

# Rutland Herald

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## **VAC prepares housing for homeless families**

By [Brent Curtis](#) STAFF WRITER

A Rutland organization known for helping children and families will soon be housing them as well.

The Vermont Achievement Center is working to renovate and furnish a temporary homeless family shelter on its Park Street campus, according to VAC president and CEO Kiki McShane.

"We know that the motels are full and families are moving into campgrounds right now because of the economy," she said. "We have a good pulse on what the community needs and we literally have the space."

McShane said the nonprofit VAC is renovating a two-story house on the east edge of the center grounds. Formerly used as rental office space, the house is being converted to a three-bedroom and two-bedroom shelter for families trying to get back on their feet.

She said she hopes the shelter will open sometime this summer.

While VAC offers programs and services for families in need, the organization hasn't dabbled in housing before, McShane said.

But, she said, VAC will have help from a number of experienced housing groups including Rutland County Housing Coalition, BROCC, Easter Seals, Eckerd and Rutland County Women's Network which will refer families seeking housing to the Park Street shelter.

"We're definitely spearheading the program, but we're not alone in it," she said.

For families, there are few emergency sources of housing to be found in Rutland County.

While other emergency shelters, including the Open Door Mission just up the road on Park Street, provide emergency shelter to men and women, fast housing for whole families is in demand, McShane said.

"We're not trying to duplicate what's already out there," she said.

McShane said VAC is using volunteer labor to do much of the renovations and is accepting donations to furnish the home.

Much of the work is already done, but the organization listed an electric stove, bureaus for the bedrooms, kitchen chairs, kitchenware, lamps, a washer and dryer among their needs.

Anyone interested in donating time or items can call either Michelle Larose-Mangan or Karin Bar-Zeev at 775-2395.

[brent.curtis@rutlandherald.com](mailto:brent.curtis@rutlandherald.com)