

MILTON FAMILY COMMUNITY CENTER
Annual Report 03-04
July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004

In the past year, Milton Family Community Center has provided various services and supports to over 1,000 families in the Milton community. Families raising children are able to receive a wide variety of services from MFCC that address the needs of parenting children from infancy through adolescence. It is through the many collaborative efforts with community, county and state organizations that these services exist. Funding for the following programs include local, state, and federal funding. In many cases, the programs are supported by the generous support of private foundations that share the values of the Milton Family Community Center in providing necessary support to some of the most vulnerable community members.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Welcome Baby Home Visiting -147 contacts, 19 Welcome Baby Bags delivered

Goal: To provide families with helpful information regarding the Milton Family Community Center's services, as well as activities within the community, thus helping to build a support system for new parents, while recognizing the valued new residents of Milton and their families.

Scenario: This is an individualized program available not only to families giving birth but also to families adopting a child or new families moving to Milton who have children. The Home Visitor mails a brochure about the Center plus a letter describing the Welcome Baby program. A follow-up phone call is made congratulating them on the birth of the child, introducing the MFCC to the family. Once a home visit is requested from the family, the Home Visitor offers a "Baby Bag" of gifts, coupons and available handouts on parenting and childcare. The Visitor informs the family of the services, agencies and programs available locally for families and children. If parents have concerns about feeding, sleeping or understanding basic behavior and needs of infants, the home visitor offers an informal, comfortable time to discuss these issues. The contact between the family and a local service for families promotes a secure source of support and information through the early childhood years. Families are familiarized with programs that are available to support them through the various phases of parenthood.

2. Healthy Babies, Kids, and Families Home Visiting - 22 individuals served

Goal: Healthy Babies, Kids, and Families is a home visiting program designed to meet the Public Health Service's "Healthy People 2010" goals related to pregnant women and infants who have Medicaid insurance. This is a coordinated effort that in Chittenden County is between the local home health agency (VNA), Lund Family Center, and MFCC to serve intensive needs families with children aged birth to five.

Scenario: Information about the program is introduced to the family during pregnancy through the collaboration of obstetricians, pediatricians, VNA and Public Health nurses providing care to the mother. A Family Support Worker from either MFCC or Lund Family Center receives a referral when the infant is two months of age. Information is provided through brochures and a phone call; and if the participants desire home visits the FSW will provide home visits that are coordinated through a collaborative plan with other involved home visitors who are also providing Medicaid-funded home-based services. This coordinated pre-approval process enables the family's team of home providers to coordinate visits to assure for non-duplication of services. Medicaid reimburses the visits on a fee for service basis. Information on infant care, behavior, growth and development, community and parenting resources for families is made available until the child is five years of age. MFCC piloted an EPSDT Medicaid project to fund this program in the

past year. The EPSDT project is being discontinued due to changes in EPSDT allowable activities. MFCC will resume the fee-for-service program design as described above. MFCC staff meets monthly with the VNA and Dept. of Health for case reviews and transfers of referrals.

3. Open Age Parent & Child Playgroup – 173 families served

Goal: To provide parents and children, ages birth through five, the opportunity to interact with other families whose children are at similar developmental stages in a supportive group situation, to acquire friendships, support and information, to promote child development and positive parent and child interaction, and to reduce isolation.

Scenario: MFCC provides several different playgroup opportunities on a weekly basis. Twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays mornings, MFCC hosts a playgroup in its TYKES preschool space. On Monday mornings the MFCC Even Start program hosts a playgroup with a strong literacy-base theme at the Birchwood Center, alternating every other week with a story hour facilitated by the local library. On Friday mornings, MFCC facilitates a playgroup in Colchester. Each playgroup supports the positive interaction between children of different age levels. The children are introduced to the social skills they will need to be successful throughout life. The goals of the facilitator include providing developmentally appropriate materials and activities in a stimulating environment that will promote learning and curiosity. Parents find friendship and support while learning the importance of play and social skills through role modeling and information sharing.

4. Parent Education –168 individuals served

Goal: To provide parents an opportunity to enhance parenting skills and to improve the quality of life within the family.

