

# YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU

## 2020 Annual Report

Helping Vermont's youth navigate the challenges of adolescence and the path to adulthood

*Thanks to you,* our **Transitional Living Program** gets homeless youth into housing and helps them develop a solid foundation with education, employment, and skills to move forward in their lives and be self-sufficient adults.

### YOUR SUPPORT PAVES THE WAY FOR SUCCESS

## Harmony

Harmony is working hard to build a more stable life for herself – to be independent – to stand on her own two feet. It's not an easy journey.

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, 18-year-old Harmony was suddenly homeless. It was a scary time. Securing housing was especially difficult, but we made it happen and set up a new transitional living apartment for her – cleaning and furnishing it with the necessities. Our staff quickly taught Harmony the basics of independent living – how to shop for groceries, wash vegetables, cook a meal, care for an apartment, stay safe during a pandemic.

Today Harmony has her sights on completing high school, getting her driver's permit, and becoming a nurse. She admits it's a lot to juggle with school, work,

and keeping an apartment, but she has a vision for herself that's worth working for.

She says that Hannah, our TLP director, is "the best counselor in the world. We really accomplish things when we meet – we get things done. She helps provide focus and move to action. She brings the 'how to do this.' Without her I'd be in chaos."

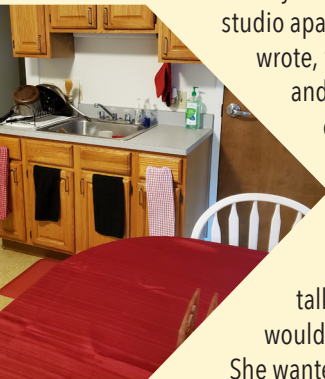
**"I didn't have a great childhood. But I'm going to make up for that by being a better adult.** I want a better way to live, more stability in my life, a better path. I want to build myself as a human – get my feet in the right step, provide for myself."



## Hannah

### TRANSITIONAL LIVING PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Reflecting on the day that she settled Harmony safely into one of our studio apartments, Hannah wrote, "She turned around and looked at me. As her eyes teared up she whispered, 'It's the most beautiful apartment I have ever been in.' She talked about how she would turn it into a home. She wanted to put curtains up and rearrange the living space,



truly making a place of her own where there was no fighting or conflict."

As they cleaned the table, Harmony didn't seem to notice the scratches on its surface. "Instead she saw the place where she would sit to do her homework as she worked towards finishing her high school degree. She saw the place where we would meet weekly to help her build her life and pursue her dreams. Her future could very well begin right here, on this table."

As the pandemic lags on, the meeting, learning, coaching, and counseling is happening not at that table, but outdoors and virtually. Still the work continues – reviewing goals, learning about budgets and saving money, filling out applications for jobs and

other resources available to her. Hannah says that Harmony has been "like a sponge, eager and willing to learn."

At the end of that first day, having handed over keys to the apartment, Hannah sat in her car and reflected. "I looked up at her apartment and felt a mix of sentimental gratitude and sadness. If only it were possible to help every youth struggling with homelessness in the same way."

**Thanks to your support and generosity,** we know that this youth, and many others too, will be **safe and supported** in the nights and weeks to come.

*Thanks to you,* our **Youth Development Program** helps youth exiting the foster care system rise above risk factors that many experience – like lower educational and vocational outcomes. Because of you, they can thrive and build stable, fulfilling lives.

## YOUR SUPPORT CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR A BETTER FUTURE

### Tasia

At 17, Tasia has aspirations, energy, and drive that are hard to match. This high school junior is charting a path for a bright future – overcoming the trauma and family instability that shaped her early years. Our Youth Development Program (YDP) is here to help her with guidance, mentoring, skill building, and financial assistance.

Moved into foster care at age 13, Tasia now lives with her new forever family who first took her into their home as foster parents and later adopted her. We spoke with Tasia and her mother, Ashley, about how YDP is helping Tasia overcome barriers and challenges that youth can experience when they have been in foster care.

Tasia explains how we have helped her access opportunities that are changing her life: “We started setting goals – short term and long term goals. That’s important because if you don’t know what you are aspiring for or where you want to go in life, the world can seem scary.”

