Notes from the Board President and Executive Director
Larry Kupferman and Leisa Pollander

Challenge Grant Update

Last summer, a very generous- and anonymous- donor challenged the Board of the SHCC with a $45,000 matching grant. As we developed our list of hopes and dreams for the Center, we established a campaign goal of $135,000. This amount would allow us to address some long-standing capital needs: replacing playground equipment, adding computer stations, upgrading the heating system and elevator, and other building repairs. The campaign goal also included program expense, such as supplies and transportation, which would allow the children we serve to participate in activities that are normally outside our budget.

To date, 137 supporters have donated a total of $109,790 toward our goal- and we remain hopeful that the final goal will be achieved. Many thanks to the folks who supported this effort! This wonderful opportunity has served as the springboard to a long-range planning process.

New Initiatives: A Year of Growth and Change for the SHCC

In addition to designing and carrying out the challenge campaign, the SHCC Board of Directors has been very busy planning and implementing several key changes to the operation of the Center. One outcome we are particularly pleased about is the partnership/merger with the New North End Youth Center (NNEYC), effective April 1, 2003. The addition of the NNEYC teen program to the array of services provided by the SHCC brings the agency’s client base to approximately 5,100 individuals per year. This partnership makes sense for a host of reasons:

• Common philosophies related to youth and family service delivery will ensure that children moving from Lawrence Barnes Elementary School are supported in a seamless transition to after-school programming at the NNEYC site, as well as to the sites at Hunt Middle School and Burlington High School.
• Shared administrative functions help to consolidate related expenses
• Both entities share a geographical territory; the merger streamlines collaboration efforts with other service providers

The SHCC Pre-School is planning to offer a collaborative classroom with Champlain Valley Head Start. Head Start will add a staff person to the SHCC classroom; this staff member will conduct home visits and assist families to access medical, dental and social service providers.

Partnership is a key term at the Center. This tiny agency is able to accomplish so much with few staff and very limited financial resources because of close working relationships with other service providers. All of us at the Sara Holbrook Center are very optimistic and excited about working with our new partners and friends.
With a Little Help from Our Friends

At the SHCC, over 5,000 people are served each year with a staff of eight full time equivalents; so, how do we do it? Luckily, over 800 friendly volunteers annually lend a hand at the SHCC and collaborations with various city organizations help us meet the needs of families in the North End of the city.

For instance, English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) classes are taught at the Center through Vermont Adult Learning. Through Burlington’s Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO), an AmeriCorps*VISTA position has been granted to aid with capacity building. Importantly, after-school programs and the Pre-School benefit from work-study students and interns from Champlain College and UVM.

This past school year the SHCC benefited from several college helpers. Specifically, Jenny Evans and Siobhan Weeks, both from UVM, were a tremendous help. Jenny interned at the Center for the entire school year as part of her bachelors in social work. Siobhan was a nursing student who worked in the Pre-School for several weeks. Following are brief reflections about their time at SHCC:

Siobhan Weeks:

"During my community rotation for the UVM nursing program I engaged in many special experiences. I taught two ESL classes on medical terminology needed for doctor visits and another on functions of organs. During these classes I distributed many handouts with diagrams of the body and definitions for the students to take home. Many of the students shared their stories of hospital experiences in the United States or native countries. I enjoyed going to the ESL classes because of the enormous energy they all contributed to the class."

At Sara Holbrook, I also spent lots of time in the Pre-School getting to know the children. I prepared a project to teach them about hand washing and teeth brushing. I called around for donations to make goodie bags and received donations: soap from Twincraft and toothpaste, toothbrushes and floss from Dr. Paul Averill. My favorite part of being in the Pre-School was teaching the children and answering their imaginative questions, but more so just listening to them. When I asked the question why do we brush our teeth, a little girl replied, “so you don’t get dragon breath!” I hope that my teaching helped influence them to continue healthy habits.”

With a giant mouth and brush, Siobhann made teeth brushing fun for the Pre-Schoolers.

Jenny Evans:

“During my University of Vermont Social Work field practicum at the Sara Holbrook Community Center, I have fully enjoyed getting to know the intimate details of how an agency is run. I have had the opportunity to immerse myself in almost all the programs the Center has to offer.

For instance, during the Holiday Outreach Program I was able to coordinate volunteers and conduct home visits. I also provided outreach and referral services to the Vermont Adult Learning ESL classes. I planned community activities for the after-school program. Additionally, I helped organize a Nurturing Parent Program with Prevent Child Abuse Vermont.

With the guidance of Leisa Pollander, executive director, I was able to develop new social work knowledge, values, and skills- as well as sharpen those I already possess. I will come away from the Sara Holbrook Center with new respect for many populations. I remember visiting the home of the an
elderly woman and realizing that what she really needed was companionship. I was glad that I had time to sit with her and listen to her wonderful life story. I learned many things that day. I learned that family and community are of the utmost importance.”

Ultimately, everybody is a tremendous help to the SHCC. From students to seniors, individuals to groups from IBM, we could not do it with you! Thank you!

If you are interested in volunteering in one of our programs, please call the Center at 862-6432.

The Teen Connection

In January, the SHCC extended their best wishes to Stephanie Lloyd (the former Teen Director) as she left to pursue her master’s degree in Social Work. At this time, Heidi Weston became the new Teen Director. Heidi comes with a background in experiential education and has worked the past twelve years with diverse teen populations within the U.S. and Canada in different education, rehabilitative and recreation programs.