Scenario: MFCC offers a variety of educational resources and workshops of interest to families. We promote programs that help improve parenting skills, including:

- ❖ CPR for Parents and Childcare Providers
- ❖ Infant/Toddler Development
- ❖ What To Do With The Mad That You Feel (supporting the emotional growth in children)
- ❖ Family Literacy/ Mother Goose Reads Workshops
- ❖ Cooking For Life
- ❖ Monthly Parents Night Out for parents of teens
- ❖ Life Skills Classes
- ❖ Supporting Children's Transitions into Kindergarten
- ❖ VT Prevent Child Abuse Workshops
- ❖ Project Rocking horse

We address concerns or needs requested by parents and coordinate the facilitation of workshops that will address these issues. It is the MFCC philosophy that parent education and support is an ongoing process incorporated into all MFCC programs.

5. Information & Referral – 201 families served

Goal: To provide information and referral resources to individuals seeking support and guidance on a variety of issues.

Scenario: This ongoing service involves everyone on the staff at varying levels. We have found that information and referral is a consistently high need, from families needing support in finding food to needing a supportive person to talk through some difficult issues, requiring intensive staff time. Parents and other individuals call or drop in to talk with someone. All MFCC staff are knowledgeable on how to

support families in accessing information about local, county and statewide services for families. Staff will make referrals and then follow up to insure needed services and supports were obtained.

6. Grandparents As Parents Support Group

Goal: To provide a support system for people parenting or spending a great deal of time with their grandchildren. This is a group that was created with the support of a Kid Safe Grant through the Network for Children, Youth and Families. The Kid Safe Grant enabled this program to establish itself as a strong support network for grandparents.

Scenario: This is a support group for grandparents who are intimately involved with the raising of their grandchildren, and other non-parent relatives raising children, because their own children cannot fulfill this role due to illness, death, incarceration, drug abuse or other conflicts. A trained facilitator and childcare are made available for the weekly meetings through the support of a grant from the Champlain Valley Agency on Aging. Both the children and adults attending this program report receiving tremendous support through their participation. Since the inception of this program, grandparents who attend these meetings have taken on leadership roles in the community, advocating and educating others on the needs of kinship. Members of this group now also are represented on the Permanency Planning Committee, the Kid Safe Council, and the new SRS advisory board.

7. TYKES Early Childhood Program – 28 preschool aged children served

Goal: The goals of the TYKES program are to increase self esteem; to enhance peer-socialization skills; to provide a positive group experience prior to entering kindergarten; to provide community experiences; to provide coordinated support for families; to provide a smooth transition into the public school; to encourage learning through play.

Scenario: TYKES (Tender Young Kids Esteem & Socialization) is a pre-kindergarten enrichment program for children who are three to five years old. The children come to one of either a three days/week morning session or a two days/week afternoon session. There are 14 preschool age children in each group. Children who otherwise could not get to our Center are transported to and from the TYKES program by our MFCC van. The TYKES program is funded in part by the Early Education Initiative grant sponsored by the Vermont Department of Education. There are also limited tuition-based slots with a sliding fee scale. Many children are able to attend the TYKES program with the support of Child Care Services Subsidy. TYKES teachers collaborated extensively with the local school districts Essential Early Education program for children with special needs.

8. Milton Community Preschool – 14 preschool age children served

Goal: Same as TYKES

Scenario: This is the last year of this program. Due to lack of funding, the Center is regrettably discontinuing this preschool program. A preschool program facilitated by the local Essential Early Education program will replace this program that was offered in a classroom space at the Milton Elementary School. This switch in programs will assist in the increased need for specialized preschool services for children with special needs.

9. Full-Day Preschool – 17 preschool age children served

Goal: Same as TYKES

Scenario: Full Day Preschool is entering its third year of operation. This preschool program provides the same high-quality preschool experience as the TYKES program, but is primarily for families who are in need of full day childcare. Children enrolled in the Full Day Preschool are benefiting from classroom support

offered by the Head Start staff. MFCC entered into a collaborative agreement with Head Start to provide enhanced wrap around supports for families. Up to 10 preschoolers in the Full Day preschool program will be eligible for Head Start case management and family support. As part of the Head Start agreement, all children enrolled in the Full Day preschool will also participate in a lunch program offering nutritious snacks and meals cooked and prepared home-style. A Rosie's For All Kids Foundation Grant supports partial scholarships that enable families to afford our preschool program. Many families also receive tuition support from Child Care Services Subsidy and Family Support Programs.

