

# KidSafe NewsNotes

## Tragedies Prompt Statewide Response



By Sally Borden

Child safety has once again tragically been thrust to the forefront of our community's consciousness as the result of the severe injuries and deaths of several infants over the past 15 months, as well as the horrific abuse and murder of Brooke Bennett in June.

Here in Vermont, we pride ourselves on having one of the lowest child maltreatment rates in the country.

That, however, should not cause us to become complacent; rather, it should provide us with a strong foundation for continuing to strive to ensure that *no child* should ever have to endure the awfulness of being neglected, beaten, or sexually abused. It should also cause us to look at that data and ask: what does that mean, the 'lowest rate?' And is our system of caring for kids looking at the right information to assure ourselves as a community that we are doing all we can to keep children and youth safe?

These questions speak to the KidSafe Collaborative's role: we bring people together to address our community's prevention of and response to child maltreatment. We do this both with individual families through our Child Protection and Family Support team and other teams, and we also do this on a broader policy and practice level.

### The Bennett Tragedy

This past summer we convened a series of meetings in the wake of the tragedy of Brooke Bennett's death, to look at where the system has failed and what we must do to ensure that this never happens again.

Overwhelmingly, the response was that we need to focus more attention on prevention: educating the public about child abuse; training people who work with kids to identify possible abuse and how to intervene; improving training on reporting suspected abuse and neglect; educating kids about what to do if they are in uncomfortable

situations; supporting families that are struggling, providing in-home parenting education; improving intervention with juvenile offenders and their families. There are groups working on many of these efforts right now.

### Broad Changes Underway

At the same time, Vermont's child welfare system (Department for Children and Families, Family Services Division) is in the midst of a number of sweeping changes which will most certainly improve how we as a state respond to cases of child maltreatment. This fall, a system of centralized intake for reports of suspected abuse/neglect was implemented, providing for a more consistent response statewide; almost immediately the number of reports to DCF and the number of cases opened for investigation increased by about 30%.

DCF Family Services is also moving toward a system of targeting their response efforts

*(Continued on page 2)*

**Our Mission**  
To engage agencies, community groups and individuals to work together to improve our community's response to child abuse and neglect.



Sally Borden  
KidSafe Executive Director

Visit our new website:

[www.kidsafevt.org](http://www.kidsafevt.org)

Thanks to Kehoe and Kehoe for providing web design and Jonathan Kissam, our engineer.

## KidSafe Staff Transitions

KidSafe bids a fond farewell to **Katie Loesel** and **Penne Tompkins**. Katie has accepted a position with the U.S. State Department Education USA Program in Chiang Mai, Thailand, teaching English and advising students. Penne, who has been with KidSafe for 5 years, is moving to South Africa with her husband Michael for the next year or two, taking the opportunity to live in their home just outside of Cape Town.

Joining KidSafe are **Anne MacLeod**, Development and Community Outreach Coordinator, and **Lisa Simon**, Administrative Assistant.



Anne's background includes several years as a producer/writer at Sesame Workshop in New York City, and freelance writing and grant writing. Recently, she wrote for Best of Burlington magazine. She is a graduate of Middlebury College.

Lisa is a clinical social worker who developed programs at the Visiting Nurse Association of Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties in the Maternal and Child Health Division. She was director of the Family Room, VNA's parent child center in Burlington's Old North End. Lisa is also a freelance grant writer.



# KidSafe Elects Board of Directors

KidSafe Board of Directors elections were held at our Annual Meeting on June 25, 2008.

Howard Kalfus, attorney for the VT Department of Public Safety, who has been a tireless advocate for children in his past work as a public defender and an Assistant Attorney General, was newly elected to the Board. He has been involved with KidSafe for many years, winning the KidSafe Professional Award in 2003.



Additionally, Suzanne Koch and Kurt Liebegott were each reelected to a second term on the Board, and remain as Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

Carolyn Smith and Jeff Morin, who had filled

vacancies during the year, were elected to full terms; continuing on the Board and completing their current terms are Penrose Jackson, President; Jay Fayette, Vice President; Chip Hart, Shireen Hart, Ron Rose, and Howard Verman.

