

**BELIEVE IN FAMILIES,  
BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE**



**2013  
ANNUAL REPORT**





Dear Friends,

As The Family Place's new – and still learning – Board Chair, I can report that the 2012-2013 fiscal year has been an astonishing one for TFP! Our fabulous Executive Director of 19 years, Elaine Guenet, retired to much fanfare in April and, in a staggering stroke of luck, Mary Smit, our new Executive Director, was looking for new challenges in the Upper Valley at just this moment. She has stepped into Elaine's giant shoes with skill, energy and dedication, making what could have been a transition fraught with difficulty as smooth as these things can be.

In the midst of this transition, our wonderful staff of some 30 strong has continued their important work making every penny of our budget count in service to young families across the valley. Watching our Families Learning Together moms – and dads -- troop into our childcare room in the morning, with their little ones running on ahead to join their friends, is a happy scene, for sure. These moms and dads become stronger as parents, as learners and as community members every day at The Family Place. As they support each other and build new lives for themselves, their children thrive. With lots of ongoing support, cycles of despair and hopelessness are broken and a world of possibilities opens ahead of them.

This work is not easy and it is not cheap, but, as President Obama has made clear, funds invested in our youngest children have the biggest pay-off of all. Everyone at The Family Place is dedicated to this work and to stretching both government funds and donated dollars as far as they can be stretched.

We are so grateful to all our wonderful friends across the Upper Valley who support The Family Place in so many ways! If you are a Gingerbread House maker or a donor of wonders at our silent auction, if you respond to the call when a family needs supplies for a brand new baby, if you wear our JewelryOs® jewelry proudly or write generous checks every year, let us be very clear: WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

Thank you so much!

Posie Taylor  
Board Chair, The Family Place



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Dear Supporters,

**Belief... empowerment... expanded support systems.** These words have tremendous meaning for us at The Family Place. As **the** designated Parent Child Center for the Upper Valley and its surrounding communities, we believe in the power of change and transformation. The donations we receive each year ensure that we are able to reach out and extend our continuum of vital parent / child support services to the over 1900 children and families we serve.

Our 2013 Annual Report marks the end of my seventh month as the new Executive Director of The Family Place. As I reflect back on these initial few months in this new role, I am incredibly grateful for the ongoing support we received from you, our friends and neighbors, throughout the fiscal year that just ended on June 30, 2013. I am also tremendously encouraged by the many strong and supportive collaborations we have with our community partners and sister agencies. Parent Child Centers were established in Vermont to ensure that families in crisis and families who are parenting in isolation receive the support they need to help their children grow and thrive.

In the following pages, we share with you



some of the tremendous ways your financial support has made a difference in the life of a child and a family. The Family Place offers a safe place for families in poverty to come and gain the skills and confidence they need to overcome the challenges in their lives. We offer welcoming educational seminars and playgroups to ensure that no parent in our community feels like they are parenting alone. And we offer hope and resources to families whose children struggle with delays and disabilities, families whose children suffer the repercussions of sexual abuse and trauma, and families in need of counseling and childcare financial assistance.

We look forward to continuing to partner with you in this important work moving forward.

On behalf of the families we serve, thank you.

Warmly,

Mary L. Smit, MSW, LICSW  
Executive Director

Over the past thirteen years, nearly **150 young parents** raising their children in poverty received academic education, job training, child care, parenting classes, nutrition classes and a valuable support system through the **Families Learning Together program at The Family Place**. According to a 2013 survey, **six out of seven** Families Learning Together participants reported feeling greatly increased confidence in their parenting skills after a year at **The Family Place**.

# THE FAMILY PLACE OFFERS HOPE AND PRACTICAL HELP

## SERVICES FOR PARENTS & CHILDREN

**CIS - Early Intervention:** Home visits for children ages 0-3 who experience, or are at risk of, developmental delays. The Family Place staff provide therapy within the child's home, and assist with the transition to school-based services when the child turns three.

**Playgroups:** Children ages 0-5 and caregivers gather for socializing at our playground and in our playroom. A staff person is always present to answer questions, offer resources, support and relationship building through play.

**CIS - Nursing and Family Support:** Home visits for families in need of education and support to foster positive parenting practices and healthy habits, including safe sleep and good nutrition.

**Families Learning Together (FLT):** A skills-based program designed to enable young, impoverished parents to reach their education and employment goals while learning to establish strong, positive relationships with their children.

