# ANNUAL REPORT 2026














NKHS
Northeast Kingdom Human Services

We're All About **Being Human!**



# Choosing Courage Over Comfort

## A Message from the Board Chair

Over the past several years, I have used one word to capture what mattered most to NKHS during the year. For 2026, that word is CHOICE.

Choice can sound simple, but meaningful choices rarely are—particularly when the future is uncertain, resources are strained, and the needs of the people we serve continue to grow. In moments of upheaval, it can feel safer to pause, preserve what is familiar, and wait for conditions to improve.

But waiting might not be the responsible choice.

This year, the NKHS Board and leadership adopted a new strategic plan built around three essential goals: sustaining an engaged and skilled workforce, achieving clinical and organizational excellence, and stewarding our resources for long-term sustainability. The plan gives us more than a collection of initiatives. It gives us a disciplined framework for deciding what to prioritize, how to measure progress, and where we must be willing to change.

Most importantly, it grounds each decision in our values. Being person-centered means considering how every decision affects the people who rely on NKHS and the staff who walk alongside them. Dignity requires us to recognize the inherent worth of every person, including through equitable employment practices and reliable access to care. Discovery asks us to seek out information, listen to those affected by change, and follow the evidence, even when it challenges our assumptions. Community reminds us that NKHS and the Northeast Kingdom are connected - we belong to it, and we share responsibility for its future.

And Courage asks us to show up even when it is hard.

During the coming years, NKHS will face decisions about programs, investments, workforce, facilities, technology, and the use of limited resources. Some choices may be unpopular. Some will involve risk. Some may require us to let go of familiar approaches that no longer serve people as well as they should. Our values don't make these decisions easy, but they help us make them honestly and for the right reasons.

The Board's responsibility is not simply to protect NKHS as it exists today. It is to ensure that NKHS can continue fulfilling its mission tomorrow. That means asking difficult questions, weighing consequences carefully, listening to different perspectives, and choosing long-term mission over short-term comfort.

A strategic plan is only meaningful if we are prepared to act on it. Our new plan establishes clear accountability, regular review, and measurable outcomes. It also recognizes that no plan survives unchanged. We will learn, adjust, and acknowledge when an idea does not work as intended. That is not failure. It is Discovery in practice, and it takes Courage.

I am deeply grateful to Chief Executive Officer Kelsey Stavseth, the senior leadership team, our extraordinary staff, my fellow Board members, and the clients, families, partners, and community members who help NKHS understand both what is needed and what is possible.

We cannot predict every change ahead. But we can choose how we meet it: together, with clear eyes, open minds, and an unwavering commitment to our mission and values.

That is the choice before us. I believe we are ready to make it.

With gratitude and deep respect,

Kari White
Board Chair



# Holding Both: The Individual and the Whole

## A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Looking back, 2026 for NKHS was marked by contrast and balance, where we often found ourselves holding two opposing thoughts at once. What does it mean to be human and person-centered while also taking the community's needs into consideration? How do we support individuals while advancing program goals? How do we balance "meeting people where they are" with staff safety? How can we plan for the next three years when we are managing crises every day? How do I think about my individual contributions while knowing I couldn't achieve anything at NKHS without other people?

Each question deserves its own answer based on its context, and we find that answer by returning to our values: Person-Centered, Courage, Dignity, Community, and Discovery. These values have guided my actions and NKHS's over the past year. I'm proud to have done this work alongside so many wonderful colleagues, board members, parents, families, people receiving services, community members, and partners—all aligned with our vision for the future. Because of these values and this hard work, our communities, the people we serve, and our staff are stronger. They should be proud of what they accomplished this past year to improve the health and well-being of the Northeast Kingdom.

You can see these values at work in the small decisions people make every single day. NKHS employees make hard decisions about how to support someone, when to speak up and give feedback that is hard to hear, when to step away and take a break, and when to ask for help. Many of these decisions aren't easy or black and white, but I trust that when people at NKHS make them, they consider what is best in that moment — and that trust is part of why, even when we move through hard things, I'm hopeful for the future. That hope is easy to feel in the abstract, since my focus is often on NKHS as an entity: clinical, financial, and community outcomes, the large vision and future. But without every individual who contributes to what we do at NKHS, I know the entity could not exist or succeed.

That tension between the day-to-day and the long view is exactly why planning ahead feels hard right now — and exactly why I'm confident we can do it anyway. So, as we head into a new year with a new strategic plan, I feel hopeful and confident about the future because of the individuals who make up the whole. It's the details and day-to-day actions that eventually make a coherent story about what happened and support what can be. The following pages are a great collection of what NKHS has done in the past year. We hope it buoys your spirit through examples of what is possible when committed individuals apply themselves to something bigger and that it bolsters your confidence in what's ahead.

This past year is a good indication of where we are headed. So please take a moment to review the following work and celebrate what happened as we move on to what is next. I am proud and impressed to be part of an organization that contributed positively to our community. We will keep asking hard questions and working through them together. Know that if you are reading this, we welcome you as you are. We hope you'll join us in making communities better than they were.

Take care and see you out there.

