

Promise Community Application Cover Sheet

Attachment 1 Coversheet

Person to contact with questions about this application:

Name of contact person: Christine Linn Title:

Telephone: 802 380 5598

Email: Christine.m.linne@gmail.com

Organization/agency/school submitting application

Name of Organization/Agency: Children & Parents Project

Address: 70 Western Ave

City: Brattleboro Zip code: 05301

Name of Executive Director/ President/ CEO/ Superintendent: Ron Stahley

County: Windham

Agency of Human Service District: Brattleboro

Targeted School District/ Supervisory Union: Green St School / WSESU

Targeted School(s): Green St. School

Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator: Chad Simmons

Sponsor:

Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator or Agency of Human Services Field Director

Name: Sadie Fischesser

Email: Sadie.fischesser@State.VT.US

The following checklist is to help you prepare your Promise Community application.

- Attachment 1 Application Coversheet
- Attachment 2 Pledge of Commitment and Signatures- mail hard copy
- Narrative on your community needs, will and impact

CATEGORY: COMMUNITY NEED

Green Street School has markedly elevated rates of poverty in comparison to Brattleboro, WSESU and the state as a whole. Point in time data (recorded 3/13/15) lists the percentage of GSS children eligible for FRL at 70.3%.

Poverty: Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility Percentages				
	AY 11-12¹	AY 12-13²	AY 13-14³	Point in time
Brattleboro Elementary Schools:				
Academy School	58.31	55.41	56.92	
Green Street	59.34	58.17	68.29	70.3 ⁴ 3/13/2015
Oak Grove	68.28	62.5	62.88	
WSESU	43.5	41.59	44.79	
State	41.14	40.77	40.67	

Kindergarten Readiness:

Data regarding school-specific rates of school readiness as a whole is not available but, at the supervisory union level, kindergarten readiness scores are 40.6%, compared to the state rate of 49.1%. Because of the correlation between poverty and negative educational outcomes and readiness, the assumption can be made that GSS, with it’s increased rates of poverty, scores lower the SU level on kindergarten readiness.

Kindergarten Readiness Scores, percentage ready			
	AY 11-12	AY 12-13	AY 13-14
WSESU⁵	54.6	59	40.6
State⁶	56	62	49.1

Specific domains within the readiness scales at the SU and state levels are broken out below. Note that the determination of ‘readiness’ is made when the student scores ‘performing independently’ in all items across all 5 domains. WSESU scored below state averages in 4 out of 5 domains, and 9 percentage points below the state average for overall kindergarten readiness.

Kindergarten Readiness data, by domain and across domains, AY 13-14			
Domain	WSESU		Statewide
	Number	Percentage	
Social-Emotional Development	125	69%	75%
Approaches to Learning	117	72%	69%
Communications	137	77%	83%
Cognitive Development	82	46%	66%
Wellness	127	70%	83%
All Five Domains	65	40%	49%

¹ From: http://bbfdata.com/map/free_and_reduced_lunch/2012/supervisory_union/80/10/7#

² From: http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-Child_Nutrition_2013_Eligibility_Report.pdf

³ From: http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-Child_Nutrition_Eligibility_Report.pdf

⁴ Data provided by Paul Smith, WSESU, Curriculum Coordinator

⁵ From: <http://vermontinsights.org/indicators/report/5>

⁶ From: <http://vermontinsights.org/indicators/report/5>

Specific data regarding entire domain scores is not available at the school-level but within the domain Social-emotional Development, over 50% of students at Green Street School scored not ready in *two* of the six domain subcategories. In the ‘Cognitive Development, General Knowledge’ domain we see that more than 50% do not meet readiness goals in *three* out of the nine specific subcategories and over 65% of students are considered not ready in two others. Again, overall scores are given the determination of ‘ready’ only when the student scores ‘performing independently’ on all subcategories in each of the five domains.

3rd Grade Achievement Scores

Third grade achievement scores again illustrate that Green Street School is markedly below the proficiency rates of the supervisory union and the state as a whole:

3rd Grade Achievement Levels, Percentage Proficient & Above	
	AY 13-14⁷
Green Street School	Reading: 53 Math: 50
WSESU	Reading: 73 Math: 57
State	Reading: 70 Math: 62

Access to Early Care and Education:

The US Census Bureau data reflects that there were approximately 1973.6 children aged 5 or under living in Windham County in 2013. Town specific data regarding the five and under population is not available after 2010 but lists 392.9 children five or under in Brattleboro during that data collection range.

