

Testimony to House Human Services PCCN advocacy

March 27, 2024

10:30-11

Hello, I am Donna Bailey – I am the director of the Addison County Parent Child Center (ACPCC). I am also a member of the Vermont Parent Child Center Network. As you know, The ACPCC is one of 15 Parent Child Centers in Vermont and we provide services to families in every town in Addison County. I am here with two participants and members of the board. Let me introduce these experts and you can hear their stories. Anneliese Masi and Sara Herbert, both who live in Middlebury:

Anneliese Masi

Hello, my name is Anneliese Masi and I live in Middlebury. I have two children, one in Elementary school and one at ACPCC. I am on the board of the Addison County Parent/Child Center and am in Learning Together at the ACPCC and live in housing provided by the ACPCC. I have been involved with the ACPCC for 15 years. I first came to the ACPCC before I was parenting – I joined Learning Together for prevention support and to get high school diploma – regular high. School was not working for me. I graduated from high school and was on my own for a few years and came back to ACPCC when I was pregnant with my 9-year-old. I knew the ACPCC would help me. I was guided by ACPCC through my pregnancy, I got a place to live at Elm Street, the ACPCC housing, and I got my LNA. I then was on my own and had an apartment and had another child. Covid hit, we became homeless due to the housing shortage and financial issues. I found my way back to the ACPCC and have been rebuilding – we have an apartment through the ACPCC, I am working on getting certified as a childcare teacher and my youngest child is in childcare at the ACPCC.

How does the ACPCC help me? They help with housing, financing, parenting, jobs, job training, school, mental health, childcare, driver's ed and getting my diploma, transportation – rides, van, healthcare. There is a community of young parents and people who care, so I am not alone.

They help with life, school, housing, childcare, parenting, etc.

Challenges facing the ACPCC and families – ACPCC tries hard to help us and sometimes the state gets in the way. It is impossible to survive in this world. Working is unaffordable as health care and subsidy ends, and we must pay higher rent. There is a such a housing shortage.

Sara Hebert

I live in Middlebury with my 3-year-old son. I was a teen parent.

I am currently a part of Learning Together and a participant on the board and have been a tenant of Elm Street, a housing program of the ACPCC. I got my driver's license with the help of the ACPCC.

Through Learning Together, I got my high school diploma and have gained job skills and parenting skills. I receive Outreach support - my outreach worker helps me with paperwork, doctor appointments, and with my mental health.

I got my own apartment with a section 8 voucher with the help of the ACPCC.

ACAPCC helped me so much when the state wasn't helping. I had to stay at Elm Street for almost 3 years and I finally got an apartment – I had to wait 6 months to get an apartment, once I had a voucher to use. My apartment is a one bedroom, when I need a two bedroom. The state needs to help to have more affordable housing to be built.

Thanks to ACPCC, I worked with the domestic violence network and my outreach worker, and I was able to get full custody of my child and child support. I got help learning how to be a single parent.

The ACPCC gets me to appointments and ACPCC has also brought the clinic to ACPCC – Porter Women's Health and Porter Pediatrics have monthly clinics at the ACPCC.

The ACPCC help me feel human. I am not just a mom, but I am a person. We do things to help us as moms, as well as helping our children. Being a good mom is important and I am not just a mom. The he ACPCC shows you that there is more to life, and we can do fun things – field trips and classes and workshops and access to higher education – for ourselves and that helps our children.

The ACPCC is our second home – we call it the Center House and we will come back when

Donna Bailey:

Please support the ask of the Vt Parent Child Center Network. We would like to continue to bring high quality service to young families, at least two generations at a time, and to do that, we need secure funding.