

# Community Connection

United  
Way



Green Mountain  
United Way

Mobilizing communities to create changes in local conditions that will improve lives.

## May 2011

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## Help Stamp Out Hunger

May 14<sup>th</sup> and the annual *Help Stamp Out Hunger* food drive is fast approaching. This is the nationwide Letter Carriers' Association food drive for local food shelves, in which many of our local letter carriers will participate.

In 2010, a record 77.1 million pounds of non-perishable food, including baby food and pet food, were collected across the U.S. involving over 10,000 cities and towns and bringing the total amount collected since the drive's inception in 1993 to over a billion pounds. It is the biggest food drive in existence and continues to grow each year. The need for food assistance has never been greater. According to a 2009 U.S. Dept. of Agriculture study, the number of Americans living in what is known as "food insecure" households topped 50 million. Of those, 17.2 million involve children. Says the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) President Fredric V. Rolando, "Sadly, that represents a 30% increase in just one year."

The driving force behind this very successful effort is the partnership that the NALC has established with United Way Worldwide and local United Ways, the AFL-CIO, the Campbell Soup Co. and Feeding America. "We are pleased ... that United Way will continue to partner with the NALC...in 2011. This effort is a tremendous example of working with organized labor to advance the common good in communities throughout the US.", Brian Gallagher, President and CEO of United Way Worldwide, recently stated. Green Mountain United Way is promoting this event extensively in its service area of central and northeastern VT.

Please participate in this year's food drive for your local food shelf. Call your post office to find out if they are participating. Simply leave non-perishable food items in bags near your mailbox and your letter carrier will pick them up on May 14<sup>th</sup>. Or, deliver them to the post office nearest you.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Ride the Realm"

Plans are underway for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Ride the Realm" NEK Bike Ride scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 13<sup>th</sup> starting and ending at St. Johnsbury Academy in St. Johnsbury. There will be multiple routes to choose from that will accommodate riders of every level of experience from 25 miles to 100 miles. In addition, a walk-a-thon and other fun family activities will abound on the SJA campus.

Whether you are a biker, a walker or just want to spend a fun day with your family, plan to be with us at St. Johnsbury Academy on Aug. 13<sup>th</sup>. Keep an eye out for our e-newsletters and other notices around the area for more information about this healthy event.

## Supporting Healthy Living

Every year, Green Mountain United Way provides funding to community organizations to expand our network of partners working to create positive changes in our local communities. We are pleased to support the following organizations that are addressing obesity and chronic disease by connecting people with local, healthy foods, education and opportunities to be physically active.

### Siskin Ecological Adventures

Siskin Ecological Adventure's Kids in Motion after school series uses a rich and varied mix of games, activities, education, and fun to keep kids healthy and active during after school hours. Kids in Motion has engaged over 100 students from Charleston, Brighton, Orleans, Holland, and Sutton schools, striving to instill a passion for outdoor activities like Nordic skiing, snowshoeing, canoeing, and kayaking that have strong ties to the region's culture and traditions. For example, at Charleston Elementary, Kids in Motion began with six weeks of Clyde River kayaking and then moved into the more traditional fitness modes of the program. This approach helped build enthusiasm and participation for the larger program and led to an unanticipated measure of improved fitness.

### Food Works at Two Rivers Center

The success and growth of the Food Works Good Food Good Medicine Program has come full circle. Health benefits and economic savings are visible, providing four seasons of gardening, cooking, food preservation and medicinal herbs education to residents of Green Acres and Highgate Apartments in Barre and putting valuable garden produce to use year round. Fresh, homegrown, and from scratch, the class assembles a meal, then sits and eats it together. Participants have enjoyed the healing benefits of culinary herbs like basil, thyme, garlic and rosemary. There is sense of ownership and pride in the GFGM program, and a kinship amongst participants. Everyone brings something of value to the table. The result is food for all.

### Central VT Medical Center

Outweighing the Odds Together is a six-week weight management series that is a collaborative project between CVMC Outpatient Health

Education and the Community Health Team participating in the Blueprint for Health Vermont Medical Home Pilot; co-led by a registered dietician (RD) and a health coach. The series empowers participants to modify their own diet to individual food preferences and health needs. This is done by providing instruction on basic nutrition skills needed for life-long weight management. The goal is to assist participants in self-management rather than to prescribe a standard diet for weight loss, as is the case with many other weight management programs.

### Area Agency on Aging for Northeastern VT

The Local Foods Initiative continues to improve access to local foods and enhance the quality of meals served by senior meal programs in Caledonia, Essex and Orleans counties of Northeastern VT. The Northeastern VT Area Agency on Aging is able to support membership in the Green Mt Farm Direct program, which has grown from four participating programs in 2010 to eight senior meal program partners in 2011. Participating programs receive support to purchase directly from more than 20 local farms. One senior center is piloting a "local buying club" in response to requests from individuals to purchase fresh local products to prepare at home. This has farmers planning their crops to meet a growing demand for their products, complementing our goal to strengthen our communities and local agricultural economy.

