



what matters.™

Community Connection

Green Mountain United Way

Serving the communities of Caledonia, Essex, Orange, Orleans and Washington Counties of Vermont

Mission: To improve lives by mobilizing the caring powers of communities.

February 2008

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GMUW Staff & Locations

Nancy Zorn, Executive Director

Madeleine Roy, Community

Development & Marketing

Kate Binns, Program Director

Wanda Baril, Executive Assistant

Brenda Thompson, Administrative

Assistant

963 Paine Turnpike N #2

Montpelier, VT 05602-9163

Tel: 802-229-9532

Fax: 802-223-0273

E-mail: gmunitedway@madriver.com

Northeast Kingdom Office:

P. O. Box 882

Barton, VT 05822

Tel & Fax: 802-525-9597

E-mail: gmunitedway@vtlink.net

We're Almost There!!

Everyone at Green Mountain United Way is very excited at the results of the annual campaign thus far. You will remember that the goal set at the kick-off event last Sept. 18 was \$625,000 as announced by Campaign Chair Steve Post, of the VT State Employees Credit Union.

As of Jan. 9th, we have reached **\$589,700**, which represents approximately 94% of the goal. This is totally amazing, especially in these difficult economic times. Obviously, our supporters see an even bigger reason to continue to assist us and are not letting us down.

We still have until March 31st to raise that last 6% (\$35,300), or more (!) and we're confident that it can and will be done. We send thanks to all who have already donated or pledged and encourage those who have not yet done so to contact our Berlin office at 802-229-9532. Be a part of the solution to improve our local communities.

Central Vermont Coalition for Health Gears Up for the New Year!

On January 18, the Central Vermont Coalition for Health (CVCH), a dynamic group of health care providers, afterschool activity directors, the Department of Health, and other interested parties convened to strategize for 2008.

In the past year, CVCH has organized strong workgroups revolving around the issues of wellness and prevention, oral health, substance abuse, chronic disease, and mental health. The workgroups have focused in on specific issues identified by the Health and Wellness Forum in 2006 and will be moving forward some great plans. Perhaps one of the most exciting developments is the newly formed partnership with the Barre Rotary Club.

Each year the Barre Rotary Club hosts a Home Show and Health Fair. All of the proceeds from this event are then donated to a variety of community events and projects in Barre. CVCH will be working closely to support the Health Fair efforts this year and help the Rotary Club expand it in the next. The Health Fair allows people to learn about healthy food choices, have their blood pressure & cholesterol checked (for free!), and become involved in health efforts throughout the region. The Barre Home Show & Health Fair will occur in the last week of April.

In addition to this event, CVCH will continue its efforts to advocate for a healthy Vermont, share information between groups, and encourage collaborations. If you would like to become involved please contact Kate Binns at gmunitedway@madriver.com. Meetings are always open!

Contact GMUW in Berlin, VT at 802-229-9532

Housing – Part 3

(This is the final of 3 installments on Affordable Housing submitted by Nicole DiDomenico of Norwich University and member of GMUW's Board of Directors.)

In this final installment on Affordable Housing, we will be exploring ways in which you can join other individuals and organizations in becoming an advocate for affordable housing and a catalyst for change in your community. If you are among those who have personally experienced a difficult time accessing affordable housing or have witnessed family, friends or neighbors lose their homes or bounce from one living situation to another due to economic hardship, there are ways you can help.

There are several active organizations advocating for better, more affordable housing for Vermonters, and it is passionate, interested citizens that keep these initiatives going. The **Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness**, which can be found at www.helpingtohouse.org, organizes teams of service and resource providers, housing coordinators and developers and other stakeholders by region to monitor the needs in their areas and “streamline local services and housing,” according to their website.

Another effective initiative worth exploring is the **Vermont Housing Awareness Campaign**. Whether you are able to contribute financially or not, the Campaign is also seeking members to: appear on local radio and television stations to speak out on behalf of the housing crunch; write opinion pieces for various local publications; participate in Campaign presentations to spread the word of this effort; and help to advertise the Campaign’s work either at your place of business or on your organization’s website. To learn more, visit www.housingawareness.org.

The key is to first better educate yourself about the increasingly complex issues around Vermont housing shortages, and then find a way to help. A very comprehensive document recently published called “Gaining Support for Affordable Housing Development in a Community offers insight into how community members can get involved. It can be found at: www.tcah.org/pdf/Housing_Advacy_Catalog.pdf.

The Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs, found at

www.dhca.state.vt.us/Housing/index.htm is also a helpful resource as you investigate not just the challenges but potential solutions for so many Vermonters struggling with housing needs.

As always, a great, free and always accessible starting point is to call Vermont 2-1-1. Good luck and if you have a story or opinion to share around affordable housing in Vermont, contact the Green Mountain United Way at gmunitedway@madriver.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

Amanda Gilman Returns to GMUW

Amanda Gilman of Danville, once a volunteer on GMUW’s Marketing Committee during her high school years in the early 2000’s, has returned! Amanda is now a senior at Lyndon State College and is required to serve an internship relative to her major before graduation in June. She is majoring in Business Administration and Television Broadcasting.

Because of her knowledge and fondness of the United Way, she chose us as the venue for her graduation project. Her internship began in mid-January.

Amanda is researching and compiling data for our new and updated Community Assessment. Following her research, she will then assist us in formulating the marketing of that information to the general public.

Welcome aboard Amanda!

Leadership Giving

GMUW offers the opportunity to donors to become leadership givers. Anyone who is able to give \$500 or more will have their name published (or an “anonymous” listing, if preferred) in our annual report and other marketing pieces.