The Board bid a grateful and fond farewell to student member Tim Rose who is now at Stonehill College in Massachusetts.

Mary McNamara was recognized for 20 years of service with the KidSafe/Community Network Board. Mary has retired from Vermont Catholic Charities and is now an honorary member of the KidSafe Board.



## KidSafe Board of Directors

<b>Penrose Jackson, President</b>	Fletcher Allen Health Care
<b>Jay Fayette, Vice President</b>	Pizzagalli Construction Co.
<b>Kurt Liebegott, Treasurer</b>	PKC Corporation
<b>Suzanne Koch, Secretary</b>	HowardCenter
<b>Chip Hart</b>	Physician's Computer Company
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<b>Howard Kalfus</b>	VT Department of Public Safety
<b>Jeff Morin</b>	JMM Associates
<b>Ron Rose</b>	IBM Systems & Technology Group
<b>Carolyn Smith</b>	Northern Benefits
<b>Howard Verman</b>	Strategies for College, Inc
<b>Honorary Board Members</b>	
<b>Dr. Joseph Hagan, Jr.</b>	Pediatrician
<b>Janet Munt</b>	Former Vermont State Senator
<b>Mary McNamara</b>	Retired, Vermont Catholic Charities
	<i>*Businesses listed for informational purposes only</i>
<b>Sally Borden,</b> Executive Director	

## "Out at the Old Ball Game"



This summer, I had the opportunity to sell 50-50 raffle tickets at a Lake Monsters game in support of KidSafe. The best part of the evening for me was talking with fans about KidSafe. I had the chance to answer questions about what KidSafe does, its mission and the scope of its services.

Members of the South Burlington Rotary Club volunteered to help with the ticket sales, increasing our presence at the game and having a great time greeting the fans in the stands. While the game crowd was relatively small due to the weather, the folks selling the raffle tickets were enthusiastic! It was a great evening at the old ballpark for both baseball fans and supporters of KidSafe Collaborative!

*By Jeff Morin, KidSafe Board Member*

## Tragedies Prompt Statewide Response

*(continued from page 1)*

most directly to the families with the highest level of need. This "differential response" system will allow Family Services to provide services and supports that can help families safely care for their children in lower risk situations, while focusing their most intensive investigations and resources on the higher risk situations.

These as well as other changes address issues raised by the federal review of Vermont's DCF Family Services last year. They focus on the "front end" of the child welfare system, something KidSafe has long advocated for. Most importantly, they are important steps toward improving child safety in Vermont.



Originally produced in 1991, this collection has been re-released on compact disc in honor of the 30th anniversary of the official formation of the Chittenden County Child Protection Network. A wonderful gift possibility—catchy songs, and 80% of the proceeds go to KidSafe, thanks to the generous Vermont artists who participated.

\$15 per copy; ordering information at [www.kidsafe@kidsafevt.org](mailto:www.kidsafe@kidsafevt.org) or call 802 863-9626.



# KidSafe Community Advisory Board: Making a Difference!

by Howard Verman, KidSafe Board Member and Community Advisory Board Member



KidSafe's Community Advisory Board (CAB) to the Department of

Children and Families-Family Services Division in Chittenden County (DCF) makes recommendations that can have a major impact on DCF's work with children and families.

One example: with budget tightening by the Governor and the state legislature earlier this year, it looked like DCF was going to have to make cuts in staff positions. Given the burdensome caseloads social workers handle already, the possibility of staff cuts was potentially devastating. On top of that, a federal review of statewide DCF practices recently cited a need for improvement in the level of worker contact with families.

If we need to increase social

worker contact with families, how can we justify cutting personnel? This is the issue Larry Martineau, Director of the Burlington DCF's Family Services office presented to the CAB. After some spirited debate, we tried to look at the problem from a different perspective.

We have long been hearing that social workers have to spend a large amount of time in the courthouse waiting for their cases to be called – lost time because they have no electronic access to their work while they wait. In addition, there are inefficiencies such as having to write case notes on paper and then go back to the office to re-enter the information on their desktop computers. Mobile devices would allow a much more efficient use of caseworker time!