### Welcome Baby Bags:

Information for new parents about newborn care, postpartum care, feeding and sleeping, plus resources to contact when you have questions. Also included in the bag is a new book for your baby! Check our website for specific towns to which this program applies. [www.familyplacevt.org/familyservices/welcome-baby-bags](http://www.familyplacevt.org/familyservices/welcome-baby-bags)

### Child Advocacy Center - Child / Family Counseling and Support:

The CAC serves children ages 3 to 18 who have made a disclosure of child sexual abuse. Services include case management, therapy, assistance obtaining victims' compensation and relief from abuse orders when needed, coordinating medical exams, and referral to other programs, services, and agencies. The CAC also serves adults who choose this site to disclose information about their experiences with sexual abuse.

Find stories about real life families in our video, "**Growing Hope,**" available for viewing at [www.familyplacevt.org/growinghope](http://www.familyplacevt.org/growinghope)

Children learn to recognize their strengths and build positive relationships in our 4 STAR Child Care Center.

**Child Care Center:** The Family Place Child Care Center is a 4 STAR center that offers care primarily to the children of parents in our Families Learning Together program. Children ages 0-3 spend their days in an emotionally nurturing, developmentally appropriate setting. The Center is also a learning site for participants in our **FLT** program, where they gain first-hand knowledge about child development and their own roles in raising happy, healthy children.



"It became home. **The staff was amazing.** I said, 'Okay! Whatever you want me to do, I'm doing it.' I had a lot of goals – and they helped me reach them." - a mother enrolled in Families Learning Together.

# THROUGH THESE INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS:

## SERVICES FOR PARENTS

**Parent Education:** Workshops, lectures and programs for parents who want to enrich their relationships with their young children and build a strong foundation for future success.

**Child Care Financial Assistance:** Financial support for low-income Vermont families who need assistance paying for quality child care while parents are working, looking for work, or continuing their education.

**Reach Up:** Reach Up helps young families with children by providing services that support work and cash assistance for basic necessities. Parents involved in Reach Up are usually younger than 24 years old and have one or more children living with them.

## SERVICES FOR ADULT & CHILD VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

**Special Investigative Unit and Child Advocacy Center:** A multi-disciplinary team that focuses specifically on the investigation, prosecution and victim services for all sexually based offenses against children and adults, as well as serious child abuse.



At The Family Place CAC, children receive the counseling they need to emerge healthy and thriving from an abusive situation.

**JewelryOs®:** Participants in our Families Learning Together program take part in our on-site jewelry studio where they learn the craft of jewelry making and the process of running a small business. The JewelryOs® Collection is sold here at The Family Place, through the website and at retail outlets and farmers' markets around the Upper Valley.



Find more of the JewelryOs® Collection for sale at [www.familyplacevt.org/jewelryos](http://www.familyplacevt.org/jewelryos)

“One of the most important things Sarah did for me was to make me realize that **my son’s speech delay wasn’t my fault.**” – a mother whose two sons received speech therapy from **The Family Place.**

# LOOKING BACK AT A YEAR OF PROMISE & FULFILLMENT



Children in our Child Care Center enjoy a music lesson.

This 3rd annual Policy Event served doubled duty this year as a retirement celebration for **Elaine Guenet**, who served for 19 years as Executive Director of The Family Place. Several people spoke of Elaine's professionalism, her vision and her energy, and board member, Posie Taylor, announced that \$20,000 had been raised in her honor for the Elaine Guenet Staff Development Fund at The Family Place.

This year's annual "**Force for the Future**" Policy Event featured **Linda Mason** as our keynote speaker. Linda presented to nearly 100 attendees from local businesses, members of the Vermont Parent Child Center Network, members of other area nonprofits and committed individuals. She spoke of her experiences confronting poverty both in the United States and around the world. Her work with **Bright Horizons** and **Horizons for Homeless Children** in the Boston area provide both inspiration and a template for all of us to apply our energy and time toward improving the lives of children and families in our own neighborhoods.



Mary Brown and our guest speaker, Linda Mason, at our 3rd annual "Force for the Future" policy event.



TFP staff encourage a child to explore his world in our 4 STAR Child Care Center.

**The Family Place Child Advocacy Center (CAC)** successfully completed their reaccreditation in November. Members of the **National Children's Alliance** conducted a site visit and concluded that The Family Place CAC was meeting and exceeding all standards of evaluation and providing stellar support for families. One evaluator said, "**This is a strong team and umbrella organization that works well in this community. This would be a good mentor program for other centers...**"

Read stories about The Family Place staff at [www.familyplacevt.org/staff-interviews](http://www.familyplacevt.org/staff-interviews)

Between the years 2000 and 2013, nearly **700 families** were supported by The Family Place Child Advocacy Center while their children were interviewed by CAC and SIU staff in relation to allegations of childhood sexual or physical abuse.

