



# NEW CCN CABLE TV SHOW

Learn more about Community Care Network by watching *Connections*, our new cable TV show produced by Rutland Community Access PEG TV. Each month features a different CCN program with in-depth conversations with agency experts and collaborative partners. Visit our website at [www.rmhscn.org](http://www.rmhscn.org) and click the YouTube icon to watch *Connections*. ■



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# Newsletter

## CLIENTS BECOME PROGRAM AMBASSADORS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND OUTCOMES

Community Care Network's Community Rehabilitation and Treatment (CRT) program for adults with mental health and co-occurring disorders has undergone an important evolution thanks to the extensive involvement of the very people the program serves. For over six years, a CRT work group has focused on making services more recovery-oriented by having clients play an integral role as peer leaders called Client Ambassadors.

"As Client Ambassadors, we hope to close the gaps in client and staff communication, and to assist clients in better achieving their goals for the groups," said one Client Ambassador. "We build bridges between our peers, staff and the community by informing, educating and passing on important information gathered through meetings, wellness groups and personal experience."

Client Ambassadors participate extensively in planning the CRT Wellness Fairs. Wellness Fairs are held on a quarterly basis and are an opportunity for clients to meet with group facilitators and other CRT clients to learn about the upcoming cycle of Wellness Group classes and workshops, which are numerous and diverse

in content. "We are always available to talk to clients, wherever they feel most comfortable," another Ambassador added. "One way that we offer support is by meeting people informally at the Wellness Fairs." For each 10-week cycle of Wellness Groups, the Ambassadors host the Wellness Fair where clients can get information on groups, talk about their experiences, or brainstorm about groups they would like to see in the future. "It's an opportunity to meet Client Ambassadors and facilitators, and learn about how we can be a resource to them."

Client Ambassadors also check attendants in at the quarterly Fairs, answer questions, and provide support around completing questionnaires and other information requests. Client Ambassadors have also participated in local and statewide initiatives to improve outcomes for adults with persistent mental illness.

Client Ambassadors for the CRT program are another way that Community Care Network listens to the people it serves to ensure that its programs and services most effectively meet their needs and goals. ■



### "I didn't know you did that."

**Daniel Quinn**  
President & CEO

## Welcome to the Community Care Network Newsletter.

This year, CCN celebrates 60 years of dedicated service to the people of Rutland County. Since 1951, the organization has grown and evolved to successfully respond to the changing needs of our society with creative and innovative programming that achieves high outcomes. Under the CCN umbrella, the programs of Rutland Mental Health Services and Rutland Community Programs touch the lives of almost 10% of Rutland County residents.

Since coming to Vermont four years ago, I have found that many people are not aware of the myriad of services offered by Community Care Network to improve the health and well-being of the region. "I didn't know you did that" are words I hear over and over again. So we are engaging in new community outreach initiatives, including this newsletter, to highlight some of the great work that is done by the people and programs of CCN. We recently launched a cable show on Rutland Community Access PEG-TV, called Community Care Network Connections. Each month, Connections features a program or service of CCN with guests that include staff experts and community collaborators. Connections can be accessed on YouTube from our web site, [rmhscn.org](http://rmhscn.org).

While the feedback about the PEG-TV shows has been very positive, we want to do more to engage the community; this newsletter is another tool toward that end. CCN confronts many challenges in our community and has many great stories to tell of the people whose lives have been changed by our agency's work. Frankly, there is too much happening to say it all at once or in one place. By using several communication mediums over the course of time, our goal is to both inform and engage our community as we collectively work to improve the region's quality of life.

In recent years, meeting the needs of our community has become more challenging. As we all know, the national economic struggles have been felt in Vermont. Community Care Network, along with other organizations around the state, has endured three consecutive years of funding reductions. At CCN those funding reductions totaled more than \$1.2 million. In the face of these funding reductions, our goal has been to minimize reductions in the services we provide to others. And in these challenging times, the needs of Vermonters have only increased. The leadership and staff at CCN confronted these challenges with creativity and perseverance. Programs have been redesigned, productivity has increased, and administrative costs were reduced. These collective efforts resulted in less than 20% of the funding reductions adversely impacting someone we serve. When you think about it, it's really quite remarkable. In my 30 years in this field, I have not seen anything like it. I think it is important to note that in the face of so much adversity, CCN continues to do everything possible to meet the needs of vulnerable Vermonters.

My hope is that you will find this newsletter informative. And when you hear about the successes of the people we serve, it may inspire you. Thank you for taking the time to learn more about Community Care Network.

— Daniel Quinn, President & CEO



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

## Innovative Educational Initiative Creates Greater Community Involvement Opportunities

The Community Access Program (CAP) of CCN has launched new initiatives that give people with developmental disabilities greater opportunities for meaningful involvement in their communities.

One such initiative, Community Campus, features a myriad of educational offerings taught by the individuals served, CCN staff, and community members. The Community Campus runs three semesters each year, with upwards of 20 offerings each semester. The



Charlene Kurant (left) works with Green Mountain College student Angela Baglione at the College's Cerridwen Farms.

Campus has become a hub of activity and the engine behind CAP's outreach to the greater Rutland community. Some of the Campus offerings include tours of local businesses to gain a greater knowledge of operating a business, scrapbooking, music theory, cooking, gardening, literacy enhancing games, and line-dancing, to name just a few.