Knowing that DCF included technology improvements as part of their strategic plan, we

advocated that the state immediately purchase laptops and cell phones for all caseworkers. The CAB presented this proposal to DCF Commissioner Steve Dale and to our Chittenden County legislators, asking them to reconsider proposed staff cuts and suggesting that a relatively small investment in technology would allow social workers to work more productively and have more client contact.

In May, Commissioner Steve came to our CAB meeting and informed us that DCF was moving forward with purchasing laptops as well as cell phones with e-mail and electronic file access. By September the new technology was in place, and Family Services caseworkers have been using them regularly.

It has been gratifying for the CAB to see our collaborative efforts make a difference!

## KidSafe Sixty 2008

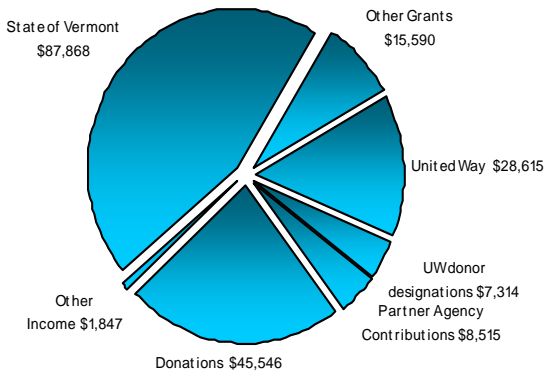
The third annual 60-mile bike ride organized by volunteer Peigi Huseby of Grand Isle raised nearly \$4,000 for KidSafe. Many thanks to all who rode and contributed to the success of the event. (See you next year!)



# Annual Report Fiscal Year 2008 (April 1, 2007 - March 31, 2008)

## Financial Summary

Revenue by Source



Revenue			Expenses		
State of Vermont	\$87,868	45%	Program Services	\$163,216	84%
Donations	45,546	23%	General		
United Way	28,615	15%	Administrative	14,799	8%
Other Grants	15,590	8%	Development	15,826	8%
Partner Agency Contributions	8,515	4%			
Other Income	1,847	1%			
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$195,294</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$193,841</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Looking Toward 2009

Penrose Jackson,  
Board President



With each passing year, KidSafe's balance sheet looks a bit stronger.

Four years ago our major federal grant ended, and we turned to colleagues, other grants, and philanthropy to help us continue the important work of helping human service providers connect more effectively to help our community keep our children safe and free from harm.

That said, as the current economic climate scares each of us personally, it scares us doubly at KidSafe. Why? First and foremost, we know that when family stress increases (as it does for those facing job losses, increasing food and fuel bills, looming medical costs), domestic violence and neglect also increase. We know that the need for our work will only increase.

The second reason is that we know everyone will be asking themselves what, if any, financial support they can offer to those outside their immediate families.

We hope we have proved our work to those generous individuals and foundations who have supported us in the past, and that they will continue to support us as the demand for our facilitation and support grows.

### KidSafe Collaborative Partner Agencies

Building Bright Futures of Chittenden County  
Casey Family Services  
Child Care Resource  
Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations/CAC  
Community Health Center of Burlington  
CVOEO/Head Start  
The Dream Project  
Fletcher Allen Health Care  
HowardCenter/Baird  
Kids on the Block—Vermont  
King Street Youth Center  
Lund Family Center  
Northeastern Family Institute  
Spectrum Youth and Family Services  
Visiting Nurse Association  
Vermont Catholic Charities  
Vermont Department for Children and Families  
Vermont Department of Corrections (Burlington P/P)  
Vermont Department of Health  
Winooski Family Center/Winooski School District  
Women Helping Battered Women  
Women's Rape Crisis Center  
YMCA

### Foundation and Grant Support

Fletcher Allen Community Health Foundation  
Permanent Fund for the Well-being of Vermont Children  
United Way of Chittenden County  
Vermont Women's Fund  
VT Agency of Human Services, Field Services Division  
VT Dept. for Children & Families, Family Services Division  
VT Dept. of Health, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program

### Event Sponsors/Corporate Donors

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MVP Health Care	The Tech Group
Northern Benefits	

### KidSafe Collaborative

308 Pine Street • Burlington, VT 05401  
802.863.9626 • kidsafevt@kidsafevt.org • www.kidsafevt.org

# Thank you! to our generous KidSafe Supporters

Our list reflects donations from April 1, 2007 through March 31, 2008. Donations received after March 31, 2008 will be acknowledged in future publications.

