



**For Immediate Release: December 29, 2017**

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**Portable Tent Offers St. Johnsbury First Night North Families a Place to Care for Children**

ST. JOHNSBURY — Nursing mothers and families attending the First Night North festivities in St. Johnsbury this weekend will have a warm, private space to breastfeed and change their young children. A portable tent, courtesy of the St. Johnsbury office of the Vermont Department of Health, will make its debut on New Year’s Eve. Equipped with seating and a changing station, the tent will be located outside the cafeteria of the St. Johnsbury School on Western Avenue, next to the Family Fun Fair.

This new community resource is a tent large enough for two adults., the portable tent provides space for caregivers to feed and diaper their young children. The tent will be available free of charge for use by organizations and events for children and families. The portable tent station, which can be easily assembled by one or two people can be reserved for use starting in January.

Health officials said the goal is to help communities and organizations be able to offer a comfortable, sheltered place to care for infants, making it easier for families to enjoy community activities like the First Night North celebration.

“We work with families, employers and community groups to foster breastfeeding-friendly environments,” said Amanda Bogie, local breastfeeding designee and nutritionist with the St. Johnsbury Local Health Office WIC program. “In the past, we have provided a tent at the Danville Fair and an air-conditioned camper at the Caledonia County Fair. We are excited to have something more portable that can be utilized for breast- or bottle-feeding by even more families.”

To reserve the portable tent, call 802-748-5151 to reach Abbie Montgomery, public health nurse supervisor at the St. Johnsbury Local Health Office.

The Vermont Department of Health supports new parents and caregivers through provision of educational programs, initiatives, and services related to early childhood growth and

development, pregnancy, infancy, nutrition, and breastfeeding. The portable tent is made possible with support from the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant.

**For information about how the St. Johnsbury Local Health Office supports families in the community,** visit <http://www.healthvermont.gov/local/st-johnsbury>.

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