# MADE POSSIBLE BY OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

In November of 2012, The Family Place was approved by the Vermont Agency of Education as a licensed **Teen Parent Education Program**, and we began offering high school classes for credit toward graduation from participating local high schools. During 2013, we offered English, Mathematics, Area Studies, Biology, Physical Education and Health, along with parenting, life skill classes and other electives to our FLT participants. Eight young adults took classes during the 2012-2013 school year, and one young mother managed to accrue enough credits to graduate!

**“The academic component of the FLT program allows our participants to work toward completing their high school diplomas within the circle of nurturing support that The Family Place provides,”** explains Christopher Ashley, the TFP academic liason for the FLT program. “Their degree is an important step as they work to become self sufficient and independent citizens, and parents of children who have a real chance to succeed in our world.”



Mary Brown, a member of the Board, and her daughter at the Covered Bridges Half Marathon, a yearly fundraising opportunity.



Families Learning Together participants celebrate the end of a successful year!

In the fall of 2012, The Family Place initiated participation in the **Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)**. Through CACFP, we serve breakfast, lunch and snack to the 16 children in our Child Care Program, 4 days a week. This federally funded program allows children from low-income families to get the regular nutrition they need to grow and thrive.



Participants in Families Learning Together are taught how to make nutritious meals for their families.

**“This is Amazing! The Family Place changed my life,** and what a fantastic accomplishment for them. I couldn’t be more excited, so many ladies have the opportunity to improve their lives here, and now more so than ever!! **CONGRATULATIONS!**” - a comment from a Families Learning Together graduate about news of the Teen Parent Education program

# THE FAMILY PLACE: NUMBERS SERVED

In Fiscal Year 2013, The Family Place made it possible for **1935** children and their families to grow stronger, healthier and closer.

PROGRAM	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	NUMBER OF FAMILIES
Early Intervention.....	<b>147</b>	<b>144</b>
Families Learning Together.....	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>
Playgroups.....	<b>154</b>	<b>107</b>
Nursing and Family Support.....	<b>64</b>	<b>55</b>
Child Advocacy Center.....	<b>52</b>	<b>44</b>
Child Care Financial Assistance.....	<b>1173</b>	<b>691</b>
Child Care Center.....	<b>22</b>	<b>17</b>
Reach Up.....	<b>80</b>	<b>55</b>
Parenting Education.....	<b>48</b>	<b>46</b>
Welcome Baby Bags.....	<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>
Special Investigative Unit (children).....	<b>151</b>	<b>151</b>
Special Investigative Unit (adults).....		<b>20</b>

## Income

State & Federal	643,935
Foundations	181,989
United Way	10,217
Medicaid Billing	719,537
Capital Campaign Funds	40,000
Earned Program Revenue	176,985
Fund Raising	132,886
Other Revenue	43,701
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,949,250*</b>



## Expense

Children's Integrated Services	668,344
Families Learning Together	384,307
Family Educator	24,362
Parent Education and Support	198,074
SIU/Child Advocacy Center	210,516
Reach Up	67,864
Family Assistance	8,890
Capital Expenses	77,690
Management and Operating	183,200
Fundraising	42,673
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,788,230</b>

\*Specific fundraising appeals in 2013 resulted in increased revenue for board designated, multi-year projects such as capital projects and establishing the EG Professional Development Fund. Our thanks to our generous donors for providing the support necessary to move these new initiatives forward.

Between 2000 - 2013, over **6,000 children** were able to attend quality child care centers while their parents were working or attending school because of the **Child Care Financial Assistance program** at The Family Place.



# A NEW WAY OF SEEING THE WORLD

## REACH UP SUCCESS



For the past two years, April has been involved with Reach Up through The Family Place. Reach Up made it possible for her to afford basic necessities for her children while she went back to school. It's also changed her life in ways she never expected.

Reach Up is a critical support for many young parents. A state funded program, it helps by providing services that support work and offering cash assistance for basic necessities. For many families it's a crucial step towards independence.

For April, the bimonthly payments are coming to an end this month because her partner is now employed and earning enough for him, April, and their two children to live on. Before that, Reach Up was necessary to help April buy baby diapers, wipes, "Whatever I needed."

Through Reach Up, April is able to provide her children with basic necessities.

"It's a scary thing," April says. "It's a good thing, but it's really stressful, too. We're going to have to manage with just his paychecks."