Access to Early Care and Education, 4 or 5 Stars, Licensed & Registered Programs, January 1, 2014—December 31, 2014				
	Stars/# of Programs	Capacity	Openings	Vacancy Rate %
Brattleboro	4 Star: 5	137	11	8%
	5 Star: 10	324	45	14%

CATEGORY: COMMUNITY PROFILE:

What is your community story on high needs children?

According to the American Psychological Association there is a direct connection between poverty and academic success, particularly during early childhood. As evidenced in the table below, there are high rates of homelessness, disabilities or developmental delays, single parent households, poverty rates and people who did not complete high school within the identified neighborhoods.

The identified area contains concentrated populations of high needs children. Green street school has elevated rates of disabled and students with developmental delays: 30% (compared to the town-wide rate of 20.72% total elementary populations, or 178 students).

Within EES’s Head-start program (92 students served within the PC community) 36% of families are homeless, 29% are from single parent household, 51% are 100% below the poverty level and 26% have parent/s who did not complete high school. EES’s Early Head-start program has similar populations but single parent households and poverty-level households are at 64% and 68%, respectively.

⁷ AY 13-14 data for Green St, WSESU and State scores, provided by Paul Smith, Curriculum Coordinator, WSESU

WHAT IS GOOD IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

Resiliency, loyalty and resourcefulness

The proposed Promise Community has many advantages that will work to bolster the success of the project. When asked, local service providers and other organizations overwhelmingly cited resiliency, loyalty and resourcefulness as key positive attributes of the community members.

As is the case with many cultures of poverty, there is a tight knit community that looks out for each other and shares its limited resources. One service provider explained that there is “almost an informal economy among [residents]. If client X is out of phone minutes but has extra diapers or formula, she may barter with client Y, who doesn’t have cash to give but will babysit Client Z’s children if Client Z gives Client X \$20 for phone minutes. Somehow, and usually together, they always find a way to get what they need!”

The Brattleboro Police Department reports that there is a striking sense of community within these neighborhoods. Of particular note was neighbors helping neighbors work through crises.

Community in Crisis: Facing it together

There is no better indicator of the strength of a community than how it responds during times of crisis. The neighborhoods within the promised project area have had plenty of crises to react to. There have been two significant events that have had devastating effects on the community in the past 3.5 years. In 2011 this community was literally underwater due to the catastrophic flooding of hurricane Irene. Local business closed, private and public housing was destroyed or damaged, personal property ruined. Then, in 2013, a multi-unit housing complex was completely ravaged as a three-alarm fire displaced 17 residents, including three children. The community response to these catastrophes was quick and resounding. Local organizations such convened almost immediately to help those effected. Food trains, coordinated efforts to collect food, clothing and monetary donations, offers of ‘a place to crash’ or ‘a room in my house’ sprung up within days.

Infrastructure, community resources and access:

The infrastructure of the proposed area contains many unique, and often un- or under-utilized components. There are two public parks/playgrounds, a brook and other green spaces that *could* serve as recreational areas for families, youth and children. Most streets have maintained sidewalks and crosswalks marking routes heavily used by school-aged children.

The centralized location of the community makes resources and services more easily accessed including Early Education Services, Vermont Adult Learning, Windham Windsor Housing Trust, Windham Childcare Association, New England Youth Theater and others are all within the geographic range of the proposed Promise Community.

Similarly, residents can walk to the downtown business district, Transportation Center a local food co-op, the public library, AHS economic services, Vermont Department of Labor, VT Vocational Rehabilitation services and more.

However, despite the availability of sound infrastructure and the accessibility of services and other resources, poverty, crime and safety concerns engulf many peoples’ experiences. For instance, the public playground on Elliot St is located at the base of a hill and not visible from the street. Because of its lack of visibility it is often used for drug and alcohol consumption. One resident described a recent experience at the park: “I took my [18 month old] daughter there

and found a [hypodermic] needle under the slide!” Understandably, because of this experience, she will not be going back.

