

Continued from Page 5

the New North End and the South End have nowhere for children to go after school. "But you're taking the taxpayers' money to bring kids downtown for entertainment. My philosophy is that neighborhood centers are the answer."

Other critics fear that any project might whither if Driscoll should leave office. Sue Luck, senior program director for youth and families of the YMCA, says that the Youth Office's direct line to the mayor often leaves other groups out of the running when funding offers arise.

"I'd hate to see any youth development tied to an administration or any sort of politics that might die. That would hurt the kids of this city a lot," Luck says. "The YMCA is an old institution. We're going to be around a long, long time."

Other Youth Office projects have sparked debate. Last year, the Youth Office opened the Burlington Children's Space, a day-care center for 40 children and infants which provides services for sliding-scale fees, to allow child-care for low income families. The center has become an out-of-control, non-profit operation. Driscoll sits on the center's board of trustees.

Creating the day-care center was one of Driscoll's hardest fought battles. It took nearly two years of wrangling with aldermen to receive the seed money. Members of the day-care community said the plan for a sliding-scale program for infants, which requires a cost-of-care for every three children, would never make enough money to survive. The recent announcement by the Elizabeth Lund Home that it would discontinue for financial reasons its 30-place, child-care program bears out, the precarious nature of such projects.

But Sue Kunz, director of the Burlington Children's Space, says that for the coming year, "We're financially sound." Kunz adds that the space's financial stability relies on fund-raising beyond tuition.

Kunz says demand for day-care is underscored by the space's large applicant pool. "The waiting list for infants includes people who are just planning on having babies," she says. Infants under 3 years old are charged \$63 to \$84 a week for full-time care. Preschoolers pay \$53 to \$74 a week.



Jane Driscoll and Mayor Bernard Sanders chat at Trinity College in January of 1982.

*"She's not a particularly good bureaucrat. On occasion she's offended people, but I'm not sure that's a bad thing."*

*Bernard Sanders*

"Whenever you do something different, like sliding fees, they say it's impossible," Driscoll says. "Now a lot of people are talking about doing the same thing. It's having a ripple effect."

The Youth Office publishes the Queen City Special once every three weeks. It is written, photographed and edited by high school students from around the Burlington area. The 7,000-circulation paper earns three-fourths of its cost — more than \$5,000 through May — with advertising revenues. Driscoll says, while the rest of the money comes from the Youth Office budget.

Much of the paper is devoted to previews and reviews of local rock groups and cultural events. The paper also has delved into nuclear disarmament, education, the drinking age and other issues of concern to youth. Its controversial editorials have been widely criticized, but Driscoll takes pride in the initiative the student journalists have shown in producing the paper.

"It's made a difference in the image of young people in the community," Driscoll says about the paper. "It gives the

kids a voice. I'm concerned about youth empowerment. Unless they have a voice, they have no power."

The Youth Office recently ran Summer City Camps, two-week seminars in art, photography, creative writing, video, graphic design and journalism. Driscoll hoped to use some of the journalism assignments as articles for the Queen City Special, but the expressed concern that the teacher had too many article ideas of his own.

David Hilberg, a Burlington High School graduate who works as the Queen City Special arts editor, came into Driscoll's office to find out where the journalism class would meet. Before he left, Driscoll put her hands on Hilberg's shoulders. "Remember," she said. "I want the ideas to come from the kids."

For the past two summers, the Youth Office with the Burlington Peace Coalition sponsored the International Work Camp, bringing teenagers from Western and Eastern Europe and Latin America to the Burlington area as a gesture of international cooperation. The office has orga-

nized a job recruiting program for area youths and businesses in the winter. It operates Operation Snowshovel, employing students to clear snow from the homes of Burlington's needy elderly.

The Youth Office has put on the annual Battle of the Bands, teen concerts in Battery Park, a New Year's Eve teen dance, roller skating trips for hundreds of children and several drama productions. The office also played a major role in starting the Old North End Little League.

Much of Driscoll's work involves advising people how to get things done. Members of the Vermont Skateboard Association who were planning a skate-in and rock concert for Battery Park came by her office, not to get money, but to pick up a list of people who could help promote the event. A man from Sacramento dropped by to get information about starting a newspaper for students in his city. Sometimes children come in just to talk.

"Kids always take precedence," Driscoll says about the times when she is busy. "If the phone rings and it's a kid, I take it. If it's an adult, I tell them to leave a message."

Before Sanders created the Youth Office, children often were overlooked by city government, Driscoll says. Their problems were handled by private groups, schools or the parks department. City Hall served as a site for adult activities: registering deeds, purchasing marriage licenses, requesting zoning changes.

Driscoll sees a special need for teen programs. "Adolescence is one of the roughest stages people go through in life," she says. "It's often very lonely. I've noticed that adults will do everything for children to make them happy, but when they get together with teen-agers, it's like they don't know how to talk (to each other)."

Driscoll has drawn heat for taking stands on issues that fall outside the Youth Office's auspices. She spoke out at school budget hearings, Board of Aldermen hearings and even on international issues. One of her earliest journeys into the spotlight arose after an emotional speech she delivered to Aldermen following a talk by a Catholic activist from Northern Ireland whom Driscoll supported.

"I was surprised at the amount of press I got, but it was interesting to see how seven minutes of impromptu speaking could create such a stir," she says. "If it were yesterday, I'd do it again. I definitely temper what I say now, though. My feelings about the school department are much stronger than what I say publicly."

Sanders says: "She's not a particularly good bureaucrat. On occasion she's offended people, but I'm not sure that's a bad thing."

Driscoll says a life outside politics attracts her. She talked about taking a six-month vacation in Ireland. Becoming a journalist interests her too. She is an editor of *The Progressive*, a forthcoming newsletter published by Burlington's Progressive Coalition party. She hopes the Youth Office will endorse after her departure from City Hall; she doesn't want to work there forever.

Before the last mayoral election, Sanders organized over whether to run or not. He has hinted about his aspirations for higher office such as the governorship. Would Driscoll follow him elsewhere?

"I don't know yet," she says. "It depends on where he's going." □