Kelsey Stavseth

# NKHS by the Numbers

## Who We Serve

| | # of services | # of hours | # of clients |
|---|---|---|---|
| CYFS (Children, Youth, and Family Services) Home and Community-Based | 15,437 | 14,334 | 513 |
| CYFS (School-Based) | 7,645 | 18,657 | 145 |
| AO (Adult Outpatient) | 14,105 | 11,109 | 1,159 |
| CRT (Community Rehabilitation and Treatment) | 11,707 | 5,182 | 100 |
| (ES) Emergency Services | 9,304 | 10,902 | 1,433 |
| (DS) Developmental Services | 131,967 | 1,280,248 | 557 |
| Substance Misuse | 2,184 | 2,321 | 338 |

**TOTAL # OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED**
3,466

**TOTAL HOURS**
1,342,753

**TOTAL # OF SERVICES**
192,349

## Average Time to Initial Evaluation

| Month | Average Time-to-Evaluation |
|---|---|
| July 2025 | 29.3 days |
| April 2026 | 10.9 days |
| June 2026 | 5.6 days |

DOWN ABOUT 81%

**MILES DRIVEN**
by staff traveling to clients
1,556,133

# Financial Data 2026

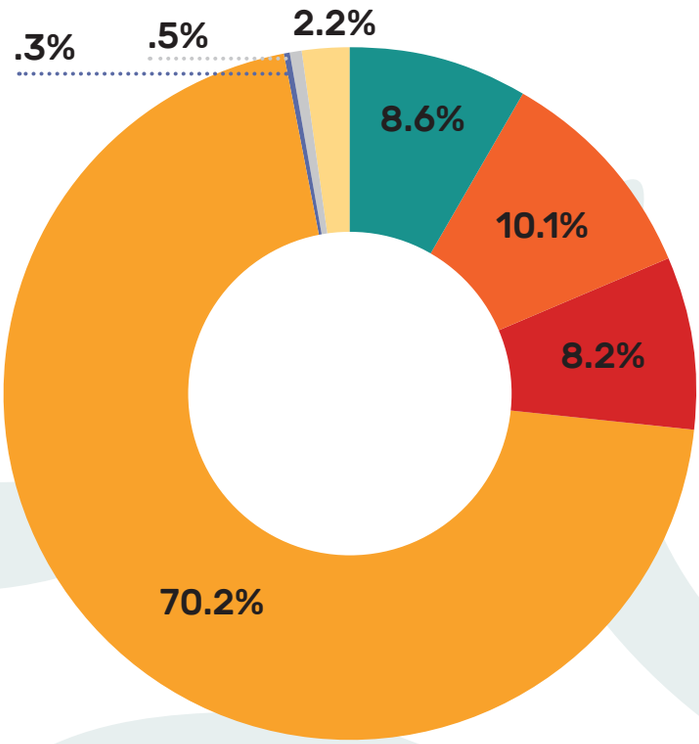
Unaudited Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2026

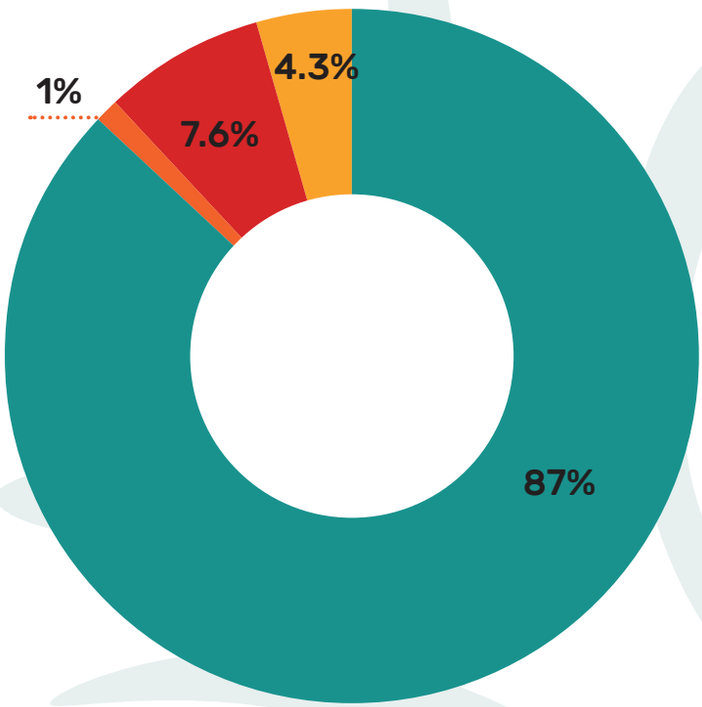
*We appreciate our staff's commitment to the work at NKHS. Their efforts enabled another solid financial year supporting our infrastructure, organization, and community needs.*

## Expenses By Program

$66,303,865

- CHILDREN SERVICES
- ADULT OUTPATIENT SERVICES
- EMERGENCY SERVICES
- DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
- NON OPERATING EXPENSES
- SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION & TREATMENT
- ADMINISTRATION




## Revenue By Source

$67,967,176

- MEDICAID
- OTHER PATIENT FEES
- GRANTS & CONTRACTS
- LOCAL & OTHER

## STAFF ADVISORY BOARD

The Staff Advisory Board reflects what NKHS believes at its core: that we do our best work when we listen to one another. By giving staff a genuine voice in our strategic direction, the Board helps build a workplace grounded in trust, transparency, and shared purpose. It's one more way we live our values, not just in the care we provide, but in how we care for each other.

