Notes from the Director’s Desk
Leisa Pollander, Executive Director

Partnership and collaboration truly exemplify the spirit of the Sara Holbrook Community Center. Joining forces with the New North End Youth Center to provide programming to youth in the north end of Burlington is but one example of blending resources to meet the needs of this community. The SHCC, partnering with Champlain Valley Head Start, now offers expansive pre-school services, far beyond what the Center is able to do on its own. Head Start provides personnel to staff the pre-school 15 hours per week; an additional 15 hours per week are devoted to assisting families with social service, medical, dental and parenting issues. SHCC staff manage three sites for after-school programming – Lawrence Barnes Elementary School, Hunt Middle School, and Burlington High School. The Burlington School District funds this effort through the Community Schools Project. The Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf staff teamed with the Center to distribute food during November and December.

Relationships with communities of faith have always been important to the Center. The American Baptist Women’s Ministry sewing group of The First Baptist Church has spent long hours crafting quilts and afghans for newly arrived refugee and immigrant families who utilize the Center. The First Congregational Church sponsors families in need through the Center’s Holiday Outreach Program. Parishioners provided food and gifts to families, and a dedicated group of volunteers from the Church participated on distribution day as well. Temple Sinai, College Street Congregational Church, the United Methodist Women, and the Religious Sisters of Mercy all subsidize Center programs.

The Center certainly wouldn’t be able to provide the extensive services that it does without the solid support of the business community. IBM, IDX, Fletcher Allen, Banknorth, Chittenden Bank, UVM, Bombardier Capital, Lane Press, Vantage Press, Scrumptious, Burton Snow Boards, Jim Messier’s Texaco, Hannaford’s, Thai Phat Market, Twin Oaks…..this is not a comprehensive list by any means, but illustrates the diversity of businesses providing assistance to the Center on behalf of various programs.

Service organizations – Burlington Lion’s Club, the Kiwanis, the Eagles, and community service groups through area high schools and colleges – all participate in fundraising or hands-on work in the programs.
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No Place Like Home for the Holidays
All of us at the Sara Holbrook Center would like to thank everyone involved with our Holiday Outreach Program. The program was again a success with 402 families receiving food boxes, feeding 1,342 individuals, and 538 children receiving clothing and toys!

Your generosity was overwhelming; we owe a special thanks to the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf for housing the food this year, and for staffing collection and distribution times.

We realize that the added changes to the program (and a winter blizzard!) made this year confusing at times. So sponsors, thank you for your stick-to-

Mary Ann Blaisdell gratefully accepts handmade dolls and quilts from First Baptist Church parishioners. The lovely items were distributed during Holiday Outreach.

What’s Cookin’ Good Lookin’?
At the SHCC a cookbook is in the works. Already we have received recipes from families and students that utilize the Center. The wonderful variety has developed into an international, community cookbook with Bosnian burek, Brazilian potato salad, guacamole from South of the border, American apple pie, and more.

However, we are still a little short. So we are asking for your help, specifically for your recipes. Simple breakfast dishes to sinful desserts—we welcome it all!

If you would like to contribute to the SHCC cookbook, please send your recipe—handwritten, typed, or xeroxed—to the Center, 66 North Avenue, by May 1st. We will keep you posted about when the SHCC cookbook will be ready for purchase. It will certainly be a fun, unique edition to your kitchen.

Thank you for your support!

Breaking News
After School Program: And We’re Off!

During the February school break, the Sara Holbrook After School Program was open for another Week of Adventure. Last year, our pipes froze, transforming the first floor into a swimming pool, which kept us out of the building. In the spirit of the water disaster, we were again out and about.

We enjoyed many activities that week: rock climbing at Petra Cliffs, sledding and ice skating at Catamount Family Center, bowling at Yankee Lanes, and swimming at Twin Oaks. For one day, we stayed at the Center for tie-dying. Casey Sexton, a work-study student at the SHCC, lead the project, helping everyone transformed a plain pillowcase into a piece of art for his/her room. Overall, the Week
Pre-School Happenings
Susan Sharp, Pre-School Director

The pre-schoolers continue to enjoy Robert Resnik’s monthly visits from the Fletcher Free Library, which provides a special time for songs and stories. Through the Very Special Arts Program, Heather Ward combines art and literacy to provide a session for the class each Friday. A weekly computer day continues to give the children individual attention in kindergarten readiness skills.