### Some recent Community Campus offerings include:

- Visiting Campbell Plaster and Iron in West Rutland to learn about bronze castings and restoration techniques.
- Assisting the Brandon Senior Center to create over 200 Easter baskets for families in need.
- A visit to the Green Mountain College Cerridwen Farm to learn about research to operate an agricultural business with as few fossil-derived resources as possible, with the ultimate target of using no fossil fuels. The Community Campus garden program, Way to Grow, will continue to work with the college in an ongoing partnership of shared resources and expertise. Way to Grow also partners with the Master Gardener program to help maintain community gardens in the Rutland area.
- A watercolor workshop with Charlene Kurant, an established collage and watercolor artist who also receives support from the Community Access Program.
- Helping with the spring cleanup at the Ed Kehoe Conservation Camp on Lake Bomoseen, operated by the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation.

To ensure that Community Campus remains responsive to the people it serves, a Campus Council was created when a group of individuals was identified with a vested interest in promoting the growth and success of the Campus program. The Council meets on a monthly basis to discuss long and short-term goals, ways to create greater levels of participation and opportunity, and development of progress measures toward identified goals.

For the upcoming fall semester, the Campus Council will continue the valuable work it does to make the Community Campus a better, stronger, and more diverse community-based educational program for people with developmental disabilities. ■

## CCN Plays Major Role in Region's Disaster Response Team

More than 20 volunteers from the Rutland Region recently participated in a two-day emergency preparedness training co-sponsored by the Emergency Mental Health Services department of Community Care Network.

"As Vermonters, we like to think we are immune from the many disasters that regularly befall other areas of the country, like wildfires out West and tornadoes in the Midwest and South," said Mike O'Brien, Director of Emergency Services for Rutland Mental Health Services and the coordinator of the emergency training. "But recent events remind us that our region is vulnerable as well. The recent deaths of several people from a tornado in nearby Springfield, Massachusetts is a reminder that we are not immune from disasters in this region."

As a community, are we ready to deal with such disasters? Are we prepared to cope with the psychological and emotional after-effects? With over 30 years of clinical mental health experience under his belt, Mike is acutely familiar with the resulting trauma that can engulf individuals and communities following a disaster. "Other disasters like plane crashes, train derailments, or major vehicle accidents, can spawn negative emotional consequences such as grief, anger, anxiety, and fear. The most extreme manmade disaster is terrorism," said Mike.

The Vermont Behavioral Health Disaster Response Coordination Team came to Rutland in June and trained clinicians and other volunteers to provide psychological first aid as part of a community-wide response to a disaster. Topics of the training included basic disaster response; recognizing trauma; incident command and emergency preparedness system; introduction to the sudden death response; and psychological first aid within a disaster response setting.

Mike describes the work of the Disaster Response Team this way. "We all know about the devastation to property from a major natural disaster. People sometimes lose their homes and possessions. Sections of a community can be destroyed. These losses can also have a profound traumatic effect on the residents. This is where the Disaster Response Team helps. The Disaster Response Team works with others in the community to assist residents affected by a disaster. By providing outreach and support to those experiencing trouble, we can get people to the help they need quickly."

The Disaster Response Team is made up of volunteers from Rutland Mental Health Services, Rutland City Public Schools, Eckerd, Vermont Department of Health, Mount Holly Rescue Squad, area Clergy and other interested residents. ■

## STAFF RECOGNITION



Curtis Taylor was named the 2010 Employee of the Year for Community Care Network. Curtis has worked at RMHS for ten years as a clinician in the Crisis Department, Adult Behavioral Health Services. He is one of the four Don LaRouche Spirit Award winners. One of the quotes about Curtis: "Curtis is known for his kindness and knowledge as he guides individuals who have lost hope and direction. He helps individuals come up with solutions and to regain their inner strength. He empowers people." ■

## Individuals at CAP Get Help "Finding Their Own Voice"



Allie Monica

Allie Monica knows firsthand what it's like to create an Individual Support Agreement. As a person who receives Community Access Program (CAP) services, Allie and her team develop an ISA every year. Individual Support Agreements, or ISAs as they are called, are detailed contracts between an individual, and their guardian if they have one, and CAP, which is a division of Community Care Network. The ISA outlines the services and supports to be given based on the individual's needs and available resources. Not only does Allie receive services from CAP, she is also a staff member employed as a Peer Mentor.

To be an effective Peer Mentor, Allie familiarized herself with Vermont ISA guidelines, created brochures explaining her services, and developed a series of questions which, when answered thoughtfully by individuals, helps them develop and clarify their life goals. Allie meets one-to-one with individuals to identify their strengths, needs, and interests. And she makes sure that people walk away with their ideas in writing so that they can be incorporated into the ISA.

Allie has presented at the Collaboration Conference for Families with Children with

Disabilities; the Community Care Network Annual Meeting; the LifeSteps Center; the CAP Apartment Program; the Local Standing Committee; and at Castleton State College to social work students. She hopes this internal and community educational component of her job creates greater awareness of the necessity for individuals to be an integral part of their planning process.

Here is how Allie describes her job. "My primary role is to help people get ready for their ISAs. I am here to offer assistance and support in developing ideas, get people thinking about what goals they would like to achieve, and brainstorm ways to make their ISAs about them personal. My job is not to write their ISA, but to help individuals think in terms of it being their own ISA. It should be about them and it should be realistic. It is my hope to teach people to self-advocate, to learn about their rights, to have realistic goals, and to help people really personalize their ISAs."

Because of Allie's services, many more individuals are, in her words, "finding their own voice" and taking an active role in developing ISAs that are personal, individualized, and meaningful. ■