*****TYKES/ Community Preschool/ Full Day Preschool*****

Characteristics that enable children to learn in school are incorporated into all our preschool programs. These characteristics include: curiosity, confidence, the capacity to set a goal and work toward it, the ability to communicate with others, and the ability to get along with others in a social environment. Children and their families are engaged in individual and group experiences within our preschool programs. Learning happens through play in our child-centered environments where there are ample opportunities for positive, quality social and cognitive experiences.

10. Infant/Toddler Childcare Program - 12 infants and toddlers served

Goal: To provide developmentally appropriate childcare for infants and toddlers ages 6 weeks to 3 years old.

Scenario: This program, licensed to serve up to 9 infants and toddlers began in September 2000. As are our preschool programs, the Infant and Toddler childcare program is NAEYC accredited and maintains a high quality care program. With the support of a Collaborative Child Care Grant through the Vermont Child Care Services Division, MFCC is able to recruit and maintain top quality, experienced caregivers. Full day childcare is provided in a safe, nurturing environment while the parents of the children are either working, at school or participating in full-day training programs. Child to teacher ratios is kept low to assure responsive care to the needs of our youngest participants at the Center.

11. Community Service Volunteers:

Goal: To provide individuals the opportunity to contribute their services at a nonprofit organization.

Scenario: Chittenden County Court Diversion refers teens to the MFCC to provide community services to a non-profit organization. MFCC also provides opportunities for individuals involved with Probation and Parole. Milton High School often refers teens to the Center to provide community service as part of their high school education requirements. MFCC has also provided volunteer opportunities for individuals wanting nothing more than to offer their time, skills, energy and support, whether they are young parents or retired citizens with some free time. Many individuals have volunteered their time to support families in need through various food drives, holiday gift donations, yard sale donations, warm coats for winter donations, and the MFCC annual Walk-A-Thon.

12. Milton Resource Network (PATCH)

Goal: To improve local access to and coordination of social services in Milton.

Scenario: The Milton Patch served as the springboard for the development of Milton's New Directions Coalition in the spring and summer of 1998. Patch coordination efforts include keeping contact with 11 member agencies and writing grants to secure Patch implementation funding. The Milton Patch joined the Milton Resource Network in the fall of 1998 to maximize resources and prevent duplication of efforts. Milton Patch created the Subgroup that was responsible for bringing an SSTA van to Milton for seniors and individuals with special needs.

13. New Directions Teen Programs & Community Coalition - 909 individuals served

Goal: To address the issues of youth substance use in Milton. A community-wide coalition, brought together by the MFCC and Milton Patch to create opportunities for youth in Milton to engage in substance-free activities and to promote opportunities for youth leadership.

Scenario: New Directions was established through New Directions Grant from the VT Department of Health. This three-year grant provided the funding necessary to create the beginnings of a very successful teen program in the Milton Community. Since the inception of New Directions, the teen program has grown to provide many opportunities for youth to engage in healthy, substance free activities. Program offerings include: Life Skills training for 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students in the Milton School District, Teen Friday Movie and a Meal, Open Mic Night, SADD, Ghost Out Day, Summer Field Trips, Emerging Young Women, Annual Rock N Roll Show, Teen Leadership trainings, guitar lessons and many other fun activities specifically for teens. This past year, the Permanent Fund for the Well Being of Vermont's Children and Families took interest in the work of the Milton Coalition and its commitment to youth. With the support of the Permanent Fund and the Chittenden United Way, the New Directions Coalition, aka Community Advisory Board, is actively working on creating a solid future for the sustainability of the teen programs.

14. Milton After School Kids (MASK) School-Age Childcare - 90 children ages 6 -12 served

Goal: To provide supervised fun and educational care and enrichment for school-aged children during after school hours, and full day care during summer and school vacations.

