RCPCC has initiated a partnership with The Vermont Foodbank, allowing us to provide much needed sustenance for food insecure individuals and families. This program began in August 2018 and now serves approximately 60 people weekly. We welcome all members of the Rutland community in addition to RCPCC participants and encourage visitors to take what they need, as much as they need and to come back when they need more. Because of our partners we are able to provide a model of generosity that not only assuages a physical need but also has long lasting effects on self esteem and worthiness.

59,882 VERMONTERS LIVE IN FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS, MEANING THEY DON'T HAVE REGULAR ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD (10%) Lack of affordable housing, low wages, high unemployment, a decrease in the number of local, affordable grocery stores, and lack of public transportation all contribute to hunger and food insecurity in Vermont.

As part of our strategic vision for a healthy community, we made a commitment to tackle food insecurity, thus breaking the processed food to pharma pipeline. We have a "Take What You Need, When You Need It" policy in our food pantry where we offer a fresh array of produce, dairy, meat, canned goods, companion food for animal friends, diapers, wipes, and feminine hygiene products. This policy is never abused. None of this work is funded but our vision is driven by what is right for the community and we trust the funds will come. Thank you for considering a donation to this important basic human need and supporting the continuation of this work.

A Note from the Executive Director:

Last year, two things occurred that made me look at RCPCC's commitment to a healthy community and food insecurity. First, I was stuck at a red light behind a Vermont Foodbank truck and the back of the truck read: "Hunger Exists Here: Ensuring no one in Vermont goes hungry." The second thing was that I got very sick and I asked myself what I could do to change my health. The answer was simple: eat well. Between these two events, I realized food is health and not everyone has access to healthy food. At the Rutland County Parent Child Center, we understand that many families, including working families, cannot manage the cost of food; food insecurity is a reality for both working families and those struggling with employment.

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RCPPC Food Pantry

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Brittany is a single mother in Rutland, raising three young daughters ranging from one to five years of age. She went to college in California for photography and loves art, and cooking for others. Brittany isn’t working at the moment because she struggles with chronic illness and has had nine surgeries in the past year. It makes it impossible for her to do physical labor, so for now she is focusing on getting healthy and caring for her daughters but is in a position where she can’t afford to pay her bills. (continued next page)
RCPCC is building a comprehensive and sustainable nutrition "system" within its early childhood education programming to engage participants in educational activities and play, observing no real distinction between these two ideas. Our classroom curriculum will feature year-round hands-on learning opportunities and integrate the food grown by the children into the cafeteria menus.

Community Gardens

RCPCC aims to not only provide much needed services to families in need but also to strengthen Rutland families’ capacities to meet their own food needs by growing, accessing, and utilizing food for themselves. RCPCC is developing roughly 10,000 square feet of greenspace at our 18 Chaplin Avenue site that will be used as both gardens and a natural play yard, creating integrated environment of food and play, one that engages both child and parent. We are able to build this capacity through the collaborative efforts and resources with many of our partners.

Staff, children and parents will be involved in the gardens throughout the year, creating ownership and investment on everyone’s part. Time will be taken daily to follow through with the pertinent aspect of the garden throughout each season. Children, parents, and staff will be involved in the choosing of seeds, the growing of seedlings, the planting of the gardens in the spring, and the tending of the gardens throughout the growing season. Produce grown in the gardens will be integrated into the food program at school and at home so children and their parents reap the benefits of their efforts as well as learning long term strategies for healthy eating.

Community gardens promote community well-being by providing land, tools, and educational opportunities for people to grow food for themselves and others. They seek to build capacity and infrastructure to enable individuals and communities to grow, access, and prepare fresh, nutritious foods for themselves in a long-term sustainable manner.

Our families have the opportunity to be involved in the growing of the food for the cafeteria and, the option of having their own garden space. RCPCC will be enlisting offering field trips to help our children and families understand other sources of local food. We will emphasize to the fullest extent possible the procurement of fresh local food while cultivating relationships with local farmers.

Farm to School

The Farm to School grant will help RCPCC incorporate more locally sourced fresh ingredients and by bring food and nutrition directly into our young classrooms. Involving kids in hands-on, integrated food practices creates interest and acceptance of new foods and appreciate balanced meals. Vermont schools with Farm to School programs have reported two times the national average in vegetable consumption and we fully expect similar results!