Affordable/need-based housing

According to Building Bright Futures, high housing costs have a deleterious effect on the child development:

Too many families spend more than the recommended 30% of their income on housing, leaving less for their children’s needs. Almost 4 out of 10 VT children under 18 years live in households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing (2012.) Among low-income children it increases to almost 7 out of ten (2011) leaving parents with less financial resources left over to meet their children’s basic needs and make other investments in their children’s development.⁸

And, undeniably, housing costs in Brattleboro are among some of the highest in the state. A resounding strength of the proposed community is the access to affordable housing. There are approximately 207 income based and/or subsidized rental units owned or managed by Brattleboro Housing Authority, Stewart Property, Windham and Windsor Housing Trust and Youth Services Transitional Youth Shelter, within the identified range.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON YOUR COMMUNITY?

This area is marked by generations of ingrained and systemic poverty. Generational poverty is defined as a family having been in poverty for two or more generations. The key distinction between situational and generational poverty is that generational poverty is not just an economic condition. Urban Ventures, an organization dedicated to breaking the cycle of generational poverty, notes three key characteristics seen in people stuck in the confines of generational poverty: hopelessness, surviving rather than planning, and values and patterns focused on survival rather than well-being.

Indeed, these key elements are evident in a majority of the residents living within the community. Service agencies work to assist with immediate needs and crises but typically serve as mere stopgaps within the larger context of need. Similarly, mental health crises are handled when they become unmanageable and medical care is sought only when pain is unbearable or mobility is compromised. Resource procural and crisis management address immediate needs but do nothing to alleviate the larger issues at play.

Single parent households, crime rates (including domestic violence; drug use, sales and thefts associated with drug use; assaults; and property damage), hunger and poor nutrition, lack of neighborhood pride or community ownership, child abuse and neglect are present within the community in increased rates and are all directly linked to high poverty rates and engrained systems of generational poverty. All of these social and economic issues are played out, among other ways, in the educational success and readiness rates of our children.

The Brattleboro Police Department identified much of the area within the proposed PC as having increased crime rates as compared to the greater Brattleboro area. Of specific concern are disputes that lead to assaults or property destruction/damage; drug use, (particularly opiates)

⁸ From: http://cdn.buildingbrightfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/BBF_HAVYC_4-11-14.pdf

possession and associated crimes (thefts, assaults); Juvenile truancy and petty offenses such as larceny and vandalism committed by juveniles.

RESOURCES THAT ARE LACKING:

- Early education and childcare services that fill the childcare gap at the beginning and end of the work day (7am-8:30 & 4-5:30) and through planned and unexpected school closures.
- Transportation to and from early education and childcare providers
- Coordinated and streamlined efforts to seek out and support the highest needs families
- Grassroots initiated community building efforts
- Vocational readiness and training that meets populations ‘where they are’; jobs and investment in vocational opportunities for at-risk families.
- Positive recreational and peer-group activities for children, youth, adults and families.
- Access to high quality drug counseling and treatment as well as education and intervention surrounding the effects of drug/alcohol use on children.
- Groups, services and intervention that work to address the ‘generational poverty’ thought processes that inhibit real change.

COMMUNITY IMPACT:

This proposed Promise Community will serve over 200 children, ages 0-6. Through our efforts to engage, educate and promote interconnectedness, parents, families and children will spend more healthy time connecting with each other and their communities. Furthermore, service providers, educators and other individuals working with these communities will be more effective in their work as the PC will be better prepared to anticipate the needs of their children, acknowledge when they need help and engage with resources. This ‘whole-family, whole-community’ approach will positively effect school readiness and success, as it will bolster the overall well-being and agency of children, parents and the community alike.

The data below represents children ages 0-6 who are served by EES, WIC, Youth Services TLP program or live in WWHT housing. There are many other services that work with populations in this area including Children’s Integrated Services, HCRS, Winston Prouty and others but data was not available at this time.

Population served ages 0-6

Early Ed Providers located within PC range: Serving children ages 0-5

1. *Early Education Services’ Headstart Programs:* Total 92
 - a. Canal Street: pre-school capacity: 45
 - b. Birge Nest: infant capacity 16; toddler capacity 16; pre-school capacity 15
2. *Sprouts Early Learning Collaborative:* Total 23
 - a. Infant capacity 2; toddler capacity 6; pre-school capacity 15

Other Services working with 0-6 populations (data sources):

1. *Vermont Dept. of Health, WIC program:* Total: 30 Families

There are over 30 families served by WIC within the identified range. WIC provides nutritional food to income eligible pregnant or post-partum women, to infants and to children until the fifth birthday.