The Staff Advisory Board meets once a month to keep members informed and involved in the decisions that guide our agency. Topics include:

- Monthly budget and finance reports
- Strategic plan updates
- CEO updates
- Quarterly turnover data
- Updates on major projects
- Fiscal year budget developments
- Culture and climate survey results
- Stronger Together

## STAFF ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Ashley Wheeler, Co-Chair
Carl Ciarcia
Chad Robillard
Christina Guillette
Christopher Vetrosky, Co-Chair
Chuck DePalmer
Erin Gaudreau
Grace Thwaite
Inez Haynes
Katie Dewey
Nick Rivera
Laurie Young
Lindsey Muzzy
Sierra Ehlers
Skye Almy
Tabitha Cutter

# Staff Highlights

**NUMBER OF STAFF as of June 30, 2026:** 515

## Milestone anniversaries

### 5 YEARS

Beth Bordeau
Brenda Tetreault
Callie Austin
Christina Guillette
Christopher Vetrosky
Jaime Snell
Joshua Drown
Larissa Hackett
Linda Walsh
Nicholas Perry
Page McKenzie
Pauline Decosta
Sally Hauge
Valerie Henderson

### 10 YEARS

Angela LaPlante
Anita Hodgeman
Brooke Bury
Deanna Johnson
Genevieve Sutton
Heidi Broome
Jennifer Alexander-Whitmore
Kimberly Bodette
Shawn McCaffrey
Tammie Bijolle
Vickie Florence

### 15 YEARS

Brenda Tighe
Tye Rowe

### 20 YEARS

Jason Chester
Michael Montgomery
Tabitha Cutter

### 25 YEARS

Amy Beer
Tammy Crowe

### 35 YEARS

Deborah Spencer-Tanguay

## Banquet Award Winners

### RENE ROSE AWARD

Gladys Konstantin
Michelle Borgstrom
Nicole Corbett
Robin Jacobs

### TEAM AWARD

DS Derby Team

### RESIDENTIAL WORKER OF THE YEAR

Daniel Houghton
Willa Greenleaf

### UNSUNG HERO AWARD

Inez Haynes

### CALL TO ACTION SERVICE AWARD

Riley Boivin

### LEADERSHIP AWARD

Larissa Hackett

### PATRICIA L. RHODES AWARD

Lisa Allard, RN

# Developmental Services

***Developmental Services (DS) supports individuals in leading whole, self-directed lives. Individuals receive assistance with daily living activities and personal and health care tasks, while their independence, choice, and right to make decisions are supported. Individuals are safely integrated into their community and encouraged to participate in meaningful activities and relationships of their choice.***

## Community Skills Group

**65** individuals participate in the ***northern*** Community Skills Group each week

**45** individuals participate in the ***southern*** Community Skills Group each week

> *Love the community skills center. We do a lot of fun cooking and baking.*

> *I really like the community skills group, and they are very helpful in teaching me independent skills, such as cooking and cleaning. We also have fun activities. Like going on walks and doing writing prompts. Other people have also come to teach classes like poetry, drumming, yoga, and strength and wellness. But I would suggest coming to the Community Skills Group 100%.*

## A New Home for the Southern Community Skills Group

Since relocating to the Elm Street building in Lyndonville, individuals and staff alike describe the new space as transformative, one built for relationships, skill-building, and meaningful engagement.

Social connection is the heart of the Community Skills Group. Marc comes "to have fun," Josh looks forward to seeing friends and playing field games at the park, and Bill treasures "card club with my friends." Skill-building is just as popular: Nick loves cooking class, and Marshall says walking club "helps me get exercise while spending time with peers." Other favorites span wellness and creativity like Tai Chi, music group, karaoke, and Justin's Monday fitness classes, alongside hands-on activities like pottery, paper mâché, jewelry making, and crocheting.



Staff have felt the difference too and share that they enjoy meeting new people, staying involved in daily activities, and teaching new and intriguing activities. As one employee stated, "Friendships have been built through supporting each other and we've become like a family."



The Elm Street building has become more than a physical location — it's a place where individuals build confidence, develop life skills, explore new interests, and form lasting friendships. The stories shared by individuals and staff this year speak to what the space has made possible: stronger relationships, renewed confidence, and a true sense of belonging.

> ***We get support, advice, and friendship.***

> ***The Bridge Program has done wonders for my son.***

> ***I get the very best care here at NKHS. Thank you and keep up the good work.***

> ***Always a supportive and caring experience.***

> ***My Service Coordinator is always there for me. She always answers when I call and is happy to help me with my problems.***

> ***Staff are responsive to needs and communicate well when issues arise. They also share positive updates, which is nice.***

> ***They are always there if you are having a rough time. They take the time to listen.***

# Developmental Services

## Supported Employment Services: Helping Individuals Find Their Place in the Workforce

At NKHS, we believe everyone deserves the chance to find meaningful work and feel connected to their community. Our Supported Employment Services program does exactly that—helping individuals discover their interests, build valuable skills, and connect with local employers who see their true potential. Through personalized support and job development, we walk alongside each person on their path toward independence and purpose.

None of this would be possible without the community-minded local businesses who open their doors to our participants, and the individuals themselves who bring courage and determination to every step of their employment journey. Thank you for making these success stories possible.

**60** **individuals are employed at local businesses through the *St. Johnsbury* program**

**35** **individuals are employed at local businesses through the *Derby* program**



**Meghan Nolan** joined the team at Price Chopper in St. Johnsbury, VT more than seven years ago. Her manager, Pat Carter, jokes that she's not allowed to leave. Meghan has become a familiar and friendly face to customers and coworkers alike.

Known as the "Leader of Carts," she takes pride in keeping carts organized—often bringing in two rows at a time—and in keeping the aisles and bathrooms clean.

Meghan recently began training a new associate and enjoys the positive feedback she receives from staff and customers. Outside of work, she has participated in Special Olympics for 16 years, competing in basketball, bowling, and snowboarding.