This 23-year-old Mom is no stranger to stress and hard times. Three years ago, soon after she gave birth to her son, Eli, she and her partner lost their apartment and had to move amongst friends and relatives – whoever let them stay over for a night or two. "We both tried so hard to get a job, but everything kept falling apart," she says. Two years ago, when she was pregnant with her second child, April decided something had to change. She found Reach Up and became connected to The Family Place for support services.

"I thought, great, all I'll have to do is focus on raising my kids, and that's enough of a job," April laughs. "But my case manager, Hoyt, told me 'no, you need to get a job, do community service, or come to school.' So I came to Families Learning Together and now I'm earning my high school diploma." While April attends classes, her children spend their days in the developmentally nurturing environment of The Family Place Child Care Center.

"Hoyt is tough, but in a good way," April says. "She really opens your eyes to look at things in a different way. That's exactly what I needed. She made me see I have to do something with my life so I can raise my kids the right way. She believed in us as a family."

Because of the Reach Up program at The Family Place, April and her family were able to survive a few tough years, and emerged from a hard time stronger than before and better prepared to take on the job of being the best parents they can be.

She made me see I have to do something with my life so I can raise my kids the right way. **She believed in us as a family.**"

# HAYDEN SAYS “MAMA!”

## EARLY INTERVENTION SUCCESS

When a child receiving Early Intervention (EI) services makes a breakthrough, it's cause for joyful celebration. And not just for the parents.

“Both Jennie and I started to cheer!” says The Family Place’s Speech-Language Pathologist, Sarah Schneider. She’s referring to the day one of her EI clients called up and had her 3-year-old son speak to Sarah on the phone. “One of our first goals for Hayden was for him to say ‘Mama.’ We worked hard to get Hayden to say it either in a therapy session or just in his daily life. One day I was at my desk and Jennie called, filled with excitement. She said ‘Hold on, Hayden has something he wants to say.’ He got on the phone and started saying, ‘Mama! Mama! Mama!’ That was a wonderful feeling.”



Hayden gained 18 months development in one year of speech therapy

Hayden is Jennie’s second child. Her daughter, Nora, was born with a hearing impairment and also needed speech therapy from The Family Place. Hayden has normal hearing, but when he was a year and a half old, Jennie noticed that he had far fewer words than other children his age. While she and her husband could mostly understand Hayden’s needs, people outside the family could not.

“Our pediatrician said it was a good idea to check with The Family Place,” says Jennie. “So Sarah started coming, and she came right to his level and played games with him, talked to him, played with him, and he made huge strides. Now he’s talking up a storm.” Hayden was three years old when he first began to say “Mama,” and he still needs help pronouncing words correctly. Speech therapy has given him a strong foundation of language on which to build, and, best of all, he finds it fun to work at his vocabulary.



Sarah Schneider has been part of The Family Place staff for seven years

Part of what has made Hayden’s speech therapy so successful may have been the use of sign language, which was already established in their home because of their daughter’s hearing. “He loves to do signs, and they help us understand what he needs,” Jennie says. “Nora loves working with him on the alphabet!”

Jennie and her husband were hesitant at first to embark on speech therapy with their son, but hearing her son say that magic word, Mama, was the best result they could’ve hoped for.

“That phone call made me smile for the rest of the day,” says Sarah.

“We wondered, does he really need speech therapy? But of course **you want to give your child any help they can get**, so for me it was yes.”

# WE THANK EVERYONE WHO PROVIDED

## BUSINESSES & ORGANIZATIONS

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A.B. Gile Financial Services  
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American Girl  
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*At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.*

*~Albert Schweitzer*

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We wish to recognize and honor the generosity and civic example of these late patrons of The Family Place:

Bill Culp  
Mel Dickenson  
Whit Dickey

We also want to recognize the staff of The Family Place, who not only perform their work with great energy and outlook, but who also contribute an extra large dose of time and effort to our annual Gingerbread Festival!

This list includes donors who generously supported The Family Place from July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013. If your name was omitted in error, we apologize. Please contact us so we can update our records.

**The Family Place Parent Child Center supports the positive growth and development of all parents by offering services that encourage families to build upon their strengths.**



“I only had to witness the budding success of one single mother and her young child to know that I was putting my energy and financial support in a program that is making a huge difference. One by one, transformed lives are being made at The Family Place. It is both humbling and ever so worthwhile to support this work.”

- Nina McCampbell,  
education specialist and  
The Family Place board  
member

“By empowering young women with parenting tools and life skills, The Family Place gives those who most need it a means to take control of their futures and to change course. It is a pleasure to support such a worthy cause.”

- Jodi Picoult, bestselling  
author and supporter of  
The Family Place

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**The Family Place  
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Norwich, VT 05055**

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