Tasia learned about budgeting and finances. She learned about needs vs. wants, making choices, finding a job, and working toward a goal. And when finances were a barrier to opportunity, YDP contributed toward

Tasia, middle, with her mom Ashley and dad Arthur.



costs for her driver’s permit, lacrosse equipment, advance placement exams at school, and the initial down payment for the semester she is attending at the School for Ethics and Global Leadership in Washington, D.C.

“Knowing it’s there, I don’t automatically say no to a dream or a goal because of finances. **They help make those things that might seem impossible more possible.**”

What would she say to other youth about this program?

“This program is so important because **it helps children with not necessarily a good past build hope and prepare for a better future.** They help focus on not letting the past define you, but setting your present up and your future up to allow good things to come to you. We get to play a part in making our future better and they are there to encourage us and support us.”

What would she say to you, our donors?

“You are donating more than just your money. **You are donating experiences. You are donating relationships that can change my life.** Seeing the way other people care and the way other people are there for us – it just redefines us. And no matter where you were in the past, where your life was, there are people who want to see you succeed.”

### Ashley TASIA'S MOM

Ashley and her husband Arthur grew their family by fostering children who needed a safe, stable, loving home. Tasia joined them as a teenager – a critical time to prepare for adulthood.

#### Ashley reflected on the importance of YDP for foster families.

“Putting yourself out there and having a new experience as a foster parent is intimidating.

But knowing that you have another avenue that can be such a support system – for financial support (for Tasia’s activities) and even just mentorship – was really helpful and gave us a little bit of a reprieve.”

#### And she spoke of YDP’s importance for teens who are or have been in foster care.

“It’s a very important time in their lives where they’re trying to figure out who they are and what they want to do. Without a mentor like the YDP worker, they could just potentially

feel stuck. So it’s helpful to have a non-biased party come in and say, ‘Let’s work on these things together. How are you going to better yourself? And how are you going to make these things available to you? What are your goals?’ I’m thankful that Tasia had that.”

#### On creating a new normal:

“Tasia was used to a different kind of normal. She grew up in a different situation. But with YDP and the opportunities she has now, she’s been able to have a new normal.”

Last year you provided **393 youth in Washington County** with:

 **3,121**  
nights of housing

 **2,993**  
hours of counseling & case management

 **1,671**  
visits to the Basement Teen Center

Of the **298 youth who received intensive services:**

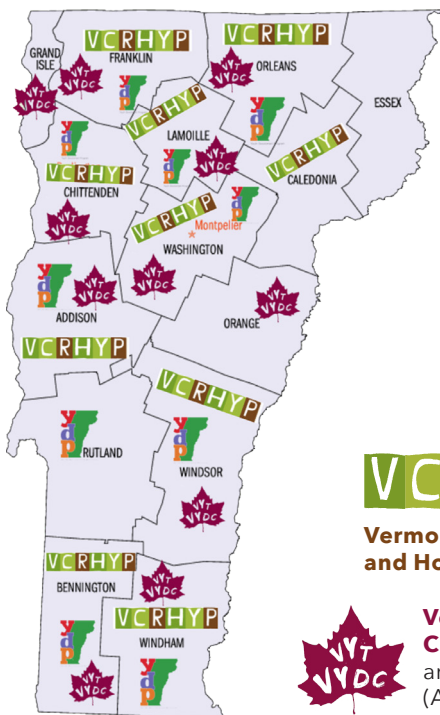
**53%** were homeless or at risk of being homeless

**75%** were involved with foster care or other aspects of Vermont's Dept. for Children and Families

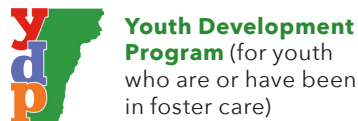
**87%** were low income

**100%** had emotional or mental health issues

Last year you touched the lives of **10,467 youth across Vermont** and ensured a statewide safety net for youth.



With your support we provided essential **leadership, resources and assistance through our statewide programs** to 39 youth service agencies around the state.