2. *Youth Services: Transitional Living Program:* Total: 9

Participants within geographic range of proposed PC with children ages 0-6: 9 children total, 8 of whom are aged 0-3

3. *Windham Windsor Housing Trust*: 87 Apartments in geographic range, Total Served, ages 0-6: 26

CATEGORY: COMMUNITY WILL (SPIRIT):

Why should your community be a part of this initiative?

The PC initiative could markedly improve the lives of so many of this community's residents. Within the community there are high rates of poor nutrition, drug addiction, high needs students and individuals, crime and other factors associated with low income and poverty level populations. However, the community infrastructure and access and availability of support services, provide a rich foundation upon which the project can grow.

Because the infrastructural and service level base is sound, there is a greater potential for true change—change that is systemic and sustainable. It is our hope that the direction and face of this change is developed by the very residents, children and families that the project seeks out as the highest needs populations, with the support and guidance of the supportive and direct service providers and partners. There is already momentum in this direction that has developed organically. One local single mother began a playgroup because she was not feeling supported in her parenting and wanted to meet other young mothers who shared her values. Another young man, who just got out of prison, has taken up advocacy work with younger residents against the impact of crime and drug use. Both have expressed interest and enthusiasm in joining the PC!

How is the community coming together to make a difference for the young children to help with school outcomes? There are several parenting classes available within the community that focus on everything from parenting skills, relationship building to health and wellness and peer networking. Similarly, there are playgroups, open gyms for toddlers and even an early education book mobile! There are organizations in place that are bringing healthy food to the neighborhoods and working to promote awareness around the importance of nutrition.

The town of Brattleboro is rich with early intervention programs and has numerous systems in place to detect and reach-out to families in need of early intervention. One local resident pointed out that many of these agencies don't reach enough high-risk families or are compromised because often DCF will mandate intervention services "because everyone thinks they're DCF! No one's gonna work with them because they'll tell DCF if your house is messy or your baby is sick!" This points, again, to the innate distrust that many residents feel towards the existing systems.

The key issue here is that while there are many services available, there is not as much engagement on the family and community level as there could be. Many of the highest needs populations are innately distrustful of systems and organizations and, as such, do not utilize potentially beneficial services. Similarly, middle and upper class populations are more likely to access optional, recreational and networking programs. The idea that these groups "are snobby" or will be "judgmental" plays out in a lack of participation by lower income populations, further compounding the divide.

What is the plan for engaging families in the work ahead? Engagement will take many forms! It is our hope that Green St. School and the PTO will help to engage parents and students at the school site. However, community involvement with more vulnerable populations will need to

involve ‘insider’ recommendations—i.e. neighbors talking to neighbors. The PC partners list already includes several residents who are ‘living their communities’. With these key insiders in conjunction with concerted outreach efforts by the school, local service agencies and other partners, it is our hope that a large portion of the PC range will be reached.

Community based social events—for example, a block party, street theater, mural project or other ‘recreational’ activities—may also be used to reach the community while providing positive community building experiences.

Initial engagement may take the form of a series of public forums where participation is incentivized.