Scenario: This childcare program provides supervision to children six through twelve years of age during the vulnerable after school and school vacation hours. The school time program runs from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm, while the vacation time program runs from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm. The MASK program takes place in the Milton Elementary School, using the gym, cafeteria and playgrounds. Staffing and administration is provided by MFCC. MASK is licensed by the State of Vermont Childcare Licensing Division to serve up to 59 children. Activities include snack, gross motor activities, homework time, field trips, reading partners, arts and crafts, sewing, drama, and many other enrichment activities depending on the interests of the children. The children are divided into two groups with a head teacher for each group. School staff, parents and children all have expressed appreciation for this needed program to ensure for the well-being of the children while their parents are working.

15. Emergency Food Shelf, Assistance, and Holiday Donations - 522 individuals served

Goal: To provide basic assistance for families in need and additional support during the holiday seasons.

16. Online Applications - 41 individuals served

Goal: The Center's social workers are available to assist community members in applying on-line for state services including health insurance, food stamps, Reach Up, childcare subsidy, and WIC. MFCC's Family Services Coordinator is also able to support families in applying for services on-line with a new laptop computer purchased with the assistance of a grant from the Fanny Allen Fund.

17. Reach Up - 235 individuals served

Goal: To help young parents gain independence from welfare by securing employment through education and work experience.

Scenario: The goal of this program is to provide opportunities for young parents receiving Reach Up Financial Assistance (RUFA) through the State of Vermont to receive training, support, education and job skills necessary to help them obtain work and get off of welfare. Services are primarily provided at the Center, and in the home when an individual is not able to get to the Center due to lack of transportation or other family circumstances that creates a barrier for them in obtaining support services. This program is

affiliated with the Department of PATH and is contracted through MFCC. MFCC is also a work-training site for individuals on RUFA who need community-based job training supports and experiences.

18. Even Start – 56 individuals served

Goal: Even Start is a family literacy program designed to provide intensive services to up to 20 families in which the parents have not achieved a GED or high school diploma. This is a collaborative program of MFCC, the Milton School District, and Vermont Adult Learning. Services include adult education, parent education, parent and child together activities, early childhood program support, home visiting, and transportation.

Scenario: The goal of this program is to provide high quality family literacy services to 15 families with children under 8 years of age in Milton, VT. These families are identified as most in need of these services due to low educational levels of the parents and grandparents, low-income levels, and family stresses such as history of child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, substance abuse and mental illness. Vermont Adult Learning provides up to 20 hours per week of adult education at the Milton Family Community Center for Even Start participants. The Milton School District provides professional development in the area of early literacy. The Milton Family Community Center preschool programs, infant & toddler program, and MASK program collaborate with the Even Start program to provide quality childcare for the children of Even Start enrolled families.

19. School Social Work Support – 86 individuals served

Goal: MFCC provides a trained social worker that is supervised by an expert mental health clinical supervisor to provide support services to children in the Milton Elementary School. The work of this social worker is preventative in nature and creates a link for families between the home and the school. This position is a collaboratively created position between the MFCC and the Milton School District. It is through the Milton School District's EPSDT funds that MFCC is able to provide this support.

20. Child and Family Programs at Birchwood Community Center

Goal: MFCC collaborates with the Vermont State Housing Authority to provide child and family services in the Birchwood Manor trailer park. This collaboration is part of an effort to transform the Birchwood community into a community where residents can enjoy a range of programs.

Scenario: MFCC facilitates a variety of programs in the new Birchwood Community Center including: Rocking Horse program to help mothers and mothers-to-be take care of themselves, raise great kids, and build healthy connections with family and friends, ARC support group for parents of special needs children, Infant and Child Playgroups, Story hours, tutoring program for youth, Cooking For Life nutritional program for women and children to learn about nutrition and healthy food preparation, resident coffee hour, and use of space for other community agencies including the Department of Health's Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, and Calm My Anxious Hearth faith-based support group for all of women of any denomination facilitated by the New Life Christian Fellowship.

21. Community Development:

Goal: To collaborate with other agencies, services, organizations and individuals to promote knowledge, support and information about local resources including MFCC's services.

