



SPECTRUM
YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

Spectrum Sun

Your gifts at work for teenagers & young adults.

SPRING 2021

“A Rock to Make it Through Some Very Tough Situations”

Thanks to you, youth have someone by their side when life gets difficult.

Youth need a fixed point to come back to—a person who helps them find their way when they are feeling lost.

For Jordan, this was Patrick.

When Jordan came out as gay at age 14, his father’s hostility led him to run away from home. After some time on the streets, he ended up in state custody and then was introduced to Spectrum.

“That’s when I met Patrick, one of the most influential people I’ve had in my life,” Jordan says. Patrick was a case manager in one of Spectrum’s housing programs.

“I was at the point in my life where I thought I was the only one that existed,” Jordan says. “But working with Patrick quickly changed that mindset.”

“He showed me I’m not the only one who has problems, and I

“That’s when I met Patrick, one of the most influential people I’ve had in my life.”



Your gift provides Jordan and other youth with a safe place to live.

learned that as I heard the stories of the others. Spectrum was helping people with pasts of abuse, neglect, and homelessness,” he says. **“I realized their stories were not that different from mine.”**

After living at Spectrum and getting his GED, Jordan was accepted to a Job Corps program and moved to their campus. But after his belongings were stolen from his room, Jordan moved out.

“I went to Burlington to stay with a friend without telling the state [which had legal custody], my dad, or anyone else that I should have told,” Jordan says. **“Months down the road, I didn’t know**

what to do and was outliving my stay at my friend’s house.”

So, Jordan called Patrick, who helped him move into Spectrum’s transitional housing program.

It wasn’t easy at first, as Jordan was hesitant to take advice from the housing staff. “I refused to show them my paystubs and bank statements so they could help me budget and save. I refused to go to any of the counseling they suggested,” he says.

“I slowly started realizing that it was what I signed up for,” Jordan says. “A more structured program to get us on our feet and living on our own comfortably.”

continued on back



MARK'S MISSION MOMENT

What Gives Me Heart

The pandemic is terrible. Here's what isn't.

When we found out last March that all but essential services must close, I never imagined that we would be here today... still grappling with this pandemic.

People often ask how the pandemic has affected the teens and young adults we serve at Spectrum. The truth is, in many ways, it's just an added challenge on top of many. When you're a young person trying to build a life for yourself—particularly when you're already impacted by childhood trauma or poverty—there is no question that daily life is much harder.

Many of our youth grappled with isolation long before COVID came along, and now their struggles with anxiety and depression have deeply intensified.

But I will tell you what gives me heart:

- ♥ It's the smile on our clients' faces when a local business owner hired them to shovel out parking meters downtown for a few hours.
- ♥ It's the way our staff have shown up, day after day for the past year, for youth who were really struggling.
- ♥ It's the people who brought food and supplies, and cooked meals week after week.
- ♥ It's the people who donated Christmas gifts, sleeping bags, jackets and the young girl who raised \$106 and brought it in with her mom.
- ♥ It's the many people who helped plan and fund a new Drop-In Center for youth in a new city.
- ♥ It's the youth who wrote recently: "Spectrum has taught me to feel like I have a family, which I am grateful for."
- ♥ It's all of you, who knew this pandemic would hit our kids hard—and made sure they had what they need. Who became their family.

This pandemic is terrible. But I know when I look back on this in a year or two, **what I'll remember is you, and the difference you made in the lives of our youth.**

With gratitude,

Mark

Mark Redmond
Executive Director

www.spectrumsleepout.org

SIGN UP NOW!



Thank you to Emma Anderson, for her incredible efforts to collect over 5,500 feminine hygiene products for young people at Spectrum!

Coming up... MARCH 26TH



Join us—students, executives, families, and teams—for one big Sleep Out on Friday, March 26. You can get your whole family involved and sleep out in your own backyard!

Tune into our Virtual Program at 7:30pm and join us for Coffee over Zoom the following morning at 7am.



Each year, adults and students join the Sleep Out in solidarity with youth facing homelessness in Vermont. They sleep outside for one night and raise money for the next young person looking for help.

Education with Equity

Because of you, Winooski schools are addressing racism and building community.

In July 2020, Winooski students shared their experiences of racism at a school board meeting. Their stories revealed many biases within the school district.

Winooski School District Superintendent Sean McMannon shared recently that, "inspired by the demands and work of the Winooski Students for Antiracism, our district is committed to becoming an antiracist school district."