The accuracy of our donor lists is very important to us and we *strive to acknowledge every donor; please notify us if your name has been omitted or listed incorrectly.*

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# KidSafe Collaborative 19th Annual Awards Luncheon April 17th, 2008



*Luncheon MC  
Bill Little*



*Nancy Menard receives Lifetime Achievement Award, cheered on by Jane Helmstetter*



*DCF Commissioner  
Steve Dale*



*Representative Ann Pugh*

The 2008 KidSafe Luncheon, held at the Doubletree Hotel, was attended by more than 250 people; **William V. Little**, Vice President of MVP Health Care Vermont, served as the Master of Ceremonies.



Penrose Jackson, Board President, and DCF Commissioner Steve Dale recognized **Sally Borden**, KidSafe Collaborative's Executive Director, for her ten years of outstanding leadership.

As in years past, a major highlight of the luncheon was the recognition of individuals and groups who have helped make children safer in our community. The following received awards:



*Kim Coe and her children*

**Nancy Menard**, 2008 KidSafe Lifetime Achievement Award. Nancy recently retired as the Burlington District Director for the Vermont Department of Health.

**Kimberly-Ann Coe**, Director of Residential Treatment and Community Services, Lund Family Center, 2008 KidSafe Outstanding Professional Award.

**John Halligan**, Outstanding Volunteer Award.

**Ann Pugh**, UVM Department of Social Work Faculty & State Representative, KidSafe Gregory Packan Children's Advocacy Award.

**Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations (CUSI)**, 2008 Outstanding Collaboration Award.

**Brian Plisko**, Spectrum Youth and Family Services, 2008 KidSafe Outstanding Young Professional Award.

**Dave Martin**, DCF Winooski Unit, and **Dorigen Keeney**, MS, RD, The Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger, Honorable Mention.



*CUSI's Kris Carlson and  
Sandy O'Sullivan*

**Building Bright Futures** recognized its **10th Annual Early Childhood Professionals of the Year**. The Family Care Award was given to **Heather Friedrichsen** of Heather's House; the Center-Based Care Award was given to **Jennifer Severance**, an Greater Burlington YMCA Early Education Teacher.



*The Halligans with  
FHTMS students Abby  
Wright and Angela Elcan*



*Heather  
Friedrichsen (top),  
Jennifer Severance*



*Thank you to Peigi  
Huseby for donating a  
gorgeous hand-made quilt!*

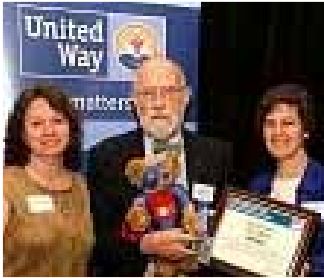


*Thank you to all of our dedicated volunteers!*

Photos courtesy of Warren Ayer Photography © 2008



# United Way Hometown Heroes!



John Bisbee with Carol Kauffman (l), Sally Borden (r)

## 2007 Hometown Hero

Just after our last KidSafe NewsNotes went to press, John Bisbee received one of our area's most prestigious awards: the 2007 United Way Hometown Hero Award in the Senior Adult category.

Nominated by KidSafe, John has been a guardian ad litem for nearly 20 years, representing hundreds of children in the family court system.

At a September '07 testimonial tribute attended by over 330 people, a local mother whose adopted daughter had received years of assistance from John described how his loving care and concern had helped her daughter and hundreds of other Chittenden County at-risk children.

We'd also like to congratulate Loretta Masi of Vermont Kin as Parents on her selection as a 2008 United Way Hometown Hero!