## Workplaces that Participate in the Supported Employment Services

### DERBY

American Legion
Barn First Creamery
Cumberland Farms
Derby Elementary School
Dollar General North Troy
E.M. Brown
Family Furniture
Fraternal Order of the Eagles
Jay Peak
Kinney Drugs Derby
Lake Region Union High School
Lawson's Farm
NKHS Derby
North Country Supervisory Union
Orleans Elementary School
Pick-N-Shovel
Price Chopper
Shaw's Derby
The Animal Doctor, PC
Tractor Supply Derby
Walmart
Whitson's Culinary Group

### ST. JOHNSBURY

ABC & LOL Childcare Center
Aubuchon St. J
B&G Foods
Breslin Center
Buffalo Mountain Coop
Burke Mountain
Care Bear Daycare
Clark's Bears
Dollar Tree Littleton
Dollar Tree St. J
East Burke Market
Federal Express Littleton
Fitness Unbound
Franconia Market & Deli
High Mowing Seeds
Hoagies Lyndonville
Jasper Hill Farm
Kinney Drugs St. J
Lyndonville Furniture
Lyndonville VFW
Maplefields Amato's
Maplefields Littleton
Maplefields St. J
Momentum MFG
Moose River Lake & Lodge
NKHS St. J
O'Reilly Auto Parts Hardwick
Peacham School
Price Chopper
Price Chopper Morrisville
RCT
Rood Roofing
Self Employed
Shaw's Littleton
St. J Academy Aladdin
TJ Maxx
Tops Market
Vermont State University Sodexo
White Market St. J

# Developmental Services

## DS Residential Division

The DS Residential Division provides specialized residential services for individuals with complex functional, medical, and/or behavioral support needs who require a higher level of care than can be provided in other settings. The Division operates 5 licensed Residential Care Homes and 11 Staffed Living Homes, providing comprehensive, individualized supports to 37 individuals.

Through skilled staff, specialized clinical supports, and individualized service planning, the Division is committed to providing safe, stable, and high-quality homes that promote health, independence, and quality of life. Ongoing attention to workforce development, clinical excellence, effective resource utilization, and program sustainability supports the DS Residential Division's ability to meet both the current and evolving needs of the people it serves.




### ANNA'S STORY

**What began as a simple walk-through at the newest NKHS residential home, Mountain View, quickly became the start of a new chapter in Anna's life.**

**As her health changed, Anna and her family faced the difficult decision of finding a home that could meet her needs. Just minutes into her first visit to Mountain View, Anna had made up her mind; she was ready to move in. In October 2025, Anna became Mountain View's very first resident.**

**From the beginning, Anna's strength, determination, and positive spirit were evident. She initially needed a first-floor bedroom, but through hard work and perseverance, she quickly grew stronger and more confident navigating the stairs. Within weeks, she decided she was ready for a second-floor room and made the move.**

**Since then, Anna has continued to grow stronger, embrace new experiences, and accomplish goals that once seemed out of reach. She has checked several items off her bucket list, including a memorable trip to The Price Is Right when the show came to Vermont.**

**Anna has also become one of Mountain View's resident Rummy experts, patiently teaching staff, volunteers, and even her guardian how to play. But don't let her sweet and kind nature fool you; Anna loves to win! With her huge, contagious smile, she proudly calls out, "Rummy!" as she lays down her final card, often defeating the very person she just taught.**

**Anna's story is one of courage, determination, and joy. As she grows stronger and pursues new experiences, she has also enriched the Mountain View community with her laughter, competitive spirit, and unmistakable smile. We are honored that Anna chose Mountain View for this next chapter and look forward to seeing what she accomplishes next.**

# Adult Mental Health

*NKHS staff work to improve the quality of life for adults with serious mental illness or severe emotional disturbances and those struggling with addictive disorders. NKHS offers individualized support through outpatient and community-based services. Adult Mental Health Services include Outpatient Services, Substance Use Treatment, and Crisis Services.*

**80%**

of adult clients receiving clinical intervention therapy rated some/good **PROGRESS** toward goals or completed treatment

**40** **VETERANS SERVED**

**43** clients participating in the **EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM**

"

*Being able to be an active participant and working w/ people who really listen and try to understand makes a huge difference from people who limit themselves to a neat diagnosis.*

*Having a counselor helps keep me motivated and confident that I can get through life's struggles.*

*This is the only place that has actually ever helped me.*

*I really like my therapist and have grown as a person. I also love my DBT class.*

*I love talking to my therapist. She helps me, and I appreciate it. I love coming and talking; it helps with my mood.*

*I learned a lot about why I feel the way I do..*

*My therapist and my DBT class have made a huge difference in my personal/professional life. It has been life-changing.*

"

## A Second Mom, A Road Reopened: Life as an Adult Outpatient Peer Support Specialist

No two days look quite the same for Samantha Simcoe, NKHS Adult Outpatient Peer Support Specialist. Some hours are spent on hold with housing authorities, waiting for a single authorization email that could change someone's life. Others are spent simply sitting with a client, listening, offering a piece of her own story just carefully enough to build a bridge.

That's the balance she's learned to strike in peer support work: connection without collapse. Unlike a therapist or case manager, Samantha doesn't diagnose, assess, or direct. Instead, her role is something more elemental: inspiring hope. Drawing on her own lived experience, she meets people not as a clinician, but as someone who has walked a similar road and knows its terrain.

"Meeting someone where they are" isn't just a phrase to her; it's a practiced skill. "When a client has a specific issue, meeting them where they are means understanding the language and culture of what they're experiencing, because you've been there, you've lived in that space. The connection is based on mutual understanding." She pauses on that idea. "At times, it feels like opening a road that's been previously closed."