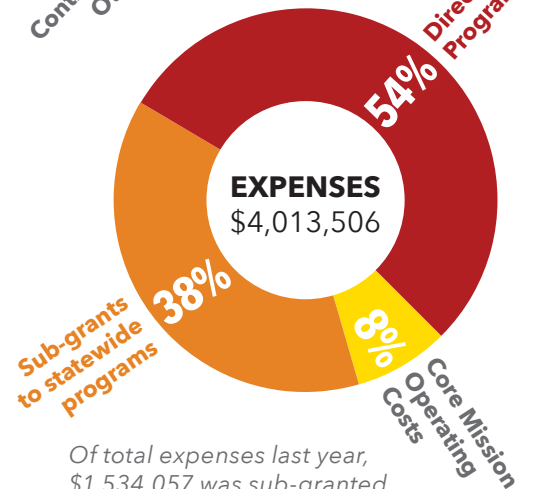
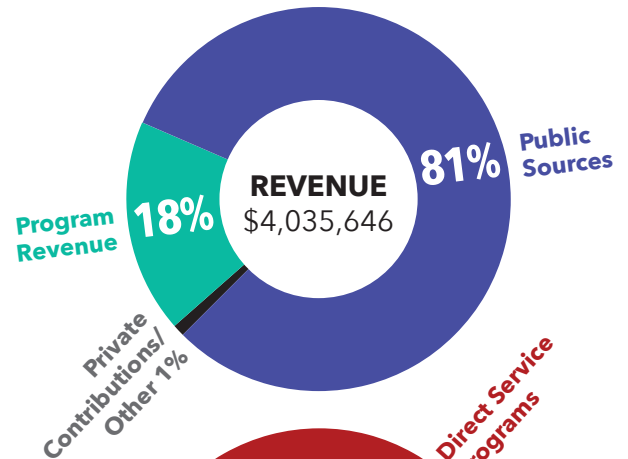
**Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth**



**Vermont Youth Development Corps** (AmeriCorps State Program) and **Vermont Youth Tomorrow** (AmeriCorps VISTA Program)

## FINANCIAL REPORT

unaudited | July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020



Of total expenses last year, \$1,534,057 was sub-granted directly to 39 youth service organizations to help ensure a statewide safety net for youth.

## Board of Directors

- Dana Lawrence**, Chair
- David Batchelder**
- Linda Babic**
- Vesta Bovair**
- Earl Kooperkamp**
- Paul Richardson**
- Bob Sheil**

## Administrative Team

- Kreig Pinkham**  
Executive Director
- Nicole Bachand**  
Associate Director of Operations
- Ginger Bartlett**  
Associate Director of Finance
- Sherry Knudsen**  
Director of Philanthropy

**Washington County Youth Service  
Bureau / Boys & Girls Club**

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[wcysb.org](http://wcysb.org)

Youth  
Service  
Bureau



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

# 2020 Annual Report

THANK YOU FOR  
MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

## RESILIENCE & Generosity

It's been a year like no other. Amid all the challenges and heartaches, I cannot help but reflect on the uplifting takeaways of the past year for the Washington County Youth Service Bureau.

Youth and families are resilient. Our staff is ever resourceful and dedicated. The communities we work in are endlessly generous and caring. Vermonters rise to meet daunting challenges with creativity and hope. Did we know this already? Certainly. But we've seen those truths tested in so many ways this past year.

**Thank you for everything you've done to help youth and families** through the crises, the isolation, and the insecurities of the past year. Growing up amidst a pandemic didn't make it easier for youth, but your support did.

Because of your support, we never missed a beat. We rapidly adjusted our services to keep clients and staff members safe while making sure we were still there for youth who suddenly found themselves jobless, or homeless, or facing family conflict exacerbated by the pandemic. We continued to provide counseling, mentoring, coaching, and support for youth throughout Washington County. Our statewide programs worked tirelessly to help other youth serving agencies around the state adapt and continue their important work.

**Because of your support youth survived, thrived, and moved forward with their lives and goals and aspirations.**

Yes, resiliency abounds. It is the bridge to the future, to realizing dreams, to growing potential and talents. And we have you to thank for helping to make that possible.

**KREIG PINKHAM**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR