A year of dreams made possible by you

GRATITUDE REPORT 2014

SPECTRUM
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES
“You give us the opportunity to witness the incredible changes that can come about when you make a young person realize they are lovable and they are worth fighting for.”
Yet there are many other youth we serve who already do have a roof over their heads. Maybe they are in foster care, or working to overcome substance abuse. They may be trying to find a job. They may just be looking for the constant support of a mentor.

But I will tell you what most have in common. They want the ordinary, everyday things that many of us take for granted.


Sometimes, it’s just to stay in one place for longer than one year.

And once these ordinary things start to fall into place? That’s when big things happen, like long-term goals—and dreams.

That’s where you come in. You make it possible for our clients to dream big. As a staff member said, “You give us the opportunity to witness the incredible changes that can come about when you make a young person realize they are lovable and they are worth fighting for.”

With gratitude,

Mark Redmond, Executive Director
“I was a pretty gung ho child,” she says, “and I would say that I’ve always been ahead of my age group, so that caused a lot of issues for me. My mom and I, we always butted heads because I knew what I wanted and she was never really willing to understand me as knowing what I wanted. She was more like, ‘I’m the parent, you’re the child, and you’re going to listen.’”

When she was 14, things came to a head between Courtney and her mother. In trouble with her school for hitting a girl who was bullying her, Courtney stayed with the man she called her father for the two-week suspension. At the end, she told her mother she didn’t want to come home. “I could tell my dad anything; I always wanted to be there. He was really my best friend. I can see why that would hurt as a mother, but I didn’t think it should.”

Rather than let Courtney stay with her dad—who was not biological although Courtney had known him since infancy—her mother called the police and had Courtney put in foster care. “Here I am, I’ve heard these horror stories of foster care, and I’m not allowed to talk to my dad. I was so scared.”

In the end, Courtney found her place in her new family. “Being with my foster parents gave me a real sense of what loving and caring were supposed to feel like... I finally got the mother figure I was looking for. And she cared about me like a mother should. And even with my dad, I’ve always had to be the caregiver. He’s always needed someone to take care of him. I would write out the checks for bills, and I would make sure he took his medicine. I got to be a kid for a little while when I was in foster care. They worried about me. I didn’t have to worry about them.”

Nonetheless, she still wanted to live with the man she considered her father, and so her Vermont Department of Children and Families (DCF) caseworker suggested he become a foster parent and take her in. Two years after being placed in foster care, she moved back in with him. Wanting to work, Courtney graduated early from high school, and a few months later had saved up enough money to move out on her own.
At 18, Spectrum stepped in to help her with navigating the path to thriving on her own. While Courtney was only required to meet with her Spectrum caseworker once a month, she found herself coming in more often. Spectrum provided funds to help Courtney with her apartment and helped her pay for car repairs, text books, and a laptop for school.

“I’ve always had these wild dreams, and I knew I was smart enough to get there,” she says, “I just didn’t know how to go about it. Spectrum really helped me focus in on one thing at a time instead of all of these things. They were like, okay, what is step one? You’ve got to get here before you can get there.”

Now a licensed nursing assistant, Courtney works in a home for elderly residents. “They tell you not to get attached but those are my grandmas and grandpas... I take care of them every day. I’ve sat and I’ve cried and I’ve held the hands of dying people. After my shift is done, I sit and make sure they’re not alone.”

After this fall, Courtney will have finished enough schooling to enter a registered nursing program. Her dream? To become a pediatric nurse.

Today Courtney is still close to her father, and is in contact with her mother although it can be strained. Of her time as a ward of the state, she is philosophical. “At the end of the day, I wish I didn’t have to go through it, but if I didn’t, I wouldn’t be where I’m at.”

“I’ve come so far being with DCF and with Spectrum. If I never went into foster care, I really don’t know what I’d be doing.”

Now 22, Courtney is well on her way to pursuing her dreams of becoming a pediatric nurse.
With vacancy rates at 1% in the Burlington area and rental rates at an all-time high, young people with entry-level jobs and no credit or rental history continue to have an extraordinarily difficult time finding a place to live. In 2015, we are looking at ways to provide longer term housing options to youth who are ready to have an apartment on their own.
“You’ve helped me realize that I am beautiful when I don’t feel like I am, I am strong when I feel like I’m not, and that I matter even when I feel like I don’t.”

Basic Needs & a Stable Home

Thanks to you, our Drop-In Center and Supported Housing programs were open for teenagers and young adults who needed a hot meal, clean clothes, a shower, medical care, or a place to stay.

Drop-In Center........................................................................................................750 served
Shelter and Transitional Housing .................................................. 61 served
Health Center ........................................................................................................560 served*

*Operated by the Community Health Centers of Burlington

Unlike a traditional shelter, at the Landing, residents get a dedicated bed and share a room, and can leave their belongings behind during the day. They also can stay until they have a solid plan for the next stage of their lives. At left: Friends enjoy the Empty Bowl Dinner.
Spectrum is finding that young adults in our programs are able to get jobs with our assistance, but have a harder time keeping them over the long term when faced with employer expectations. In 2015, we are looking at ways to provide a supported employment option, where we can give clients on-the-job training under our own roof before they obtain jobs in the community.
“I am overwhelmed thinking about the amount I’ve changed over the past year... I am now a person who has dreams.”

**Life & Survival Skills**

**With your help**, teenagers and young adults got coaching on how to find and keep a job, get in and pay for school, budget for food and other expenses, and other critical life skills.

- Youth Development Program .......................................................... 97 served
- Jump on Board for Success .......................................................... 76 served
- Youth in Transition ........................................................................ 63 served
- Drop-In Center Classes and One-on-One Assistance ................... ~500

Representative Dave Zuckerman, Spectrum’s own Gina D’Ambrosio, and author Chris Bohjalian serve up soup at the 2014 Empty Bowl. At left: Now in its second year, a whopping 350 students participated in the 2015 Student Sleep Out.
With more teenagers requesting mentors, our mentoring coordinator became full time so we can serve more people, particularly New American youth. In 2015, we launched a new program to better connect New Americans to services and the larger community.
"I’ve been waiting my whole life for a mentor."

Prevention & Intervention

Because of you, teenagers, young adults, and men with a history of domestic violence got the help they needed to begin to turn their lives around.

Counseling.................................................................404 served
Mentoring.................................................................74 served
Domestic Violence Intervention & Prevention..............494 served

Muna and Johara, two of our mentees. At left: As part of the Philanthro-Me Project, five Burlington High School students interviewed staff at Spectrum and designed the Passion Project to help clients discover their passions.
YOU ARE A DREAM MAKER. Federal and state funding continues to wane, following local and national trends. Just three years ago, we received 86% of our funds from federal and state sources. In 2015, we expect to receive just 50%. Thanks to you, each year we have been able to bridge the growing gap and keep our doors open for the next youth who needs help.

GROWTH IN COMMUNITY DONATIONS (including United Way)
### Source of Funding

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<th>Source</th>
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<td>Federal and State Funding</td>
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<td>Community Donations</td>
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<td>Program Fees</td>
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<td>United Way</td>
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**Total Source of Funding:** $3,583,594

### Use of Funding

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<td>Administration</td>
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<td>Violence Intervention &amp; Prevention</td>
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<td>Mentoring</td>
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**Total Use of Funding:** $3,453,118
Make another year of dreams possible!

Here are some creative ways to make sure all teenagers and young adults get help when they need it most.

**Giving monthly** is an affordable way to support struggling young adults year-round.

With a **gift of stock**, you can save more on your taxes while helping our clients.

**Writing your will?** Leave a legacy of help for young people by making a bequest to Spectrum.

**Have extra time?** Cook a meal for diners in our Drop-In Center, become a mentor, or sign up at [www.spectrumvt.org/volunteer](http://www.spectrumvt.org/volunteer) to be alerted when we need help with a mailing or event.

Whichever way you choose to help out, we thank you!
Clockwise from top left: the Shelburne Girls Student Sleep Out, the downtown Sleep Out, Berta Randall and her grandson Javion at the Empty Bowl Dinner.

Learn more at [www.spectrumvt.org/donate](http://www.spectrumvt.org/donate) or call us at (802) 864-7423 x350.