Reflections from the Director’s Desk: So...Why Do You Work at Sara Holbrook?
Leisa Pollander, Executive Director

Every now and then, someone poses this question: what is it about this tiny agency that causes people to make long term commitments? The Center has board members, current and honorary, who have been giving their time and financial backing for 30 years. For an agency to have staff completing almost 40 years of employment is nearly unheard of—yet witness our own Linda (Cadorette) Hamlin. Almost every past executive director still calls, writes, or e-mails to touch base and see how things are going. Parents who attended the Center as children enroll their own kids here. Young adults who attended as children become employees.

Vermont is small and the north end of Burlington is smaller yet. This can be a tough neighborhood, but good people here care about one another, look out for one another and appreciate what the community has to offer. When I walk into the building in the morning, I usually have a concept of what is on my agenda for the day. Yet, many times the plans I came in with get put on the back burner because something “more” pressing needs to be dealt with. A mom needs help to complete an application for childcare subsidy. A dad needs support to find the English class that will help improve his job prospects. A grandmother needs to access the SHCC foodshelf because her social security check doesn’t get her through the month. A little girl in preschool needs a big hug and someone to cuddle and read to her.

The Sara Holbrook Community Center is all about caring and all about making a difference. Caring for and about kids, families and one another makes the community stronger. I believe that everyone here—board members, staff members, donors, volunteers, children, parents—makes a difference. I know that this place has made a difference in my life. I am part of something much bigger than me. I have an arena in which to give; yet I receive ever so much more. I work here because I belong to an organization that makes a difference and that supports others to make a difference.
Summer Highlights

Over the summer, the Sara Holbrook Center booms with activity. Here are the highlights:

- **Garden Camp**, a collaboration with *Friends of Burlington Gardens*, was held for two weeks. This year the campers created another mural with the help of Carrie Diehl of *Very Special Arts of Vermont*. The mural highlights the gardens at the Center with lively pictures of carrots and tomatoes.

- Again this year, the SHCC hosted *New Arrivals*, a summer language program for immigrant and refugee children; this was the program's 17th year! Sixty-two children represented 17 different countries and 19 languages!

- A grant from the *Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust* supported enrichment activities for *New Arrivals*. Younger children explored Shelburne Farms and older children challenged themselves at the University of Vermont Ropes Course.

- For one week, *Kids on the Block-Vermont* led a puppetry workshop with the middle schoolers in *New Arrivals*. The kids demonstrated their new skills with several performances, one of them being at the Crombie Street Block Party.

- Summer campers cooled off at area beaches, enjoying six weeks of recreational programming. The campers adventured to community sites like the Audubon Society and berry farms.

- Teens involved with the *Bob & Maggie Green Youth Adventure Camp* enjoyed an exciting itinerary: mountain biking, kayaking, hiking, exploring natural swimming holes, camping, rock climbing, cruising Lake Champlain on the Spirit of Ethan Allen, and zipping down the alpine slide!

- 100 middle-schoolers took part of 18 courses including electric guitar, yoga, stained glass, pottery, digital photography, tennis, soccer clinic, and cartooning. The programs, held from July 5th - August 4th, engaged youth for 3,641 student hours! This free summer program is a collaborative effort of the New North End Youth Center (NNEYC) and the Burlington School District.

- On August 4th, the SHCC presented its first annual *Night Golf Tournament*! Under the moonlight, 64 golfers adventured onto the Link’s golf course with glow sticks and luminescent golf balls to support our children’s programs. Many thanks to everyone for making this new event a success!

It’s Coming!

Mark your calendars for Saturday April 7, 2007 for the *Festival of Cultures*! The Festival will again be held in the gymnasium of Burlington High School. If you are interested in volunteering, performing, or vending at the event, please contact Kim Wojcik at 862-6342 or email: kwojcik@saraholbrookcc.org

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The New North End Youth Center (NNEYC) collaborates with a number of agencies and businesses to offer a wide range of activities for teens in Burlington. Over the summer months, the NNEYC, partnering with the Burlington School District, offers five weeks of programming specifically for middle-schoolers. The courses vary from yoga to sailing to soccer to gardening. Diverse programming captures a large audience; this summer 100 youth participated!

