the Liveable Wage, 2007.

City of Burlington. 2005 Consolidated Annual Evaluation and Performance Report – Affordable Housing Indicators, 2006.

University of Vermont website, 2007.

State of Vermont, Child Development Division. Income Eligibility Levels of the Child Care Subsidy Program, 2007.

www.publicschoolreview.com/county\_schools/stateid/VT/county/50007

NACCRRAware Child Care Database, 2007.

“Child Care Resource honors the fact that we are all constantly learning, whether new to the field or seasoned providers... Questions are answered and resources are offered in a very open, respectful and non-intimidating way.”

*Heather Friedrichsen*

**PROVIDER  
SPOTLIGHT**

**Heather Friedrichsen** is the owner of Heather's House, a family child care program in Shelburne, VT. Heather has been a registered Family Child Care Provider for the past six and a half years. Her program services children aged five and under.

Over the years, Heather has learned to operate a successful home-based business with the help and support of Child Care Resource. She is an active mentor in CCR's Mentoring Program, as well as a Starting Points leader for the Shelburne area.



As soon as Gail made her first phone call to CCR, she started having more success navigating the child care system. She learned that Katie qualified for assistance through the State of Vermont Child Care Subsidy Program. The program would help her with child care costs by paying part of child care tuition. She would still be responsible for paying the rest – about \$34 per week.

Her Subsidy Specialist knew that in special circumstances the State would pay the full tuition and this was likely to be one of those cases. The Specialist helped Gail identify, collect and submit all the relevant paperwork to request additional help. Her request was approved.

Since it was almost a year after Katie started at the child care center, the Subsidy Specialist also helped the Smiths receive retroactive reimbursement for tuition and co-payments previously paid. “The money was a godsend,” says Gail, “since child care was an expense we never planned on – how could we?”

**It's Okay to Ask for Help**

Gail has learned a lot about parenting the second time around, and describes some positive changes for her. “CCR and the GAP group have helped me learn how to be more assertive for Katie's sake. I was raised not to ask for help, and to settle rather than put up a fight.”

Today, child care decisions are easier for Gail. Katie's in first grade, and cheerfully attends an after school program near their home. Since her CCR caseworker was familiar with the after school options in her area, Gail says, “I didn't feel alone in choosing the right program.”

However, Gail's eyes fill with tears when she talks about a loss she didn't expect. “We can't be Katie's grandparents any more. We can't spoil her – we have to be the authority figures.” Gail doesn't dwell on her losses or her delayed retirement. Instead, she's making a scrapbook of her daughter Sarah's school years, to help keep her memory alive for the family.

Oh, and forget about finding babysitters. Gail laughs, “Where is a 65 year-old grandmother going to find a sitter so she can go to a Willie Nelson concert with her husband?” This is a problem she can handle, now that so many of the big ones have been solved.

*Candelin Wahl is Director of Development for Child Care Resource.*

**“CCR and the GAP group helped me learn to be more assertive for Katie's sake.”**  
*Gail Smith*

<b>2006-2007 Financial Resources*</b>			
<u>Revenue</u>		<u>Expenses</u>	
Federal and State	\$863,116	Referrals, Subsidy, Direct Services	\$1,232,627
CCFP Provider Reimbursement	321,433	Child Care Center	268,671
Corporate, Foundation & Fundraising	166,626	Administration & Fundraising	168,880
Other	35,576	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,670,178</b>
Child Care Tuition	225,198		
Training Fees	90,941	<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$32,712</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$1,702,890</b>		

\*Audit of FY 2006-07 Financials still in process at time of publication.

**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*

**Meghan Flanders**  
*Professional Development Coordinator*

**Andrea Viets**  
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**Candelin Wahl**  
*Director of Development*

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**The Power of One Story**  
 by Elizabeth Meyer, Executive Director



If a picture is worth a thousand words, what about a story? At a recent staff meeting, I was struck by one story that vividly reminded us just how critical child care is for each family — how CCR's daily efforts can be a lifeline. The story was about a child in child care - a child whose behavior was becoming overwhelming. The story was about the teachers who care about this child, but in spite of their best efforts were at their wit's end. The story was about a family faced with a crisis because the child would be asked to leave the program unless something changed. How would they go to work, and what's next for their child?

The story unfolded like this: An urgent call was placed to Child Care Resource and our staff began to ask important questions — What can we see about the child's needs? What do the teachers think? What do they need? How can the parents help? What do they need? Would a different program be better? What options are available? The questions diffused the crisis. The teachers and parents took a breath. The work wasn't going to be easy, and by working together a solution would emerge.

**Eight days to homelessness**

As we talked about these labor-intensive services, one of our staff spoke up about a recent case, “Our work prevents homelessness. I've seen one of our families end up homeless eight days after losing their child care slot.” She ticked off the days on her fingers to describe the downward spiral: from the loss of child care, to the loss of a job, to the loss of an apartment and the fruitless search for somewhere to stay, to the family's arrival at the family shelter.

Sobering as this story was, it inspired us. Since 75% of our clients are from low and moderate income families, we know that thousands of Chittenden County children live in fragile economic circumstances. Every day we hear compelling stories, and we do everything we can to make child care work.

We have learned that telling stories is the best way to make child care issues more tangible and to raise public awareness and support. We plan to share child care stories on our website, in mailings, in regional and statewide planning meetings, and in testimony before the state legislature. Please join us by doing the following, starting today:

**Talk to parents and the professionals who care for their children.**

**Share these stories with people you know.**

By doing this, you can help Child Care Resource move Vermont's leaders to support quality early education for all Vermont children. Thank you.

# CCR: A YEAR IN SNAPSHOTS

## Community Food Program



Fresh veggies delivered every week! Meredith Bartolo (left) admires the garden with Miss Terri, a teacher at the Children's Preschool and Enrichment Program in Essex Junction.

**"This program gave our kids a great opportunity to experience different vegetables, and we're having lots of fun preparing everything!"**

*Linda Tuck, Growing Years Preschool and Child Development Center, Colchester*

Dollars distributed to family home providers by the CCR Food Program last year: **\$323,423**

# of times a toddler refused to taste a cucumber before deciding she liked it: **16**

## Williston Children's Center Play-based program is thriving



# of staff hours logged to date for NAEYC accreditation process: **387**  
# of socks lost by 36 children in one year: **174**

# of child care programs in Chittenden County: **348**

% of programs that contacted CCR in a three-month period: **72%\***

# of contacts for Consultation support last year: **704**

*\* does not include contacts about Subsidy.*



Williston Children's Center pre-schoolers happily romp on the indoor gym set, generously donated by the Mervyn L. Brenner Foundation.



Senior Referral Specialist Susan Richards has been helping families find child care since 1996.

## Resource & Referral

**"I found your service exceptional and efficient and really appreciate that this service is available in the Burlington area... I was under a time constraint and your service gave me a sigh of relief."**

*Matt Shepherd*

# of child care searches last year: **2,459**

# of families served by CCR since 1984: **30,000+**



## Toy Van and Mentoring Program Supports Providers



**Toddlers on Snow:** CCR received thirty pairs of kids and adult snowshoes just in time for the snows of last March and April!

**"You give providers a lift & assistance, which keeps us sane & ultimately, in business."**  
*2007 Provider Survey Comment*



Amy Conant, Toy Van Coordinator, delivers sturdy plastic building blocks to a provider in Winooski.