One story stays with her: a client who had been in the program for ten days, slowly gathering the resources most people take for granted: a job, a phone, a sense of stability. Through the relationship they built, the client told Samantha she felt like a second mom. "They were touched by the inspiration, the hope, the resources we shared together," Samantha says. "Mutual support and connection, that's really at the core of a peer relationship."

Working alongside clinicians and case managers requires its own discipline, something Samantha and her colleagues call avoiding "peer drift", resisting the pull to step into roles that belong to others on the care team. "It's an important reminder for a peer specialist to understand their lane," she explains. "For example, when I'm attending an assessment, I'm there to observe, to understand how a client responds to a clinician, and to support that client. Everyone on the team has their role in supporting someone."

For Samantha, it comes back to something simple.

"Mostly, I see my role as inspiring hope, offering support, and sharing resources as clients work toward their own vision of wellness."

# Adult Mental Health



NKHS offers in-person and virtual therapy groups for adults in St. Johnsbury and Derby, covering skill-building, trauma and substance use recovery, and healthy relationships.

- Anger Management
- Dialectical Behavior Therapy
- DUI Group
- Intensive Outpatient Treatment
- Relationships
- Women's Seeking Safety Group
- Women's Creating Change Group

## CARE Bed

CARE (Community Aid & Recovery Effort) Bed is a voluntary, two-bed, community-based crisis stabilization program offering short-term care in a non-locked, supportive setting. Staffed 24/7 by residential crisis counselors and supported by the Emergency Services Department, the program helps individuals stay safe during a difficult time while working toward a timely, successful return home. Staff provide monitoring, clinical support, and guidance throughout the stay, while participants take an active role in their safe transition back home and into the community.

The average length of a stay

**18.5**

**DAYS**

The CARE Bed saw

**25** **STAYS**

with

**23** **UNIQUE CLIENTS**



## From Crisis to Stability: One Client's Journey

NKHS was contacted by the NVRH to see if someone in their Zone B unit, the hospital unit supporting individuals experiencing suicidal ideation, would be a good fit for the CARE Bed. Our team moved quickly to connect, meeting with the client at NVRH, explaining our services, and gauging whether our program fit her needs. That evening, staff returned to help the individual transition from Zone B into the CARE Bed — a critical step that can feel overwhelming without support.

During her stay, the client shared the weight she was carrying: her son's ongoing struggle with addiction and her own difficulty staying consistent with her medication, which she had stopped taking before coming to us.

Our team worked alongside her to help her stabilize her medication again, while also connecting her with resources to help her navigate her son's addiction and its impact on her own well-being.

By the time she left our care, she was stable on her medication and equipped with tools to face what lay ahead. She shared that she felt genuinely supported during her stay and expressed hope about using the resources she'd been given to continue caring for herself and her family.

# Emergency Services

## The Front Porch: A Place to Land, A Place to Heal

For many people in crisis, the hardest part isn't asking for help — it's finding a door that feels safe to walk through. This year, that door opened wide.

The Front Porch is complete and open.

What began as a vision to close a critical gap in mental health care has become a reality: a dedicated urgent care space where community members experiencing a mental health crisis can receive immediate, compassionate support without the delays, stigma, or intimidation often associated with traditional emergency settings.

Every detail of the space was chosen with intention. Felt walls reduce noise and soften the sensory experience for visitors in distress. Nature-inspired artwork lines the walls, enhancing openness and offering moments of calm. A color palette, selected through careful research, sets a warm tone rather than clinical detachment. Together, these elements create a warm, home-like atmosphere built to support comfort, connection, and healing for everyone who walks through its doors.

The Front Porch represents more than a building. It represents a promise: that in our community, help is close, care is human, and no one has to face a mental health crisis alone.

Thank you to the donors, partners, staff, and advocates whose support made this vision possible. Because of you, the Front Porch stands ready — open, welcoming, and waiting to help.

### FRONT PORCH UTILIZATION

# of Encounters: **1,551**
# of Unique Clients: **289**
# of Emergency Department visits diverted: **844**




988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

Three simple digits — 988 — connect anyone in Vermont to free, confidential, and compassionate crisis support 24/7. As part of a nationwide network of more than 200 local crisis contact centers, NKHS and Northwestern Counseling and Support Services (NCSS) serve as Vermont's only two 988 crisis contact centers, ensuring that every call made in Vermont reaches a Vermont-based counselor who truly cares. Rooted in a broader national vision built through federal, state, tribal, and community partnerships, 988 exists to give everyone what they deserve: someone to contact, someone to respond, and a safe place to heal.

## NKHS Call Center Data

Total Number of Contacts – Phone: **11,396**
Total Number of Individual Callers: **2,108**
Average Speed to Answer a Call: **23.5 Seconds**
Average Time on the Phone: **14.9 Minutes**
Total Number of Contacts - Chat: **947**
Total Number of Contacts - Text: **1,656**
Average Talk Time with Chat/Text: **34.4 Minutes**

## Enhanced Mobile Crisis

MOBILE CRISIS of Vermont

Launched statewide in January 2024, Enhanced Mobile Crisis makes sure no one in Vermont has to face a crisis alone. The NKHS Mobile Crisis team is available 24 hours a day, offering rapid, compassionate support to people of any age who are experiencing an emotional, mental health, or substance use crisis. A two-person team comes to you at home, at work, or wherever you are in the community. They assess your individual needs, create a safety plan, and connect you to the right supports. By meeting people where they are, the team helps reduce the need for more restrictive responses, such as law enforcement involvement or hospitalization, so care stays close, personal, and rooted in dignity.