One of the most popular summer courses is sailing. Instructed by staff from the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and the Lake Champlain Community Sailing Center, youth were able attend sailing workshops and even spend one week at sea, sailing and camping at different islands. One participant reflects on his time spent at sea and in other NNEYC summer programs.

“Hello, my name is Skylar and I am here to tell you about some camps I experienced this summer. They were full of new experiences that I have never done before such as building a fire and going looking for new and cool looking birds.

First, I am going to tell you about my trip on Lake Champlain for a week. I experienced a bunch of happy times as we sailed over Lake Champlain as a group of eleven. We saw blue herons, loons, and a bunch of fish. We also experienced a bunch of weird weather, such as lots of rain, waves, and thunder. One day we where sailing to Valcore Island and we were hit with a bunch of huge waves, two of those waves almost tipped us over. The week came to a fast halt and Friday we went home and all the way we had to row [due to a lack of wind]. Also we saw three blue herons flying over us; they were cool.

The other camp I went to was carpentry camp at Hunt Middle School. We had a blast building stuff such as a compost shed, shelves for the shed, and art carts for the art room. The best project we did was the hexagonal bench around the tree next to the shed. I hope that you guys sign up for these camps. Have a great season.”

Did You Know...

- that the NNEYC opened its doors in 1995?
- that over 1,000 youth attend NNEYC programs each year?
- that the NNEYC joined the Sara Holbrook Community Center in 2003?
- that Kathy Olwell, the NNEYC Director, was honored this year for her dedication to and work for Burlington’s youth by the Children’s Trust Fund?
Life’s a Beach: Summer campers enjoyed their time outdoors.

Making a Garden Grow: Garden Campers worked the soil before planting. Photo courtesy of Friends of Burlington Gardens.

Climb High: At the University of Vermont Ropes Course, New Arrivals participants were challenged individually and as a group to master high and low elements.

Yummy! At Shelburne Farms, preschoolers in New Arrivals made ice cream and then enjoyed their tasty treat.

If I Had a Hammer: Through the NNEYC & the Burlington School District, young carpenters constructed a round bench to decorate a tree at Hunt Middle School’s garden.
Cheese!: Ashley (center) smiles with the twins in the New Arrivals Preschool. Ashley volunteered daily in the program, contributing 96 hours of service!

Move Over Monet: Middle schoolers were able to participate in a week long painting class sponsored by the NNEYC and the Burlington School District. The class focused on landscapes and used acrylic paints as its medium.

Earthy Art: Garden Campers paint a second mural, which they designed, at the Center. Photo courtesy of Friends of Burlington Gardens.

Discover Digital: Participants in the digital photography class cruised Burlington on bikes snapping photos of the city’s sites. The class was sponsored by the NNEYC and the Burlington School District.
Thank You!

Our programs are made possible thanks to the generous support of the community. The following individuals, corporations, and foundations have contributed to our success. The following donors made their gifts between April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006.

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At the Center, we do our best to recognize those who have supported us; we try to insure this list is as accurate as possible. If you find an error or omission, please accept our apology and contact Leisa at (802)862-0080. Thank you for your understanding.
The Sara Holbrook Community Center’s fiscal calendar begins April 1st and closes on March 31st of the following year. The following financial information reflects the 2005-2006 fiscal year. For the 2005-2006 fiscal year, the SHCC’s total agency budget was $510,889.00. The chart below identifies the SHCC’s income sources and actual totals for each source.

FY 2005-2006: Income Sources for the Sara Holbrook Community Center

- Your support to the Sara Holbrook Community Center is an investment that makes a difference in the lives of children and families in need. In 2005, 89 cents of every dollar raised went to program services.
- The Center serves 4,000 individuals a year through its programs and partnering efforts: preschool, after-school programming, teen activities, summer camps, English instruction, and emergency food assistance.
- In 2007 the Center will be 70 years old! To help up celebrate, we would love to hear your stories. Did you tap dance here as a kid? Volunteer in a program near and dear to your heart? Share your warm memories with us. Email them to kwojcik@saraholbrookcc.org or mail them to the Center, 66 North Avenue.