Consider joining our Leadership Pioneers at the following levels:

\$500	-	999	-	Pathfinder
\$1,000	-	2,499	-	Pacesetter
\$2,500	-	4,999	-	Trail Blazer
\$5,000	-	9,999	-	Challenger
\$10,000 +	-		-	Pinnacle

GMUW Awards 128 Backpacks

The folks at IBM have again very generously provided us with backpacks, 128 of them to be distributed to schools in our region. These are for children and youth whose families are not able to afford to buy them.

The receiving schools were: Union Elementary School and Main St. Middle School, both of Montpelier, Spaulding High School, Barre, Fayston Elementary School, Union 32, Montpelier, Northfield Middle & High School, Northfield Elementary, Barre Elementary & Middle School, COFEC Head Start Program, Barton, St. Paul's School, Barton, Troy School, Jay/Westfield School, Lowell Elementary, Good Shepherd Catholic School, St. Johnsbury, and St. Edward's Preschool in Derby Line.

Also assisting in this part of our Goods and Services Program was the Montpelier Kiwanis Club that donated funds for school supplies with which to fill the backpacks. A big thank you to them and IBM.

New IBM Computers Distributed

Several organizations applied to GMUW in October 2007 for new desktop computers and laptops provided us by IBM. A group of volunteers reviewed the applications and made recommendations as to which agencies should receive them based on IBM's criteria to provide "computer access and training for youth and the disadvantaged."

In November, GMUW was pleased to award desktop systems to Oxbow Senior Independence Program Adult Day Services of Newbury, Grass Roots Art and Community Efforts (GRACE) of Hardwick, Project Independence of Barre and Mad River Valley Senior Center of Waitsfield. The laptops were presented to Prevent Child Abuse Vermont and the Central Vermont Council on Aging.

Don't Forget the Talent Show

Be sure to mark your calendars to attend the GMUW Second Annual "Kaleidoscope of Talent" Talent Show on Saturday, Feb. 23rd at Spaulding High School Auditorium starting at 7 p.m. It's sure to be great fun for a great cause. For more information, call 802-229-9532 or visit www.gmunityway.org.

The Planned Giving Corner

We all, at one time or another, wish that there were more funding for all those wonderful programs out there that enrich people's lives. As a result, over 80% of Americans contribute to non-profit groups throughout their lives. Yet, only about 8% of them choose to continue that gifting through a bequest.

Consider making arrangements in your will, or through some other charitable gifting vehicle, to continue your support of Green Mountain United Way, and your other favorite charities, after you are gone. There is no better way to thank those organizations that have made a real impact on your life.

For some very informative reading on this subject, visit www.leavealegacynhvt.org. Green Mountain United Way is a member of Leave a Legacy New Hampshire/Vermont.

Consult with your attorney or estate planner today to find the best way for you to leave your legacy to that which has meant so much to you during your lifetime.

Save on Your Prescriptions!

Thousands of Vermonters lack prescription drug coverage and constantly struggle to pay for life saving medications. Now, through a partnership with Family Wize, GMUW is pleased to announce that prescription savings cards are now available!

The cards are accepted at most major pharmacies such as: Rite Aid, Walgreens, and Kinney Drugs. Simply give the pharmacist your card and save up to 20% on your prescriptions. There are no income requirements, age limitations, or registrations required! To obtain your prescription savings card, please contact Kate Binns at gmunityway@madriver.com or call her at (802) 229-9532.



Green Mountain
United Way
963 Paine Turnpike N #2
Montpelier, VT 05602-9163

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Note: Beginning with our next issue of this newsletter, Green Mountain United Way will be sending as many copies via e-mail as possible. However, we can only do so if we have your e-mail address. Please call us with that address if you want to receive your copy by e-mail. And, please bear with us during this transition. Some of you may receive more than one copy by e-mail because of the way our list serve is set up.

Dates To Remember

Feb. 18, 2008: Presidents' Day. GMUW offices will be closed.

Feb. 21, 2008: Member Agency Winter Training/Networking Meeting at GMUW Conference Rooms.

Feb. 22, 2008: "A Kaleidoscope of Talent" **Rehearsal** at Spaulding H. S., Barre, VT 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Feb. 23, 2008: The second annual "Kaleidoscope of Talent" **Talent Show** for the benefit of Green Mountain United Way at Spaulding High School starting at 7 p.m. For more info, call GMUW at 802-229-9532.

June 28, 2008: UPS Golf Classic for benefit of Green Mountain United Way at Montague Golf Course, Randolph, VT. For more information, call GMUW at 802-229-9532.

Wanted: The Montpelier Meals on Wheels program is in desperate need of drivers. If interested in becoming a driver, or know of someone who might be, please contact the Central Vermont Council on Aging in Barre at 802-476-2676 or e-mail Beth Stern at bstern@cvcoa.org.

"The weather outside is frightful..."

Are you prepared for the challenges of winter? Here are some helpful tips to keep you safe and warm.

Staying safe and warm:

- * Install smoke detectors on every level of your house. Check the battery monthly.
- * Insulate pipes and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing. Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts).
- * If you lose power for an extended time, evacuate your home, rather than heating via unconventional methods.

Staying safe while traveling:

- * Reduce speed when roads are wet or icy, even when they've been treated by salt and sand.
- * Keep a winter storm survival kit in your car with blankets, flares, gloves and first aid supplies.
- * Maintain at least a half tank of gas during the winter season.

Keeping your family safe and warm:

- * Wear several layers of loose fitting, warm clothing. Wear mittens (they're warmer than gloves!).
- * Apply sunscreen to exposed skin, even when it's cloudy.
- * Help children choose play areas with a warm shelter nearby such as a friend's home.

Visit us on the web at: www.gmunitedway.org