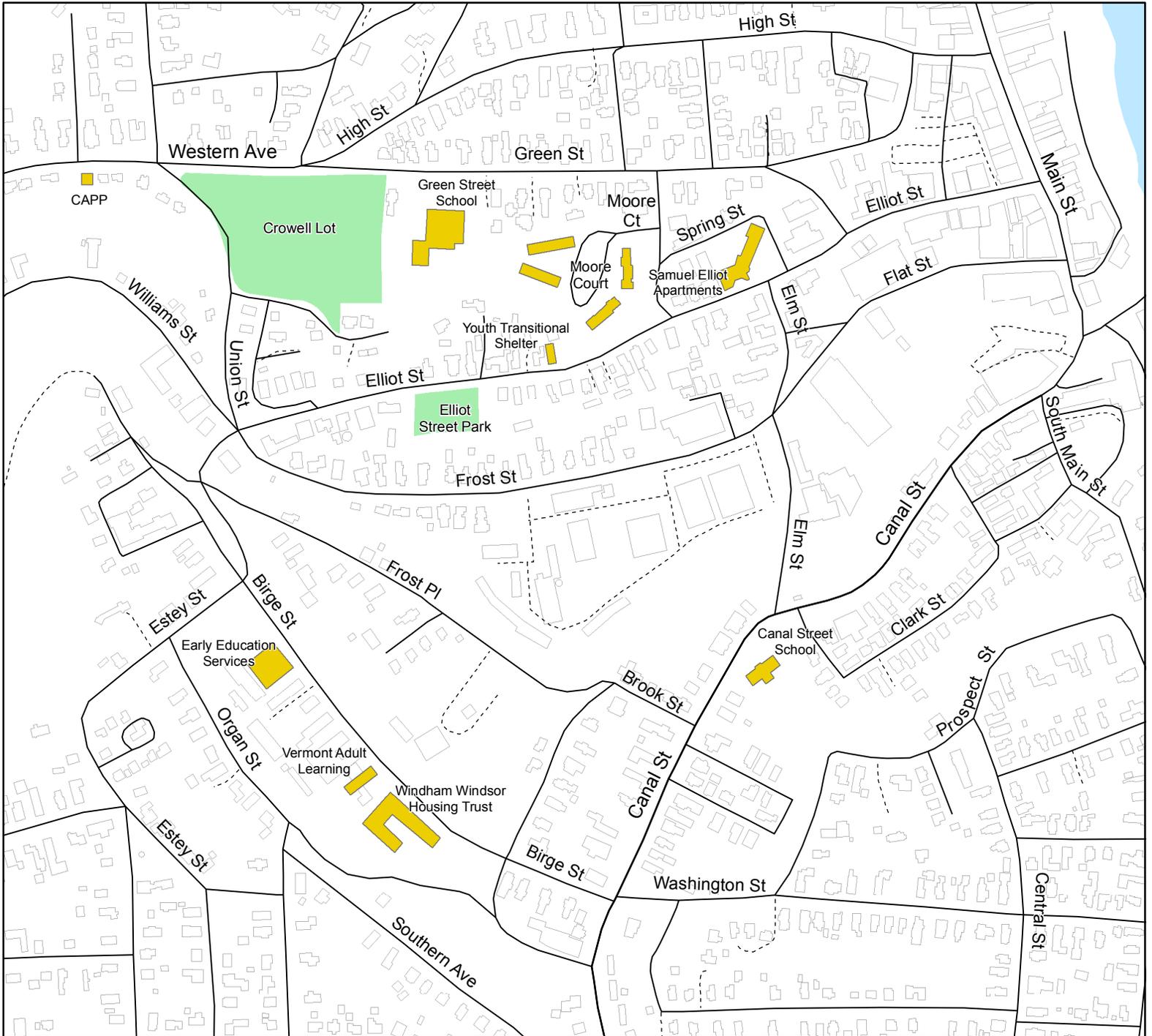
WHO ARE THE PARTNERS TO HELP MAKE THIS WORK HAPPEN?

The Children and Parents Project (CAPP) is an agency that is dedicated to serving high needs, low-income and/or at risk families, children, couples and individuals. CAPP works within a framework that considers the whole person, including relationships, social and economic contexts and any other supports or barriers that are relevant. CAPP currently provides services to many families and children within the geographic range and collaborates with numerous other service providers, agencies and organizations. CAPP is already deeply embedded in the PC range and is highly effective in it’s work with children and families.

Families, individuals and other residents of the Promise Community: It is our goal to invite many residents living in the PC neighborhood to contribute to the assessment, goal planning and implementation stages of this initiative. These are the people who know their communities best! There are currently four residents committed to working on the project and additional outreach plans are waiting in the wings.

The following organizations and individuals have been identified as potential collaborators on this project. Some have pledge commitment already while outreach has not been established with others. Every org or potential partner listed is currently involved in the PC area in some capacity.