**710** Mobile Crisis Responses
**310** Follow-Ups
**189** Safety Plans Created

# Children, Youth, and Family Services Home and Community-Based

***CYFS provides individualized care to meet the unique needs of children and families, including case management, counseling, psychiatry, crisis intervention, respite, and more. Services are offered in the office, home, school, and community.***

The CYFS department invested

**$28,828**

**TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

through summer camps, classes and lessons, family activities, sports and fitness programs, NKHS-hosted summer field trips, and other resources such as equipment and movie passes.

86.2% of CYFS clients receiving clinical intervention therapy rated some/good ***PROGRESS*** toward goals or completed treatment

## Wellness Day

CYFS held its annual Wellness Day on July 12, 2025, at Crystal Lake and enjoyed beautiful weather and higher attendance compared to last year. The event paid admission to anyone who enjoyed the park that day, and NKHS hosted 440 adults, 153 children, and 43 children under 3. Of those admissions, more than 180 parkgoers participated in the activities provided by NKHS and our community partners.




## 2nd Annual Community Thanksgiving Feast

The CYFS team hosted its 2nd Annual Community Thanksgiving Feast on Saturday, November 8th, 2025 and the community showed up in a big way. Fourteen dedicated volunteers came together to serve 132 meals, including special deliveries to the afternoon crew at Newport Ambulance Service and to our own team at the Front Porch, Mental Health Urgent Care.

About 34 community members and their families joined us to dine in at the Newport Church of God event space. Tin Shed Grill in Derby generously prepared all 20 of our 10-pound turkeys, paired with stuffing donated by Vermont Pie and Pasta and fresh rolls from Millers Pub. CYFS Director Vicky Whitehill hand-peeled and prepared 100 pounds of mashed potatoes, while CYFS Admin Amy Gosselin's buttery farm-fresh carrots were, as always, a crowd favorite. With plenty of pies and cookies to go around, guests left with full tummies and even fuller hearts.



Twenty-five community businesses and supporters made the feast possible, including non-perishable donations from three of NKHS's group homes and generous contributions from fellow NKHS employees. We are deeply grateful for the support of our community, co-workers, families, and friends, and we look forward to serving this November again.

> ***"It has really improved my son's life by giving him the skills and tools he needed to succeed in the school environment."***
>
> ***"They've never said no when I needed them."***
>
> ***"I love my therapist. She really understands me and has helped me through hard times."***
>
> ***"My daughter's therapist did an amazing job connecting with her and working with her."***
>
> ***"We've seen more success and progress than with any other therapist we've seen."***
>
> ***"I am grateful for the way staff communicates, listens, and helps. We feel seen!"***

# Children, Youth, and Family Services School-Based Services

*Our CYFS School-Based Services Department works collaboratively with our school districts to provide individual supportive counseling and case management services to youth in the school setting.*

School-Based Services are in

**12** **SCHOOLS** across **6** **SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

**29** **EMPLOYEES** in the school department and growing

**78.8%** of school-based Success Beyond Six clients receiving clinical intervention therapy rated some/good **PROGRESS** toward goals or completed treatment

## Catamount Community Connections - C3P

### WHAT IS THE C3P CLASSROOM?

The C3P classroom is a collaborative partnership between the St. Johnsbury School District and NKHS. It is an early elementary alternative classroom for students with intensive social/emotional needs.

### HOW DOES IT SUPPORT STUDENTS?

C3P uses an evidence-based, relationship-centered model, Healing the Self (Ketterer, 2020). C3P is a therapeutic classroom that supports students socially, emotionally, and behaviorally while integrating individualized educational supports. It provides students with healing, adult relationships, and tailored, individual, and small-group instruction.



*Jennifer Thompson, Special Educator and Classroom Teacher, explains, "I think the biggest thing that makes us stand out is prioritizing students' social/emotional needs and encouraging them to take risks, which enables them to attempt academics. Our Trauma-Informed Practices (TIPs) have been a very positive experience for our students. As an employee, I've seen students make more progress in one year than any other time in my career."*

**– Quote from Staff**

*"When we first got here, we hadn't identified my students' difficulties. In the first few months here, my student felt safe enough to talk about his abuse, which was appropriately handled. I am so proud of his progress. It would not have been possible without C3P. His communication skills are much, much better; he can now tell me what he needs. Now my student gets along better with his sibling. I feel supported, and my student loves it here. My student is happy to go here; before, it was pulling teeth to go to school…."*

**– Quote from a C3P Parent**

# Community Engagement

## Zero Suicide Initiative

At NKHS, we believe everyone in the Northeast Kingdom deserves the tools to support their own mental health and community members in need. That's why, through our Zero Suicide Initiative, we offer a wide range of evidence-based and evidence-informed community trainings that build real skills in mental health support and suicide prevention.

**MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID (MHFA)** **27** Trained

**TEEN MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID (TMHFA)** **10** Trained

**QUESTION, PERSUADE, REFER (QPR), SUICIDE AWARENESS TRAINING**

**247** individuals completed QPR Training
6 in-person and 12 virtual trainings

**IT'S REAL: TEEN MENTAL HEALTH** **476** Trained

**GIZMO'S PAWESOME GUIDE TO MENTAL HEALTH** **82** Trained

**CARING COMMUNITIES**

**98** Trained

**SUPPORTING AND MAINTAINING MENTAL HEALTH IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY**

**103** Trained




*On May 11th, Vermont Care Partners hosted a statewide Mental Health First Aid training gathering in Barre. The goal was to bring MHFA trainers together from across the State to learn what is working in each region and how to strengthen systems and support one another in delivering MHFA.*



*Circus Smirkus performers spell out QPR after training this spring.*



*QPR Trainers Ruth Marquette and Terri Lavely*

> *"(QPR) has already been used by our staff, and we are eternally grateful for those tools and resources."*

