

Good morning...My name is Dottie Moffitt and I am a peer navigator employed by Clara Martin and part of the Youth in Transition program. The part of Vermont that I work in is northern Windsor County and all of Orange County. I am here today to briefly let you know what not only I do but what the Youth in Transition program provides for youth throughout Vermont.

As a peer navigator I work with youth ages 16-22. The young adults served by the Youth in Transition program are young adults who have, at some point in their lives, fallen through the cracks. They suffer from depression, addiction, homelessness, personality disorders and have home lives that would bring an adult to their knees. As a peer navigator I have the honor of supporting our young adults as they work to pull themselves back up and guiding them as they work to achieve the life they deserve to live.

The Youth in Transition program supports young adults in all aspects of their lives. We have groups that work with addicts, groups that work on self-esteem building and groups that teach much needed life skills. We also offer individual mental health and substance abuse counseling. A JOBS clinician is also available to Youth in Transition to support our clients in finding and maintaining gainful employment that will lead to self-sufficiency. Personally, as a peer navigator, I have helped young adults get health insurance so that they can enter treatment for their addiction. I have supported them as they made the choice to enter treatment for their addiction by calling treatment clinics, setting up appointments and bringing them to their appointments. I have supported homeless young adults as they searched for suitable and safe housing. I have linked them with food shelves and food stamps so they can feed themselves. I recently brought a young adult, fresh out of prison, shopping for clothing so she would have something nice to wear as she went on a job interview. Some days my job is just to listen and let a young adult know that I care, that I am there to help and that I will never judge. Without the Youth in Transition program these young adults would have had nowhere to turn.

The Youth in Transition program helps young adults navigate social services, educational services and employment services so that they can become

productive and valued members of their community. We truly wrap our services around the young adults in such a way that enables them to be successful.

I have previously worked for the department of corrections as a teacher for the 16-22 population and as a risk reduction clinician. This program can change lives and in changing lives keep our youth out of prison as well as keep our youth emotionally and mentally healthy. I believe deeply, that continuous funding of the Youth in Transition program, will allow our young adults, who find themselves on the margins of society, to live a life they can be proud of. An ounce of prevention is most definitely worth a pound of cure.

Thank you for listening and thank you for your previous support of this program.