

DIRECTOR SEARCH DOCUMENT

THE SEARCH

Mary Johnson Children's Center seeks a Director to continue the leadership of this well-established non-profit that has served the families of Addison County for fifty years.

Since its beginning in 1970, Mary Johnson has been committed to encouraging and celebrating families, and high-quality early childhood and school age programming.

MJCC is fortunate to have a history of stable and committed leadership. Staff turnover across the organization is unusually low as well, resulting in a strong and reliable organization where staff feel valued and supported, and where the work is rewarding.

The board of directors is cognizant that matching the organization's needs and culture with the right leader is critical to continuing this successful track record.

MJCC is seeking a candidate who can work in partnership with the board, staff, community partners, and funders (current and prospective) to design and execute a plan for strategic program development that conforms to community needs, is mindful of the financial climate, and keeps a watchful eye on changing government and social issues in order to respond and adjust course accordingly.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CENTER

In 1970 a group of concerned Middlebury residents decided that the community needed a safe, supportive program for the children of families who needed to work outside of the home. Now, 50 years later, the Center offers a wide array of services to children and families in Addison County and oversees initiatives that cover the entire early childhood and school age systems locally and statewide.

CURRENT PROGRAMS

•Early Childhood

Currently the Center operates three early childhood programs, each serving families who represent the economic and social diversity found in our community. Approximately 50% of the children enrolled in the Center's early childhood programs receive state childcare subsidy support.

- (1) Mary Johnson Children's Center, 81 Water Street, Middlebury

This program serves 70 children three months to kindergarten year-round. The Water Street location is the original Center location and also houses the administrative offices.

The Center has been accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children for longer than any other licensed center in the state of Vermont.

The Center uses a model of therapeutic childcare that supports children who struggle with social, emotional and behavioral challenges. This care focuses on providing a reparative or compensatory experience for young children who, for either internal or environmental reasons, struggle with the people in their world. The Center has formed a partnership with our local mental health agency that provides regular, ongoing supervision and support for classroom teaching staff doing direct service. The Center has twenty children currently being served by this model.

- (2) Middlebury Cooperative Nursery School, 391 East Main Street, East Middlebury

This program serves 30 children year-round in a 1900's two room school house in East Middlebury. Founded in the 1930 as part day parent cooperative nursery school, the Co-Op was acquired by the Center after it became clear to the parent led organization that the

time needed to operate the non-profit had moved beyond their capacity.

- (3) Orwell Early Education Program, Orwell Village School, Orwell Vermont
Housed in the Orwell Village School the Orwell Early Childhood serves 25 children and families in an academic year full day program.

•School Age Programs

MJCC offers a comprehensive system of after school care. Six school age programs operate at elementary schools throughout Addison County for children 5-12. A variety of school year, summer and enrichment programs are offered to 425 children. Currently the Center operates programs in Middlebury, Salisbury, Weybridge, New Haven, Bristol and Starksboro.

•STARS: STARS is Vermont's quality recognition system for childcare, preschool, and afterschool programs., MJCC has administered the program for the State of Vermont since 2010

•Referral Services: Families seeking care can receive current information about available child care openings throughout the county.

•Child Care Financial Assistance Program (formerly the Subsidy Program) provides assistance with child care costs for qualifying families through this state funded program.

Middlebury Nourishes- Middlebury Nourishes is a summer lunch program in Middlebury that serves over 12,000 free lunches over an eight-week period. The program serves lunch to any child up to age 18 who shows up.

•RFD: RFD (Rural Fun Delivery) operates for eight weeks each summer, taking meals and activities to underserved part of the county.

From the outset Mary Johnson Children's Center developed a reputation as a valuable resource for all parents across the Addison County –regardless of age or socio-economic status.

WHERE THE CENTER IS TODAY

The Center's reputation both locally and at a state level is of an organization known for the high quality of its services and programs. The programs are supported through a myriad of funding streams including state and private grants, private tuitions, state subsidies and fundraising. Most grants are renewed annually and are vulnerable to state and federal fiscal realities/pressures.

Projects:

In addition to these core programs, the Center develops both short-and-long term projects to meet emerging needs. Examples of the innovative responses to those needs include the RFD Program and Middlebury Nourishes.

- The Center is working on creating a new early childhood program in Vergennes. The Center owns land in Vergennes and draft architectural plans have been completed with the help of a planning grant from the Vermont Community Development Program.

Fundraising:

An annual campaign mailing goes out to donors each spring. These efforts have realized some success with individual donors having increased both the amount and frequency of giving.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT DIRECTOR

The successful candidate will possess a combination of skills, knowledge, and attributes that will assure the Center fully leverages emergent opportunities and skillfully and nimbly navigates anticipated and unforeseen challenges.

The Director will assure the long-term viability of the organization, as well as the success of children, and families across the Addison County.

Over its 50-year history the Center has grown organically in response to emerging needs and opportunities. The Center now needs to undertake a comprehensive strategic planning process to help identify the community's current needs as well as its opportunities for growth. A part of this work should include an updating and revision of its mission and vision.

The work to support the organization fits under four broad categories.

Finance and sustainability:

The Center operates on a tight budget with pressures on many fronts. About 38% of the budget comes from one state department, and those grants and contracts have been level-funded for many years.

With many moving parts, the Director manages the inevitable tensions between prudent fiscal management and the needs of a professional workforce.

Programs and services:

With numerous programs and projects under its umbrella, the Center is a reliable go-to agency for Addison County's community partners, citizens, schools, and businesses when it comes to the needs of children, and families. The Center serves as a regional hub for families with children, and supports families across a range of needs. Increasingly, a growing demand for data, evidence, and effectiveness is driving new ways of demonstrating accountability. The Center director will need to be an advocate for the organization's role in this dynamic environment.

Facilities and technology:

The Center owns three properties, two adjoining properties on Water Street and the Middlebury Children's Cooperative in East Middlebury. While several large projects have been completed on each of these properties over the past few years, as with old buildings everywhere, there are ongoing maintenance and capital improvements needs.

The Center has maintained an upgraded computer system, both hardware and software. Staying relatively current with those systems and ensuring digital and data security will continue to be important priorities for the Director and the organization's leaders.

Organizational culture:

The Director serves as an organizational, regional, and state leader, significantly influencing the tone and tenor of how staff work with families, and how the agency interfaces with other regional organizations and influences policy at the state level.

MJCC has created a culture that expects transparent decision making, encourages diverse points of view, engages in continuous improvement, and is focused on family strengths and resilience. The next Director should be prepared to continue and grow these traditions.

THE DIRECTOR WILL HAVE DEMONSTRATED COMPETENCE IN THESE AREAS

- Managing people and money
- Communicating orally and in writing
- Understanding and applying strengths-based approaches to child, youth, and family development
- Navigating Vermont's human service system, especially in the early childhood and youth services arenas
- Using data to measure program performance and whole population well-being
- Negotiating contracts
- Leading organizational, regional, and state efforts to improve outcomes
- Fundraising and grant writing
- Planning strategically
- Leading teams
- Supporting a work and organizational culture that is rooted in respect, inclusion, accountability, humor, and empowerment. We hope this opportunity excites you. If it does, please send your resume and letter of interest to