> *"Thank you for the QPR training. When I attended, I was struggling with thoughts of suicide. The resources you shared saved my life."*

> *"Excellent training and educators! Thank you for providing this training to the community."*

> *"The trainers were fantastic! It was very apparent that they knew what they were talking about."*

# Community Engagement



## Popup @ the Pavilion Food Truck Events

Thank you to everyone who came out this summer for the NKHS Food Truck Popup @ the Pavilion! Over five wonderful evenings, our community gathered at the Trailhead Pavilion to enjoy great food, live music, and the kind of connection at the heart of NKHS's mission to support healthy minds through strong community bonds. We're so grateful to the incredible food vendors who joined us throughout the season — Chef Nadav, Lady Shaye's Catering, Mexirico Autentico, NEK Catering, O'Crepe, Smokin' Somethin' BBQ, Sour Bros, Chez Poutine, Miracle Mary's, The VT Ice Palace, The Runaway Tomato, and Avalie's Sweet Treats — for sharing their incredible food with our community.

A huge thank you as well to the talented musicians who filled the Pavilion with live music, including Barry Hayes, Whiskers of Odd, Autumn Chamberlain, and Koa Phoenix Pillsbury, and to Denelle Noyes for the face painting that delighted our youngest attendees.

Most of all, thank you to the hundreds of community members who showed up, ate together, danced, and connected with neighbors along the way. Community is one of NKHS's core values, and evenings like these remind us why it matters so much — it's in these shared moments that we build the relationships that make our region stronger and healthier.
















**Top Left:** *The CYFS Truck or Treat event in Derby, October 2025.*

**Top Middle:** *Community Skills group member placing a hand-painted rock with 988 information in St. Johnsbury.*

**Top Right:** *988 Program Manager Alicia Webb speaks at the Governor's Press Conference at the Front Porch, Mental Health Urgent Care, in September 2025 for Suicide Awareness Month. Also pictured are Governor Phil Scott, NKHS CEO Kelsey Stavseth, and Department of Mental Health (DMH) Commissioner Emily Hawes.*

**Bottom Left:** *Kallianne Fulford at the Homelessness Awareness Walk in Newport in January 2026.*

**Middle Right:** *NKHS Communications Coordinator Elaine Dunbar presents the Northern Counties Health Care Hardwick office with goodie baskets in celebration of National Rural Health Day. We were honored to recognize 30 of our local healthcare partners and their dedication to meet the unique health needs of rural America.*

**Bottom Right:** *Erica Perkins and Joy Morse from the Communications Department scoop ice cream at the St. Johnsbury Town Band free concert event on the courthouse lawn.*

# Donors

*To every donor who stood with us in FY26 — thank you. Your generosity made it possible for us to expand our reach, strengthen our programs, and turn ambition into impact. Whether your gift was your first or your fifteenth, large or small, it mattered, and together we accomplished more this year than we could have alone. As we look ahead, we carry your generosity with us and remain deeply grateful for the role you continue to play in our mission.*

## HOPE SOCIETY ($5000 +)

Order of the Eastern Star
Vermont Program for Quality in Health Care, Inc. (VPQHC)
Caryl Eikenberry

## HERO ($1000 - $4999)

Kathleen Johnson
NEK Collaborative
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*We've made every effort to list donors accurately; please contact us with corrections.*

## Join Our Monthly E-News

Stay up to date with the latest news, programs, and stories from NKHS. Our monthly e-newsletter shares updates from our team, highlights the impact happening in our communities, and keeps you informed about upcoming events and opportunities to get involved. Join our mailing list and be part of the work making a difference every day.

# Programs

## Developmental Services

*Developmental Services provide personalized supports that promote independence, growth, and community integration for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.*

### HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

HCBS, primarily funded through Vermont's Global Commitment to Health Medicaid Waiver, provides individualized services based on each person's needs, budget, and person-centered plan.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Community Supports help individuals develop skills and social connections through teaching and assistance in daily living, community activities, and building healthy personal, family, and community relationships.

- **Supported Employment:** Helps transition-age youth and adults with disabilities obtain and succeed in competitive employment.
- **Service Coordination:** Helps individuals coordinate and access personalized services and supports.

### STAFFED LIVING

Staffed Homes provide one or two individuals needing significant emotional, behavioral, or medical support with individualized 24-hour care from trained staff.

### GROUP LIVING

State-licensed Residential Care Homes serve individuals who cannot live independently and need higher levels of care. Individualized services may include medical, behavioral, emotional, and daily living support, with nursing oversight and, when appropriate, nursing-home-level care.

### ADULT FAMILY CARE

Adult Family Care (AFC) is a 24-hour HCBS shared-living option through Vermont's Choices for Care program. Eligible, high-needs individuals live full-time in a single-family home and receive care from the resident to support autonomy, independence, and dignity. Each home serves up to two individuals.

### FLEXIBLE FAMILY FUNDING

Income-based funding helps eligible families of children and adults with developmental disabilities purchase legal goods and activities of their choice, including respite, assistive technology, home modifications, household needs, and recreation.

### THE BRIDGE PROGRAM

The Bridge Program helps families of children and young adults under twenty-two with intellectual and developmental disabilities access and coordinate medical, educational, social, and community services and develop coordinated support plans.

## Mental Health

*We provide a wide range of evidence-based, individualized services that promote mental well-being, resilience, and recovery in a supportive and compassionate environment.*

### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Our staff works to improve the quality of life for adults with serious mental illness or severe emotional disturbances and those struggling with addictive disorders. Individualized support is offered through outpatient and community-based services.

### MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Provides adults experiencing mental health challenges with therapeutic services and individualized, person-centered treatment plans.

### PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

Provides comprehensive evaluation and treatment across Developmental Services, Children, Youth and Families, Emergency Services, and Adult Outpatient programs, while collaborating with community partners to improve psychiatric care delivery in the community.

### REACH UP

Reach Up, a Vermont Department for Children and Families program, helps eligible parents achieve short- and long-term goals toward financial stability for their children.

### ELDER CARE

Serves individuals over 60, who are disabled and homebound through in-person or virtual assessments and follow-up addressing mental health, substance use, and case management needs.

### VETERANS CASE MANAGEMENT

Supports NEK veterans with support services, including VA appointments, transportation, claims, peer counseling, and other resources.

### SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER

*We offer a comprehensive continuum of care tailored to each individual's unique needs. Whether individuals are experiencing daily life stressors, acute emotional distress, or severe and persistent mental illness alongside their substance use disorder, NKHS is here to provide compassionate and effective treatment.*

### SUD ADULT AND ADOLESCENT

Provides prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery services for adults starting at age 18 and adolescents 13–18, addressing alcohol, cannabis, opioids, and other substance misuse.

## INTENSIVE OUTPATIENT (IOP)

IOP helps people achieve sustained recovery by acquiring the skills to reduce relapses and increase sobriety through community-based services.

## IMPAIRED DRIVER REHABILITATION PROGRAM (IDRP)

A Vermont program providing education on substance misuse and DUI for individuals convicted of a first or second DUI.

## EMERGENCY SERVICES

*NKHS offers a range of services to support a person experiencing a crisis. Each service works along a continuum of care, which allows the person in crisis to determine, when appropriate, how much intervention and support they need. The continuum allows the person in crisis to move freely between different levels of service they require, both during and pre/post-crisis.*

## FRONTLINE

Mental health emergency services provide 24/7 telephone, face-to-face, and telehealth support; involuntary hospitalization screening; and referrals to appropriate levels of care.

## MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS SPECIALISTS

Embedded specialists at Vermont State Police barracks in Derby and St. Johnsbury help divert individuals in mental health crisis from emergency departments, reducing police intervention and arrests.

## 988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides 24/7, free, confidential emotional support to people in a mental health crisis.

## ENHANCED MOBILE CRISIS

Mobile crisis teams meet individuals who are experiencing a mental health crisis where they are, assess needs, develop safety plans, and coordinate services to reduce reliance on hospitalization or law enforcement.

## FRONT PORCH MENTAL HEALTH URGENT CARE

*The Front Porch provides 24/7 walk-in mental health support in a warm, home-like setting without an appointment. Qualified, empathetic professionals and peer support specialists offer confidential, person-centered care, including rest, conversation, and individual or group therapy.*

Families with children can access a dedicated children's wing. Urgent care guests may stay up to 23 hours and receive peer and therapeutic support. Adults needing longer support may access a 2–10 day crisis stabilization program with private bedrooms, shared living spaces, and 24/7 staffing. Services are tailored to each person's recovery needs.

## CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY SUPPORT AND STABILIZATION DEPARTMENT

*The Child, Youth and Family Support and Stabilization Department includes several programs that meet the specialized needs of individuals and families. These programs provide targeted services to support children and families in achieving positive outcomes and promoting healing.*

## EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Provides mental health and behavioral consultations for families and professionals, promoting social-emotional development and kindergarten readiness.

## HOME AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND STABILIZATION PROGRAM

Provides comprehensive, trauma-informed, and strengths-based care for youth and families in homes, community, and office settings.

## SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Our clinicians and case managers collaborate with our school districts to provide individual supportive counseling and case management services to youth in the school setting.

## SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES PROGRAM

Provides trauma-informed case management and counseling in schools, helping youth address social, emotional, and mental health needs.

## BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION (BI) PROGRAM

Staff collaborate with schools, families, and communities to provide strength-based, positive behavioral programming to school-aged youth with emotional/behavioral disorders, trauma, Autism Spectrum disorders, mental health needs, and developmental or learning disabilities.

## JOBS – JUMP ON BOARD FOR SUCCESS

Provides supported employment and intensive case management for young adults ages 16–22. Using employment as an engagement point, the program helps youth obtain and maintain competitive employment, overcome barriers, and transition successfully into adulthood through trusting, holistic support.

# The Foundation of NKHS

## Mission

We're all about being human. Our mission is to empower individuals, families, and communities by promoting hope, healing, and support.

## Vision

To be leaders in rural health and human services by offering programs that are innovative, flexible, and comprehensive.

## Values

### PERSON-CENTERED

We engage with the whole person, meeting everyone where they are on their journey. We recognize strengths and embrace diverse identities.

### COMMUNITY

Strong connections and relationships are the foundation of our mission. We advocate for inclusive spaces that honor diversity, knowing that varied lived experiences strengthen our work.

### DISCOVERY

We prioritize curiosity and understanding over making assumptions. By seeking understanding and valuing diverse insights, we make thoughtful decisions and foster growth for ourselves and those we serve.

### DIGNITY

Every person has inherent value and the right to belong, regardless of their condition, status, or identity. We advocate for change that destigmatizes mental health, substance use, and developmental disabilities, ensuring equal rights, support, and respect.

### COURAGE

We recognize the bravery it takes to seek help. With compassion and strength, we walk alongside others, celebrating resilience and illuminating the path to healing and growth.




NKHS
Northeast Kingdom Human Services

We're All About **Being Human!**

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