This winter, the Teen Program incorporated “Ladies Night Out”, a program for young women of the Center to use activity-based outings to develop and explore themselves. With eight young women consistently participating, the program was a huge success; a waiting list has already been formed for next fall’s program. The plan is to incorporate a Young Men’s group as well.

Just this spring, the Teen Program has seen eighty-nine youth walk through the Center’s doors, averaging 15-20 kids a night. The youth that attend belong to diverse ethnic backgrounds and come from differing communities and economic levels. There is a core group of youth that frequent the Center almost every night to “hang out” with friends from schools in the community. Many say that the Center is a place where they can relax and just be teenagers. The Programs popularity is due to the teens; someone comes for a night, next time s/he bring a friend, and soon enough many new faces become familiar at the Center.

The Teen Program continues to provide youth with a “drop-in” Monday through Thursday, with Friday being an evening out of the youth’s choice. Some of the more popular outings include: teen swim at the YMCA, rock climbing, bowling, ice skating, trips to area parks, and the movies. Also, the Teen Dance Party, a monthly event, continues to be a major hit!

With the arrival of summer, the Teens hope to take advantage of the warmth and daylight to do outdoor recreational activities: swimming, bar-b-ques, camping, mountain biking, skateboarding, and rock climbing. Everyone is looking forward to being out of school and having some summertime fun!
New North End Youth Center
Kathy Olwell

The New North End Youth Center (NNEYC) opened its doors in April of 1995 in the National Guard Armory adjacent to Hunt Middle School. There was, and still is, a need for youth to have a neighborhood place to go after school and in the evening, and we have tried to fill that niche in the New North End. With funds from the city of Burlington, borrowed staff from King Street Youth Center, and supportive community volunteers, the NNEYC was able to offer a Middle School Drop-in twice a week. Within a year, we had hired a paid staff member and were open three afternoons a week for middle schoolers and one evening for high schoolers. Eight years later, the NNEYC offers a Middle School Drop-in four afternoons a week and a High School Drop-in two evenings per week. The NNEYC runs the after-school programs at Hunt Middle School and Burlington High School (BHS) as well. Three full-time staff, three part-time employees, AmeriCorps' VISTA positions, social work students from both UVM and Champlain College, and many other volunteers help us serve the many youth of the New North End.

This past year we served 321 middle school aged youth during our drop-in and 169 high schoolers in our evening drop-in. For After-school programs, 398 Hunt students (82%) and 464 BHS students (39%) participated in our programming.

After eight years under the umbrella of King Street Youth Center, we realized that NNEYC needed to either become part of a larger entity or we needed to become a separate agency, as many of our funding sources were the same as King Street. It was becoming increasingly difficult to have foundations support two different entities under the same 501c3 (non-profit id number). After many discussions and reviews, the SHCC Board of Directors voted to bring the NNEYC under their wing as a new program of the SHCC.

Needless to say we will miss our friends and colleagues at King Street and thank them immensely for all the support and guidance they gave us. Certainly, collaborations with our King Street friends are in the future. All of us are very excited to be a part of the SHCC and are looking forward to the new work we will be forging together.

New Arrivals

The New Arrivals: English as a Foreign Language Summer School will soon be in full swing. When planning begun in April, space for participants was already filling fast! Children, from 5 to 14, will immerse themselves in learning and maintaining English skills. The four week program begins July 7th and ends August 1st.

This year's theme is Helpers and Heroes. Field trips into the community are aimed at meeting the individuals and teams that play critical roles in our community. Some of the planned trips include the fire station, police station, and coast guard. However, the program's director, Mark Nigolian, was careful to point out that helpers and heroes are not limited to the common stars. "Everyday people are just as important, like bus drivers for example." Mark explained, "The theme is to focus on how people help in the community, but also learn how you can help and be a part of your community."
The Gallery

This February our pipes froze, causing a destructive flood on the first floor. Since no one could be in the building, the SHCC kids attended a Week of Adventure - the only good thing out of this water disaster.

Acting goofy always makes you smile!

There she goes!

At Frog Hollow Studio, an artist, demonstrating the wheel, captivated the group’s attention.

Look at me! I’m skating!
The Gallery

During April vacation we had a Spring Fling, another week full of field trips and crafts. Once again, climbing at Petra Cliffs was a fun challenge!

By the climbing wall, checking the mat was a must: “Is this soft enough to fall on?”

Here we are at the Kids’ Day Parade!
The Gallery

For the SHCC Summer Camp, life's a beach!

Summer Camp hits the green!
The Gallery

For Linda Hamlin and Susan Sharp, 16 years together makes for a great team!

This year the classroom was full of 15 high-energy Pre-Schoolers; seven children graduated in May and will be entering kindergarten in the fall.

Financials: April 1, 2002 - March 31, 2003

Source of Income FY 2002-2003

Graph Key
1= Contributions $4,220
2= Solicited Contributions $7,464
3= United Way $88,540
4= Holiday Appeal $19,960
5= Grants $70,733
6= Challenge $85,977
7= Program Fees $32,530
8= Investments $1,024
9= Rental $2,810
10= Miscellaneous $500
Total=$321,574

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2003-2004

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