## 2008 Hometown Hero



John Halligan

This September, another KidSafe nominee, John Halligan was honored with a United Way Hometown Hero Award by the United Way of Chittenden County.

John was recognized for his dedication to preventing young people from being bullied, and to making life safer for them in schools and on-line. This work has included legislative advocacy, and has made a significant difference in the lives of countless children and families.

In 2003, John lost his son Ryan to suicide, as a result of bullying. In honor of Ryan's memory, John has been willing to share his personal story with others. His message has been that adults can and must address the risks of bullying and depression in their families and communities, and that youth have the power to look out for and protect friends.

## Vermont's Juvenile Judicial Proceedings Undergo Revision

The laws governing Vermont's juvenile court - where child in need of care and supervision (CHINS) petitions and delinquency cases, are heard - have been revised, resulting in significant changes which will take effect January 1, 2009.

The revisions improve how the juvenile laws are organized; Chapter 55 of Title 33, is replaced with Chapters 51 (general), 52 (delinquency) and 53 (CHINS).

A few key points about the new Juvenile Proceedings law:

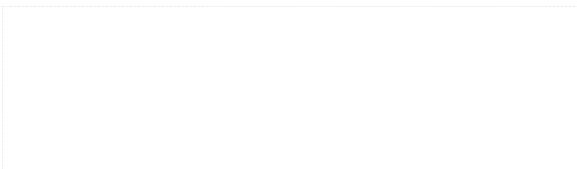
- ◆ Core principles of Vermont's Family Court are maintained:
  - Family preservation consistent with a child's safety and well-being.
  - Due process.
  - The right of every child to a stable, safe and nurturing home.
- ◆ Early resolution of cases and elimination of delays.
  - Early identification and location of non-custodial parents;
- ◆ Increased frequency of reviews to ensure compliance with case plan.
- ◆ Preservation of family relationships:
  - Allows child to remain at home under court ordered conditions and subject to Dept. of Children and Families monitoring;
  - Establishes a custodial preference (in CHINS cases) that emphasizes options to keep children out of state's custody while ensuring that they remain safe;
  - Requires the identification and evaluation of kinship resources early in the case;
  - Addresses parent child contact at every stage of the proceedings;
  - Permits court ordered contact between child and sibling, relative or persons with whom the child has a significant relationship.

There are also important terminology changes, for example: the term "detention" is no longer used to refer to children coming into state custody; there will be an "Emergency Care Order" followed by a "Temporary Care Order," etc.



KidSafe Board member Howard Kalfus, an attorney with the VT Dept. of Public Safety who has a long history of serving as a strong advocate on behalf of children and families, served on the committee, convened by the Honorable Amy Davenport, Administrative Judge for VT Trial Courts, which undertook a comprehensive review of the juvenile proceedings. The committee included attorneys representing children, parents and the state, social workers, a victim's advocate and a prosecutor.

For complete text of the new statutes, go to:  
<http://www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes/>



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## KidSafe and Vermont Lake Monsters Team Up!



KidSafe hit a home run when we were selected as the 2008 Official Charity of the Vermont Lake Monsters! A huge thanks to General Manager C.J. Knudsen and the entire organization for coordinating a summer full of activities including raffles, an auction, information tables for KidSafe and our community partners, appearances by the ever-popular Champ, and opportunities for local kids to meet the team.

👉 The Lake Monsters and KidSafe have agreed to partner again in 2009! You can purchase tickets and support KidSafe with your purchase by visiting [www.vermontlakemonsters.com/store](http://www.vermontlakemonsters.com/store). Be sure to click "KidSafe Supporter", under "How did you hear about us?"

### *Save the Date!*

KidSafe Collaborative *20th* Annual Awards Luncheon

Tuesday April 14, 2009  
11:30AM - 2:00PM

DoubleTree Hotel, 1117 Williston Road, South Burlington, VT 05403

*Master of Ceremonies: Dr. Lewis First, Chief of Pediatrics,  
Vermont Children's Hospital at Fletcher Allen Health Care*