A special thanks to Duncan-Wisniewski Architecture for their support in production of this newsletter!
Wax On, Wax Off: Life Lessons Learned at the Sara Holbrook Center
A Reflection by Bruce Green

There are many events and people who help shape and form our lives, a number of which I had the privilege to experience as a custodian or janitor at the Sara Holbrook Center when I was a teenager finishing high school. Let me tell you about my most memorable lesson, an experience I continue to draw from year after year.

I started working as a janitor at the Center some 25 years ago. The job required coming to work in the early evening hours when the after school program had completed and the Center was closed for the day. The daily routine consisted of sweeping and washing the floors, emptying the waste baskets, cleaning the kitchen, nursery school, and bathroom areas, and taking down or setting up tables depending on the events of the day and those planned for the next.

Other than my daily duties, there were also duties required once or twice a month. One of these duties was the stripping, waxing, and buffing of the floors. This work was completed using a heavy duty, industrial, machine with a circular pad rotating underneath the heavy engine and controlled by a long arm extended out to the operator at an angle.

Prior to the first time I used the buffer on my own, I had been given some brief instructions on how to run the machine and even had a chance to operate it under supervision for a few short minutes. At the end of my training I was given advice and a warning, “Be sure to gently guide the buffer, allowing it to do its job, and everything will work out. If you try to force the buffer, it’s going to be a lot harder to get the job done.” After my brief lesson, it seemed simple enough and I stated that I could easily operate this on my own and would be able to complete my new duties quickly.

A few weeks later it came time for me to operate the buffer on my own for the first time. I started the machine up and slowly went about stripping the floor, completing the task cautiously to ensure I did everything right. Once done, I quickly waxed the floor and prepared to buff the floor. By this time it was getting quite late and I was in a hurry to finish and get home. Although, I had easily remembered how to operate the buffer, I had quickly forgotten the advice I was given.

So, being in a hurry and having a new found confidence in operating the buffer, I decided it was time to quickly finish up by rushing through the job of buffing the floor. I started up the machine and begin forcing the buffer in one direction or another but quickly found the machine resisting my control. The more the machine resisted the more I tried to forcibly control it and so on until to my surprise and without warning the buffer physically overtook me and pinned me in the corner of the room. I released the cut-off throttle on the handle controlling the buffer and it released its grip on me. I considered the situation a fluke and rolled the buffer back away from the walls and started it up again. Proceeding cautiously at first everything went fine. Remembering I was in a hurry, I again began rushing to finish and started forcing the buffer and, once again, soon found myself overtaken by the buffer thrashing me against the wall. This situated repeated itself a couple more times until I remembered the advice I had been given earlier. “Be sure to gently guide the buffer, allowing it to do its job, and everything will work out. If you try to force the buffer, it’s going to be a lot harder to get the job done.” Needing to finish the job and get home, this time I followed the advice and gently guided the buffer allowing the machine to use its own capability to complete the job. Over time I learned to guide the buffer with only one hand, no longer suffering a bruised body or ego and finishing the job with ease.

The lesson I learned from this machine as a janitor applies to my life and interactions with people to this day. From my experiences with the buffer machine I learned a valuable lesson which can be applied to leadership and teamwork situations with people everyday… you’ll accomplish a lot more working with people if you guide them and work together with them rather than trying to force them to perform or overly control the way in which they perform their work. Through guidance and teamwork we accomplish things more quickly and efficiently than if we attempt to force the outcome. As a young janitor I learned to work as one team with the buffer; in my life today I strive repeat this lesson by working with other individuals in cooperation. Some days I succeed and others I find myself pinned in a corner recalling the lessons of the young janitor and his buffer...

Bruce Green worked as a custodian at the Center when Maggie Green, his mother, was our Executive Director. Today, Bruce lives near Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he operates his own consulting business, Greenhouse Technologies.

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Thank you to the volunteers from the RSVP Mailers Program for their help with this mailing!