Scenario: MFCC staff strives to be visibly active in participating in local and statewide committees, conferences, networks and training. The Center puts on a wide variety of special events and community events throughout the year, from family dinners to community planning meetings. All events bring families and community members together for the same purpose; to support the mission of the MFCC in creating a sense of community belonging. The committees that MFCC staff have participated in include:

- ❖ Chittenden County United Way Member Agency
- ❖ Family Support Childcare Selection Team

- ❖ Vermont Parent Child Center Network
- ❖ Milton Resource Group
- ❖ Milton New Directions Coalition
- ❖ Chittenden County Early Childhood Connection
- ❖ Milton Business Association
- ❖ VT State Patch Network
- ❖ Mobius Mentoring Network
- ❖ Child Care Providers Association
- ❖ School Aged Care Network
- ❖ Chittenden County PCC Workgroup (with Lund and VNA)
- ❖ Chittenden County Healthy Babies, Kids and Families Committee
- ❖ PCC/Dept. Health/Home Health Healthy Babies, Kids and Families workgroup
- ❖ Early Childhood Council Executive Committee
- ❖ Kid Safe Collaboration
- ❖ CUPS (Children's Upstream Services)
- ❖ Milton Drop-out Prevention Team
- ❖ Prevent Child Abuse Vermont
- ❖ Champlain Initiative
- ❖ Chittenden County Community Development Committee
- ❖ Chittenden County Family Literacy Committee
- ❖ Chittenden Planning Group for the AHS Restructure

MFCC Highlights

July 2003

- ❖ Run Girl Run, a running program for girls ages 8 -13 with a focus on self-esteem, finishes up a summer of hard training to participate in the Susan G. Komen RACE FOR THE CURE 5K run
- ❖ Programs at Birchwood Community Center commence
- ❖ Rocking Horse Circle of Support group for women commences, to later evolve into a women's support group

August 2003

- ❖ MFCC Teen Program kicks off its annual Take It Outside smoking cessation campaign.

October 2003

- ❖ MFCC Family Fall Harvest Open House
- ❖ MFCC staff and Board members attend Raising the Bar: Performance Excellence Training provided by the Vermont Council for Quality
- ❖ MFCC Early Childhood Teachers attend the annual Vermont Association for the Education of Young Children (VAEYC) conference
- ❖ Two members of the MFCC Grandparents As Parents support group attend the National Generations United Conference in Washington, D.C.

November 2003

- ❖ MFCC's New Directions Teen Program celebrates its 5th year anniversary

December 2003

- ❖ 5th annual Santa Bus collects tons of toys, clothing, and food to be distributed, through a successful collaboration between MFCC and the local churches, to needy families in Milton.

January 2004

- ❖ All Staff and Board members participate in the Performance Excellence Survey.
- ❖ MFCC Teen Program holds its annual Open Mic Night
- ❖ MFCC Full Day Preschool Program merges with Head Start for enhanced programming

February 2004

- ❖ MFCC undergoes a complete agency restructuring process
- ❖ MFCC's Teen Program starts a new group called Emerging Young Women
- ❖ MFCC hosts a "Coat Day", distributing winter coats and boots to families in need of warm clothes for the cold winter
- ❖ Milton Even Start program coordinators attend the National Family Literacy Conference in Florida

March 2004

- ❖ MFCC Board member Mike Lane begins the process of leading MFCC staff and board members through the creation of a new Strategic Plan based on the results of the Performance Excellence Survey.

April 2004

- ❖ Volunteer work days at MFCC including volunteers from St. Michael's College and University of Vermont
- ❖ MFCC collaborates with United Way, Milton School District, and Dr. Peggy Carey to launch two Community Discussions identifying needs in Milton and developing plans to address the needs

May 2004

- ❖ MFCC Yard Sale benefiting the MFCC Infant & Toddler Program, Grandparents As Parents, and Women's Support Group
- ❖ Volunteer work day at MFCC with the Milton Boy Scouts
- ❖ MFCC kicks off its Friends of MFCC campaign

June 2004

- ❖ MFCC holds its 4th annual Walk-A-Thon with a new "Fun Run"
- ❖ MFCC Teen Program holds its annual Rock n Roll show featuring local bands and musicians
- ❖ Milton Even Start graduation celebration: 1 participant received their Adult Education Diploma and 3 participants received their General Education Diplomas.