<p>Educators and Education Green Street School WSESU Early Education Services Windham Childcare Assoc. Vermont Partnership for Fairness & Diversity VT Adult Learning</p>	<p>Direct Care and Service Youth Services Winston Prouty VT Works for Women Henry Farnum, PO VT Vocational Rehab Brattleboro Police Dept. Local MH Practitioners</p>	<p>Pro-Social Brooks Memorial Library Circus Minimus Boys and Girls Club KidsPlayce Circus Yoga Insight Photography Project New England Youth Theater High 5 Adventure Learning Center</p>
<p>Nutrition and Wellness WIC FoodConnects Brattleboro Food Co-op Farm to School Center for Health & Learning Just So Pediatrics Brattleboro Primary Care</p>	<p>Housing Supports and Care WWHT Bratt. Housing Auth Private Landlords Stewart Properties SEVCA</p>	<p>Neighborhood/community groups F.E.E.T Neighborhood Assoc GSS Parent Teacher Org Canal/Clark Street Neighborhood Assoc.</p>



Promise Community Pledge of Commitment

Attachment 2 Pledge of Commitment
Organization/agency submitting application

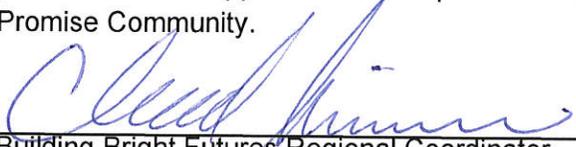
Targeted School District/ Supervisory Union: WSESU

Targeted School(s): Green Street School

Sponsor: Children & Parents Project

We pledge to support the local community of Green Street to Canal Street—including Frost, Elm, Elliot Terrace, Spring St. to improve the lives of the young children in a Promise Community. To do this we will work together in a coalition of partnerships with regular meetings and communication to reach the community goals to fulfill the *promise of every child*. The goals and outcomes will be developed as part of needs assessment, strategic planning and implementation process.

This form must be signed by Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator; targeted school principal (s); targeted school superintendent; Regional Agency of Human Services Field Director; and community child health care provider, indicating their pledge to participate as a partner in the implementation of the work plan presented in this application. Other partners are encouraged to sign as well to make a commitment to be a Promise Community.

 Chad Simmons 3/17/15
Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator

SIGNATURE PRINT DATE
 Ron Stahley 3/17/15
School Superintendent
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

SEE Attached
School Principal
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE
 Susan Stawinski 3/17/15

Child Healthcare Provider
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE
SEE Attached
AHS Field Director
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

Promise Community Pledge of Commitment

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Targeted School(s): WSESU

Sponsor: Green St School

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Building Bright Futures Regional Coordinator
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

School Superintendent
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE
Mark v. Speno 3-16-15

School Principal
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

Child Healthcare Provider
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

AHS Field Director
SIGNATURE PRINT DATE

Promise Community Pledge of Commitment Signatures

[Signature] Stephen Spitzer, LICSW 03/09/15
 SIGNATURE PRINT DATE
 ORGANIZATION/TITLE: Co-Director, The Children + Parents Project

[Signature] Tim Causton 3/9/15
 SIGNATURE PRINT DATE
 ORGANIZATION/TITLE: Wintonham + Windsor Housing Trust

[Signature] Ashlyn Murn Ashlyn Murne 3-10-15
 SIGNATURE PRINT DATE
 ORGANIZATION/TITLE: Parent, Spring Street

[Signature] Andrea Waisman Andrea Waisman 3/13/15
 SIGNATURE PRINT DATE
 ORGANIZATION/TITLE: Vocational Educator & Organizer

Via email

[Signature] Eric O'Keefe ? ERIC O'Keefe 3/12/15
 SIGNATURE PRINT DATE
 ORGANIZATION/TITLE: Circus minimus

Via email

[Signature] Erin Maile O'Keefe 3/17/15
 SIGNATURE PRINT DATE
 ORGANIZATION/TITLE: Circusyoga

[Signature] Rick Davidson 3/17/15
 SIGNATURE PRINT DATE
 ORGANIZATION/TITLE: Boys & Girls Club of Beattleboro / Unit Director

SIGNATURE PRINT DATE
 ORGANIZATION/TITLE: _____

SIGNATURE PRINT DATE
 ORGANIZATION/TITLE: _____

(This page can be copied to add additional partners as needed.)

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S. Fischesser

S. Fischesser

3/17/15