“Families need and deserve a place to feel that they are honored and contribute to the greater community.”

—Jackie Reno, Preschool Director and Children’s Programming Coordinator
The Janet S. Munt Family Room
It is my great pleasure to contribute to the first annual report for the Janet S. Munt Family Room as an independent nonprofit organization. While we have been serving families in our community for thirty years, this first year of our independence has been a busy and joyful one. The energy and dedication of staff and volunteers and the deep satisfaction of families in our program continue to astound me.

While Family Room staff remain hard at work connecting families with the services they need, the board has been busy securing funding for subsequent years of operation, establishing and refining relationships in the community, and developing a strategic plan to ensure the organization remains financially stable and maintains high quality programs and staff. Many thanks to our myriad mentors and advisors in this process- it has been a true group effort!

Our challenge has been to balance the very real need to expand programming with our desire to build a reserve fund for longevity. Our strategic plan, which we continue to revisit and revise, focuses on the following goals:

• **Supporting Children:** increasing skilled staff in our preschool and playgroups
• **Supporting Parents:** increasing skilled staff hours in workshops and support groups for parents, as well as expanding our home visiting service
• **Supporting Staff:** offering full benefits to eligible staff and a livable wage to all employees
• **Supporting the Organization:** improving data collection and management to allow more useful evaluation, diversifying our funding and building a reserve, and improving our visibility in the community

This year we made progress towards these goals by hiring a new preschool teacher/playgroup facilitator and partnering with other organizations to provide more parent workshops. We are expanding our monitoring and evaluation practices focused on results and community impact with new tools and a new database, designed by a Family Room parent and volunteer. We are pleased to end our first fiscal year with a small surplus, which allows us to move into next year with greater confidence.

Board work has been very demanding, and I’d like to thank all those who have served this year. The combined talents and efforts of this dedicated team have allowed us to remain attentive to the big picture, while staff focus on direct service to families.

I remain in awe of what is possible at the Janet S. Munt Family Room, and committed to ensuring it has the resources it needs to succeed.

With gratitude,
Sophia Donforth
Board Chair
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

I remember the uncertainty of June 2017. Will we be able to be open? Who will work here? Should we close for the summer? All of those worries are behind us now. The Family Room community is healthy, growing and doing what we always have done, be there for families. Our staff have been amazing throughout the transition and our first year. We are grateful for our talented Board of Directors who have stood alongside the staff in our mission. It cannot go unsaid, that we would not be where we are today if it weren’t for our strong core of volunteers and a community that values what we do.

Upon a successful transition to being a stand alone nonprofit, we started with a bare bones budget and minimal programming. By the fall, through successful fundraising efforts, the Family Room was able to bring back some of our most important programs, Crawlers, Waddlers and Toddlers, Early Months and Strong Families with a wonderful collaboration with Lund. We were also able to introduce a prenatal program for fathers called Training Camp for New Dads.

Having few resources prompted us to strengthen and creatively collaborate with several organizations. We worked with many organizations to continue to provide the most service for families. We are grateful for work with the Association of Africans Living in Vermont, the Department of Children and Families, Vermont Adult Learning, The Vermont Foodbank, several connections with UVM Medical Center and Vermont Community Garden Network.
In April, Sophia Donforth, our board chair, received the Janet S. Munt Outstanding Prevention Award from KidSafe Collaborative. This was a testament to the outstanding work of the Sophia, our Board of Directors and an incredibly supportive community.

We prioritize expanding our home visiting program, which decreased substantially last year, because it provides the connection, education and gateway to other important services. Home visiting helps to mitigate damaging isolation for high risk families and can connect them to a bevy of community resources. We act as a trusted liaison for much needed help within the system so families receive the support they need, in the way they need it, and have access to opportunities to create their own network of support.

We recognize the need for more programming is still there and I am excited about the opportunities for growth in the coming year!

Best,
Josh Miller
Executive Director

**Mission**
The Janet S. Munt Family Room is a place that builds healthy, connected communities by supporting families and young children.

**Vision**
Our vision is that every family is connected, healthy, and strong. The Janet S. Munt Family Room is a leader in fostering community and accompanying families as they realize their potential.

Vermont’s statewide network of Parent Child Centers is recognized in Time Magazine.

Family Room programming moves to its current location at St. Joseph School.

Burlington begins receiving more refugees and immigrants and the Family Room becomes a second home for many New Americans. This is also the first year of the Federal Fatherhood Grant, allowing the Family Room to expand its services for dads.

The Janet S. Munt Family Room becomes an independent organization and gains non-profit status. Our namesake, Senator Janet S. Munt, passes away, and is remembered by all as a visionary and pioneer in advocation for the health of families with young children.

