

From: Amy Wenger <awenger@vtdonormilk.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2023 12:57 PM
To: jkitchel@leg.state.vt.us
Subject: [External] A warm hello from the Vermont Donor Milk Center

[External]

Dear Senator Kitchel,

Happy 2023! We hope that this year brings goodness, strength, and joy for you and your loved ones.

We wanted to reach out to express our deepest and most profound gratitude for all of your support and advocacy for the Vermont Donor Milk Center for the past few years. Because of you we have been able to serve our proud mission; Supplying lifesaving pasteurized donor human milk for infants in Vermont, regardless of their families ability to pay.

With your help we are making a very powerful impact for the families that we have the honor to serve.

Since opening in January of 2020, we have:

- Served over 500 families.
- Dispensed over 70,000 ounces of Pasteurized Donor Human Milk.
- Helped facilitate over 19,000 ounces of raw milk donated from Vermont donors.
- Provided over \$117,000.00 in financial assistance to make this precious resource accessible for over 150 families.
- For families who responded to our survey, 80% who received a bridge supply of pasteurized donor human milk went on to exclusively feed their babies human milk for at least 6 months.

We continue to answer this call-to-action, post pandemic, and through the devastating formula shortage. We provide infant food security and are a safe space for families to receive postpartum support and resources. It has become an invaluable resource for so many.

Our goals in the next year are to expand access to donor milk throughout our state, especially in our more rural areas. We also plan to create a full-service lactation consultation clinic run by International Board-Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLC) who are also maternal-child health registered nurses. We are very excited to be able to serve more families.

It takes people like you who understand that both support and access to safe supplementation and comprehensive lactation supports are driving factors to increase lifelong wellness for families. As advocates for families and babies we and some of our clients are willing to testify to the need and the work that we are doing in our community. Currently we have a **bill in the House Health Care Committee (H.579), championed by Rep. Mari Cordes**, for insurance coverage for donor milk. We want to see this bill progress this year as we continue to see a substantial increased need from families requesting supplementation with donor milk. We are also asking for your continued advocacy to help us remain in the Senate budget at an increased amount of **\$100,000.00** to continue to make donor milk and our services equitable and accessible for all.

We are often reminded about the value of our work. A few weeks ago, a first-time dad came into the donor milk center for a late night dispense of donor milk for his very tiny brand-new baby boy who had been born 6 weeks early and was finally able to come home. He was bleary eyed and exhausted, but he took his time, lovingly told us his son's story, asked great questions, and accepted all our resources. As he left, he said: ***"It is amazing that you are here, this is literally lifesaving."***

We would always appreciate any of your time to discuss the Vermont Donor Milk Center.

In gratitude and continued service,
Amy Wenger and Rachel Foxx, Executive Directors

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