This semester Molly Moran, a UVM senior nursing student, is our intern. Molly is in the classroom three days a week. She has discussed germs and nutrition with the pre-schoolers. Recently, we finished making individual number books. The next project is to write stories based on magazine pictures chosen by the children. At the end of March, the fire marshal will be visiting to explain his job and expand on fire safety.

In February, pre-school families gathered for a Valentine’s Day Family Breakfast. The breakfast was hosted with the help of the Head Start Cook, Patty Rose, and parent-volunteer Aileen Katon. The chil-

Pre-School Partners

In the fall, the Sara Holbrook Pre-School welcomed Head Start to the classroom. Head Start is a national, educational program, preparing children for kindergarten. The program is comprehensive because it focuses on families, providing resources and referrals in the areas of health, nutrition and more.

Importantly, SHHC’s partnership with Head Start allowed for another teacher into the classroom, Kelley Kamison. Prior coming to the SHCC, Kelley taught kindergarten. Here, Kelley’s role has two facets: being in the classroom and providing outreach services to Head Start enrolled families, such as finding dental insurance for a little one.

Since Head Start believes that parents are the first and most important teachers of their children, there are many opportunities for families to be involved. Kelley explained, “Outside the classroom, Head Start provides several types of family services, such as family support, Policy Council opportunities, which is much like the Board of Directors of Head Start, Parent Educational Courses, and Family Fun Nights. For instance, this year we had a Parent Course on Challenging Behavior and another on nutrition called, ‘Fast, Cheap, and Nutritious Meals’. For a Family Fun Night, we had a sled party.”

Our collaboration with Head Start introduced us to another new friend, Patty Rose. Patty prepares breakfast and a snack for the Pre-School. Breakfast may be blueberry pancakes, french toast, oatmeal, or scrambled eggs. Every meal is served with fresh fruit or vegetables and milk. Monthly, the Pre-Schoolers help prepare a meal; the class recently helped make hummus and guacamole for their snack.

Tooth-brushing has become part of the daily routine as well. After breakfast, every little one uses his/her own toothbrush and brushes up on dental hygiene skills. This experience, along with opportunities to enjoy nutritious foods,
New North End Youth Center  
Kelsey Tierney, UVM Social Work Practicum Student

The New North End Youth Center (NNEYC) offers a drop-in for middle school and high school students and provides after-school programming at Hunt Middle School and Burlington High School. Programs for March and April have been organized and are just about ready to begin.

At Hunt Middle School, the Homework Club will be continued in both the mornings and the afternoons, and the English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) Homework Club will be offered in the afternoons as well. The NNEYC has created a variety of programs to meet the students’ many interests. Athletic programs include: karate, dance team, yoga, basketball skills and drills, and a Vermont City Marathon Team. For those interested in music, beginner guitar and piano are offered. Students seeking the arts can choose from collage, pottery, stained glass, sculpture and knitting. Other programs include learning to build Adirondack chairs and playing strategic games, such as chess.

Programs offered this session at Burlington High School include: weight training, five-on-five basketball, eclectic yoga, dance team, fencing, bowling, indoor soccer, sign language, black and white photography, and motor head club, for students who like to work on cars. The homework support center and the ESL homework club will again be available to assist students with their studies. An exciting new program is also in the works; coordinators are making arrangements with Circus Smirkus to teach students circus acts.

As it has all year, the New North End Youth Center will continue to offer middle school drop-in hours on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2:45pm-5:00pm and high school drop-in hours on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 6:00pm-9:00pm. Girls’ Group will continue to run on every Wednesday from 2:45pm-5:00pm.

The NNEYC has also prepared for our upcoming summer programs, which are available to all of Burlington’s middle school aged youth. Listed is a sample of some of the programs that will be offered this summer:

- Our Town- an opportunity to examine personal and local history of Burlington
- Sailing- learn basic and intermediate level skills
- Building and Carpentry- learn to design and build; Adirondack chairs will be built for auction to benefit the SHCC
- Circus Smirkus- learn acrobatics, juggling, clowning and other circus performance arts
- Lake Merchant Program- explore the maritime history of Burlington
- Gardening Club- plan, plant, tend, and reap the benefits of a vegetable and/or flower garden
- Tennis– beginners to masters will be sharpening their skills at Twin Oaks
- Arts- open studio, nature art, pottery, and art exploration at the Fleming Museum
- Writers’ Workshop- a supportive and constructive club to share and work on writing

Additionally, a free lunch program will be offered called Summer Food and Fun; for four weeks, all youth, 18 and under, are welcome to come to Hunt’s cafeteria for a free nutritious lunch and the opportunity to engage in different activities each day.