The Janet S. Munt Family Room celebrates 30 years of offering support and connection to families in the greater Burlington area.
The Family Room works with families at a crucial time in their children’s development, ages 0-5. It is a period when Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) including household challenges and traumatic experiences, such as abuse or neglect, result in increased instability for children. According to the Center for Disease Control, ACEs are linked to an elevated risk of chronic health conditions, risky health behaviors, low success rate (e.g., school completion), and early death. The more ACEs, the greater risk of these negative outcomes.

Preventing ACEs is important for individual children and also for the community in which they grow up. 90% of families served by the FR report at least 2 ACE factors and 40% report more than 4 ACE factors (the highest measured by the CDC). Research indicates that a variety of protective factors, including a connection to a caring community and building habits of self-care, help individuals survive ACEs to live healthier lives. Four strategies that have proven to help prevent ACEs are home visiting, parent training, social support for parents, and high quality child care. The Janet S. Munt Family Room provides them all and does so in a way that is culturally competent and empowering for caregivers.

Our programs support families with young children by engaging children in activities that encourage healthy growth, by helping parents develop the skills they need, and by connecting families to community resources and to each other. Our accessibility and flexibility allow us to meet families where they are, offer opportunities for growth, and create a joyful and open atmosphere where we can learn from each other.
Family Play
We offer a drop-in playgroup for parents and caregivers with children ages 0-5. The Family Room provides play spaces with an array of age-appropriate activities including gross motor play, sensory play, music and movement, singing, literacy and open play. The Family Room staff encourage connection and community as we eat, sing, talk and play together. Lunch is provided.

English Language Learners (ELL)
In collaboration with Vermont Adult Learning and with the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program, the Family Room provides child care while parents participate in English classes.

Summer Garden Program (May-September)
We offer a drop-in playgroup for parents and caregivers with children ages 0-5 at the Ethan Allen Homestead in Burlington. The Family Room provides transportation to and from the Homestead. Families can sign up for a garden plot, learn effective gardening techniques and play with their children in a vibrant outdoor environment.

Strong Families Program
This is a 12 week enrolled program for mothers and their young children ages 0-5. Participants meet in a group facilitated by our skilled staff to learn effective parenting strategies with each other, learn about self-care and develop a network of support.
Crawlers, Waddlers and Toddlers
We offer a drop-in playgroup for parents and caregivers with children ages 0-3. It provides an age appropriate playspace for infants and toddlers to discover movement, engage in play and interact with other children. Parents connect with each other and share their joys and challenges of parenting. Lunch is provided.

Early Months
We offer a drop-in infant massage class where new mothers bond with their babies and help their children to relax. The group also provides moms an opportunity to connect with other new parents and receive post-partum support.

Fathers and Children Together (FACT)
We offer a drop-in playgroup for dads and their children ages 0-7. Dads connect with other dads, participate in fun activities and have dinner together, provided by the Family Room.

Crawlers, Waddlers and Toddlers
We offer a drop-in playgroup for parents and caregivers with children ages 0-3. It provides an age appropriate playspace for infants and toddlers to discover movement, engage in play and interact with other children. Parents connect with each other and share their joys and challenges of parenting. Lunch is provided.

Home Visiting Program
This enrolled program offers additional support through staff home visits to families with children ages 0-5. Family Room staff utilize the Parents As Teachers curriculum, which promotes optimal early development, learning and health of young children by supporting and engaging their parents and caregivers.
Preschool
We offer an enrolled part-time preschool that uses an emergent curriculum geared toward meeting the needs of the students and the classroom. This is a five-star licensed preschool. STARS is the Step Ahead Recognition System, which is Vermont’s system for recognizing quality programs for children. Five stars is the highest recognition.

Fatherhood Parent Education and Support Group
This enrolled group focuses on strengthening participants sense of self and increasing the critical role and value fathers have in their children’s lives by building relationship and communication skills and practical parenting skills. This includes a basic understanding of child development, emotional literacy and how to be connected with our children in a positive and healthy way.

Zainab, mother of three from Somalia, moved to Vermont in 2009 after living for 19 years in a dangerous refugee camp in Kenya. At the Family Room she met a large community of friends and learned skills to support her family like sewing and gardening, and received childcare while she studied English.