With Farm to School we will be growing our partnerships within the broader community by bringing the farm sector into our educational programming. It’s exciting to think of our children knowing who is growing their apples, how their potatoes are grown, and where in the Rutland County community these farmers work and live to bring the salad on their plates. Vermont is fortunate in that we have so many individuals committed to working the land and creating a healthful food system. Introducing children to this healthier, fresher food system through cafeteria, classroom, and community will help them to understand some of the strongest values held by Vermont in a comprehensive way.

Partners in our Farm to School and Early Child Nutrition Program include: Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Farm and Markets, Building Bright Futures, Radical Roots Farm, Someday Farm, NOFA VT, Shelburne Farms, The Vermont Foodbank and The Nutrition Coalition.
Rutland County Parent Child Center began offering food assistance due to our partnership with the Vermont Foodbank and Brittany knows how important it is to be thoughtful about meal planning when trying to feed three kids on a limited budget. And through practice, she has learned to be a great and resourceful cook. You just need to know how to improvise,” she says. And she shares this love with her daughters, who get excited to help out in the kitchen, working together to make their favorite foods.

Brittany’s love of cooking pairs well with her background in photography. She crafts beautiful dishes of food into art that she can capture with her camera. When RCPCC shared her photographs and love of cooking with the Vermont Foodbank, she was asked to be a guest writer for the Vermont Foodbank’s blog to share her recipes and art with others. We are very excited to have helped her in her professional development. Visit her blog posts at: https://www.vtfoodbank.org/category/in-the-kitchen-with-the-colletts

Though times are hard right now, Brittany is hopeful and eager to share her food and help others. She is looking to the future with plans to go back to college to become a teacher. She looks forward to a life where she is financially stable and can buy a home for herself and her daughters. And as she works towards these goals, Brittany is grateful to be able to turn to the Rutland County Parent Child Center for help.

The kitchen at our Rutland ECE site is bustling with fresh flavors and home cooking style with Grace Davy, Kitchen Manager, at the helm! Grace comes to RCPCC after teaching hands-on scratch cooking workshops to children and adults through programs such as Everyday Chef and Come Alive Outside. These programs aim to build confidence in the kitchen and excitement for local ingredients. Grace also ran her own large-scale and fast-paced food business, “Get Crackin’ Kitchen”.

In addition to providing healthy meals for our Rutland ECE site, Grace will be instrumental to our new Farm to School and Early Childhood program which is just launching. Through Farm to School, RCPCC’s investment in nutritious meals is brought to the classroom. Here Grace will work alongside children and teachers to build appreciation of the local farm community and its role in healthy eating. Additionally, Grace will be helping in the implementation of a Farm to School garden at the new Chaplin site.

17,726
VERMONT CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18 LIVE IN FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS (15%)

Children living in food insecure homes are at greater risk for poor health, nutritional deficiencies and obesity/overweight, as well as developmental delays, poor academic achievement, depression, and increased aggressive or hyperactive behavior.

WELCOME!
Grace Davy
Chaplin Meals Director

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Fun and Easy Recipe of the Month

Do you want to get your kids started in the kitchen? Try this simple recipe on a weekend morning. Eggs, corn, cheese and black pepper combine in one pan to make this simple breakfast dish that will motivate them to do it all on their own very soon.

Serves 4     Prep time 5 mins. Cooking time 5 mins. 73 calories per serving     $.32 per serving

Ingredients:
- 3 eggs
- 1/4 cup corn (cooked or canned)
- 1/4 cup cheese
- Black pepper to taste (if desired)

Steps:
1. Break eggs into medium size bowl
2. Stir with fork until blended
3. Add corn
4. Coat pan with non-stick spray, butter or margarine
5. Put pan over medium heat
6. Add egg mixture and stir
7. Add cheese when eggs are almost done cooking
8. Eggs should not be runny and cheese should melt
9. Divide eggs among plates
10. Sprinkle with pepper if desired

The Learning Kitchen

Through The Learning Kitchen, a program offered through Hunger Free Vermont, RCPCC has been able to teach food safety and sanitation, healthy eating, as well as methods to create balanced meals. This hands-on engaging program has brought confidence to our participants and new creative energy towards fresh ingredients which are easily accessed through our food pantry.

The RCPCC Parenting Group has enjoyed the delicious results of these efforts.

159,270

VERMONT RESIDENTS HAVE INCOMES QUALIFYING THEM FOR FEDERAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS LIKE 3 SQUARES VT (27%)

The number of our state’s residents who live on the razor’s edge of vulnerability to hunger is much higher than revealed by food insecurity statistics. This number, which includes 36,423 children, illustrates that Vermonters receive low wages and struggle to make ends meet.

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