The school district decided to use restorative practices throughout the school to create an environment where students can know that their voices are heard and valued.

They started working with the Spectrum Multicultural Youth program to design and facilitate a series of group discussions between students, teachers, and administrators that promote community building and address conflicts.

"It's a step in building an equitable community and a multicultural understanding that is reflected in the diversity of Winooski."

"Restorative justice has been implemented in schools around the world to decrease suspension rates, eliminate racial disparities in discipline, and close the school-to-prison pipeline," said Remy Uwilingiyimana, Spectrum's Multicultural Youth Program Manager. "It's a step in

building an equitable community and a multicultural understanding that is reflected in the diversity of Winooski."

The group discussions are prompted with questions like: What happened? What impact has the incident had on you? Who has been affected? How can things be made right?

Thanks to you, restorative justice is making it possible for the Winooski School District to build an inclusive and equitable community.



Students and teachers in Winooski School District have group discussions, called "restorative circles" to address conflicts and build community.

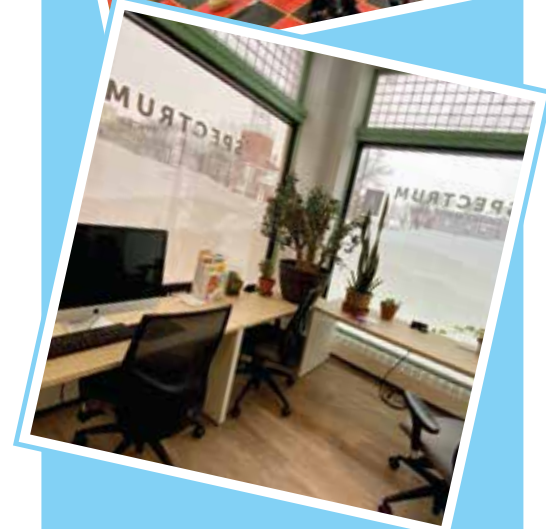


A new Burlington space that YOU made possible!

This year, we asked you to help us expand and renovate our Burlington Drop-In Center to better serve youth who need our help. And you said, "yes!"

The timing has been crucial—we might not have been able to stay open during the pandemic if it had not been for this incredible renovation which doubled the size of the space.

Take a virtual tour at spcvt.org/ThanksToYou



A Light in the Darkness continued...

While Jordan lived at Spectrum, he worked with Patrick on getting a job—he worked at a bakery for a couple of years— while taking classes and coaching from the residential staff.

“All in all, my road with Spectrum was a very long one, but a very helpful and fulfilling one,” Jordan says. “I learned all of the skills I needed to purchase my house at a very young age, and I’ve been at my current job for multiple years due in part to what Spectrum has taught me.

“I want to be what all of the caring people at Spectrum were for me—a rock to get someone through some very tough situations.”

“Patrick has helped me throughout my journey, even years after we met,” Jordan says, who is currently in college for social work. After he finishes his degree, he plans to find employment with a nonprofit like Spectrum.

“I want to be what all of the caring people at Spectrum were for me—a rock to get someone through some very tough situations, when they have no one else to turn to.”

Thank you for making sure youth at Spectrum have a rock to come back to when they need it most.



Jordan and his partner after they recently closed on their new house.



We're Expanding!

“A place to go” in St. Albans— thanks to you!

“I am so glad the rumors were true. I will probably be there every day,” said Dex, a young person who has grown up in the foster care system in St. Albans. They are referring to the new Drop-In Center opening this March that will be open weekdays from 10am – 6pm for youth ages 14-22.

We know from the urging of St. Albans community leaders, as well as from our own staff who work with youth in state custody in Franklin County, that there is a great need for a physical place where young people can go to find a hot meal, help with the homework, assistance finding a job, and a friendly ear.

“Kids that were in custody or kids that didn't have a childhood need a place to go—we don't have people to help us,” says Dex. “Being able to have somewhere to go and see the same people will help kids like me open up and really talk about what's going on and what they need help with.”

Thanks to you, the new Drop-In Center will give youth like Dex the support they need to reach their goals. “I want to be a mentor and help kids that are going through what I went through,” says Dex.

Yes! I want to make sure help is there when youth need it most!

I'd like to make a donation of \$ _____

Please make my gift monthly!

Your credit card will be charged on the 15th of each month. Or call Bridget at (802) 864-7423 x222 to set up an automatic payment through your checking or savings account.

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