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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Leisa Pollander

Tel: 802/862-0080

E: lpollander@saraholbrookcc.org

SARA HOLBROOK COMMUNITY CENTER ANNOUNCES PUBLIC PHASE LAUNCH OF CAPITAL CAMPAIGN TO IMPROVE AND EXPAND FACILITY AND PROGRAMS

BURLINGTON, VT. —The Sara Holbrook Community Center is excited to announce a kickoff ceremony for the public phase of its \$3.9 million *Believe in Tomorrow, Believe in Success* capital campaign to improve and expand its current facility at 66 North Avenue. The Center has raised \$2.3 million during the private phase and the public phase is intended to bring in the remaining \$1.6 million.

The kickoff ceremony is on **Thursday, May 17th**, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and includes a birthday celebration of the Center's 80 years of community service. The event is free and open to the public. It will take place at the Center's 66 North Avenue location, and includes live music, guest speakers, appetizers and birthday cake. For information about parking details, please call the Sara Holbrook Center at 862-6342.

“Meeting the needs of the families we serve in our current space is an ever-increasing challenge. The North Avenue programs outgrew our space a long time ago,” said Executive Director Leisa Pollander. “We are so grateful to our donors who have already made it possible for us to acquire two contiguous buildings and we look forward to achieving our ultimate goal through the public phase.”

The capital campaign investment will be used to increase the capacity of the Center, enabling the following improvements and new services:

1. Creates a true outdoor playground and a safer, more efficient driveway and drop-off area.
2. Builds a new reception area with a security system.
3. Adds a year-round gymnasium, art room, and a teaching kitchen.
4. Expands the preschool program from part-time to full-time.
5. Adds a new toddler program.
6. Offers many more elementary school students afterschool care in their own developmentally appropriate classrooms.
7. Structurally improves the current facility and environmental impact of the current facility.

About the Sara Holbrook Community Center

Founded in 1937 by UVM professor Sara M Holbrook, an old Burlington storefront at 116 Cherry Street was transformed into the (formerly named) Burlington Community Center. Irish, Italian, and French-Canadian immigrants learned English, studied for citizenship tests, and immersed themselves in classes while a nursery provided childcare. During the ensuing years, the Center initiated many responsive services to assist families with limited financial means. The agency was the original location of the Burlington Boys Club (now known as the Boys and Girls Club of Burlington); and the Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS) was founded at the Sara Holbrook Center. In 1985, the Center partnered with the Burlington Police Department and a local radio station to provide a telephone check-in service for children home alone after school. Also, in response to a tragic community fire in 1983, the Sara Holbrook Center coordinated the installation of 3,000 smoke detectors into area homes. The New Arrivals Program, initiated in 1989, was developed to provide academic instruction in the summertime for refugee and immigrant children. Collaboration with other local organizations and a longstanding blessing of support from community members has sustained the Agency since its beginning.

The Center currently serves over 1100 children annually. Programs include a 5-STAR preschool and elementary afterschool program, a teen drop-in center for students in grades 6-12, and a course-based middle school program housed at Hunt Middle School. In addition to the school year schedule, the Center offers full-day summer programming for elementary and middle school students. The New Arrivals summer academic program serves 80 preschool through middle school children who are learning English. Sara Holbrook Center partners with the Vermont Adult Learning Center to provide English language classes to our newest neighbors. It also maintains a small food shelf which offers assistance to community members in need, annually serving about 250 individuals and families.

Find more information about the Sara Holbrook Community Center at www.saraholbrookcc.org

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