FAMILY FEATURE

Zainab Osman

“The Family Room changed my life a lot. Before coming I was shy and lonely, now I speak English and feel more confident and brave. When I’m here I don’t worry about my family in Africa or think about the bad things that happened. I feel energy, the kids are happy and everyone is together.”
I wish many things could be different, so much damage has been done, including the ripple effect of my absence during my two jail sentences on my relationship with my children. I don’t have custody of my daughter and this is the only time we spend together each week. One night a week is huge for me because not seeing my daughter was like trying to swallow sandpaper. I like the group format because everything is consistent. I don’t normally have dinner at the same time. I don’t always hold my daughter accountable and we do that at the Family Room. I don’t normally do song and dance and this gives me a chance to get out of my comfort zone. At Dad’s night (Fathers and Children Together) I learn how to play. My daughter loves Dad’s night too and counts the days until we go again.

87% of parents said their knowledge of available community support increased at the Family Room
90% of families indicate at least 2 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Participants indicated an 89% increase in protective factors, (conditions or attributes that help people deal more effectively with stressful events and mitigate or eliminate risk in families).
Number of languages spoken: 25
Arabic, Bosnian, Burmese, Cape Verdean, Chinese, Dinka, English, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Karen, Kirundi, Lingala, Maay Maay, Nepali, Nepali Sign Language, Portuguese, Pular, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tibetan, and Vietnamese.

Participants come from across Chittenden County: 60% from Burlington, other large clusters in South Burlington, Winooski, Colchester, Essex Junction, and Shelburne. 40% of participants are refugees and immigrants.

Number of Regular Volunteers: 65
Total Number of Children in FY18 Ages 0-5: 275
Total Number of Families Served in FY18: 247
Just as we encourage parents and caregivers to build a strong support network, we know that our work is only possible through the generous contributions of our many partners, donors, and volunteers. We would like to thank all those who contributed funds, time and skills in our first year as an independent nonprofit organization, with special recognition to:

- Grace and Ishmael Ahmed
- The Morris and Bessie Altman Foundation
- City of Burlington
- The Buffum Family Foundation
- John Canning
- Barbara Cate
- Anne Damrosch
- Patricia Fontaine
- Mary Hart
- The Hoehl Foundation
- Nell Ishee and Stephen Mann
- Ann Mann
- The Redducs Chartered Foundation Group
- The Turrell Fund
- United Way
- Christina Wagner

**Board of Directors:**

Sophia Donforth, *Chair*
Hannah Burnett, *Treasurer*
Katy Wallace, *Secretary*
Suzy Finnefrock
Kath Laing
Bobby Riley
Meg Mclaughlin
Association of Africans Living in Vermont

The Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV) is a great partner of the Family Room. AALV helps new Americans from all parts of the world gain independence in their new communities through a range of integration services, including bridging case management, workforce development, behavioral health awareness, and interpreter services. More than half of the refugee and immigrant families at the Family Room also utilize AALV, and through this partnership we have been able to support families more effectively.

Department of Children and Families

The Family Room works closely with the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Through this collaboration, we have been able to provide extra layers of support for high-risk families, from providing home visits to attending safety planning meetings to providing space for over 300 supervised visits at the Family Room this year. We work with DCF or with families who work with DCF every day we offer programs. We look forward to strengthening these relationships so we can continue to work with families to help them get what they need to have a healthy and safe family.

The Family Room is a hub of support for families with young children, offering many resources beyond our regular programming through partnerships and close collaboration with other area organizations. The Family Room works with 40+ community partners, including:

**Food**
- Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf
- The Vermont Foodbank
- Women Infants Children (WIC)

**Education**
- Building Bright Futures
- Head Start
- Vermont Adult Learning
- Vermont Humanities Council
- YMCA

**Healthy Child Development**
- Department of Children and Families
- Easter Seals
- Lund Family Center
- Parent Child Center Network

**Safety**
- KidSafe Collaborative
- Steps to End Domestic Violence
- Prevent Child Abuse

**Resources for New Americans**
- Association of Africans Living in Vermont
- Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program

**Garden/Outdoors**
- Burlington Area Community Garden
- Vermont Community Garden Network
- Winooski River Valley Parks
2017-2018 FINANCIALS

REVENUE

- Individuals: $141,000.00
- Investments: $12,578.00
- Foundations: $117,617.67
- Government: $177,224.00

EXPENSES

- Program Delivery: $273,890.30
- Operations: $22,686.71
- Partnerships & Advocacy: $7,623.42
- Leadership & Management: $48,448.22

Total Revenue: $452,649.04

Total Expenses: $352,648.65

July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018
The Family Room provides a place that is safe and nurturing for all parents. It can be so easy for parents to feel isolated and alone, which is stressful, daunting, and has a rippling effect on the whole family. The Family Room provides a community. A place that is truly welcoming, celebrating diversity, and fostering long-lasting relationships between parents as well as between parents and staff.

—Suzy Finnefrock, Board Member