### Green Mountain Farm-to-School

Do You Know Where Your Lunch Comes From? Thanks to Newport based Green Mountain Farm-to-School (GMFTS), 5,000 students at 24 schools in Northern Vermont know where their school gets its food. A leader in the growing farm-to-school movement, GMFTS, is addressing the issues of childhood obesity, nutrition in schools, and local food sourcing. GMFTS promotes healthy lifestyle choices through hands-on gardening and cooking activities in their Sprouts after-school program. During the 2010 growing season, Sprout's 20 school gardens produced over 2,600 pounds of fresh, organic produce for the school cafeterias! Because of the work of GMFTS, teachers, students, parents, farmers, and community members are coming together to change the way we eat and think about food and especially our lunch.

## STEP INTO SPRING!

Green Mountain United Way's Building Healthy Communities Project, with support from Gifford Medical Center, follows up the Moving Through Winter Series with Step Into Spring. These free community-based events promote information, tips, and fun family activities that encourage folks in Central Vermont to improve their health by increasing their daily physical activity. According to a recent GMUW assessment, the most commonly cited barriers to the recommended 30 minutes, 5 times a week of exercise includes busy schedules, exercise as a low priority, and lack of motivation and support. "The key is to have a sampling of beginner events where fun is the focus" says Bill Merrylees from The Central Vermont Physical Activity Coalition. Members of this group have organized the Barre Bike and Fitness Festival on May 20, 21, 22. The festival will feature elite athletes and community events. The "Main Street Mile," a one-mile course running the entire length of Main Street in Barre, will be held on Sunday, May 22, at 12:15pm. This walk, run, race or bike is free and open to all for participation with prizes and giveaways and will serve as a kickoff to the Step Into Spring Series. The Series will conclude in July with a Fitness Festival on the State House Lawn in Montpelier. For more information about Step Into Spring or the Central Vermont Physical Activity Coalition contact Barbara Christie-Garvin at [bcgarvin@gmunityway.org](mailto:bcgarvin@gmunityway.org).

## GMUW Awards to Local Food Shelves

IBM of Vermont has again provided its annual food shelf assistance and has asked GMUW to distribute these funds to food shelves of its choice in its service area. GMUW tries to make one award in each county and to different food shelves each year.

This spring gifts were made to the Lyndon Area Food Shelf in Caledonia Co., the Lunenburg Area Food Shelf in Essex Co., the Randolph Area Food Shelf in Orange Co., St. Mark's Episcopal Church Food Shelf in Orleans Co., and to the Central VT Community Action Council Food Shelf in Washington Co. We are pleased to partner with IBM each year on this project that helps hundreds of families in our area put nutritious food on their tables.

## *The Planned Giving Corner*

### **GMUW Advised of Coming Bequest**

Green Mountain United Way recently was advised by one of its long-time supporters that he had named GMUW as a beneficiary in his will. We are very pleased that John Gardner believes in the work that we do for our local people and communities and has chosen to take this step for our eventual benefit.

Says John, "I care about my local community while I am on this great earth and I wanted to show that I care even though I'm no longer here. 'Live to Give', that's my motto. We only pass through this life once, so let's be the best we can be." John is a great example of someone who cares about those around him.

Do you have a will? When was the last time you thought about its contents? Please consider naming Green Mountain United Way as a beneficiary. Your bequest would help insure that our organization continue its work in the community for many years to come.

*(Green Mountain United Way does not provide legal advice, but recommends that you consult your attorney, tax accountant or estate planner to find your best estate-planning avenue.)*

## **Kudos to Kit Gurin**

Did you attend our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Kaleidoscope of Talent on March 5<sup>th</sup>? Weren't the Irish Step Dancers absolutely wonderful? They took first place in the Grades 2 - 8 Category and also were voted for Best Overall Performance.

What you may not know is that one of the performers in this twosome, Kit Gurin, is a very community-minded youngster. A few days after the show, she arrived at our GMUW Berlin office with questions about what it is that we do and whom we serve. After receiving the information she had wondered about, she immediately donated her prize money back to Green Mountain United Way "because I want to help others."

Thank you Kit for thinking of others before yourself.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

### Dates To Remember

- May 2011:** Financial Literacy Workshops in Lyndonville on first four Mondays in May. See information block below.
- May 14, 2011:** 19<sup>th</sup> Annual National Association of Letter Carriers' Food Drive for local food shelves. See separate article in this issue for more information.
- May 30, 2011:** Memorial Day - GMUW offices will be closed.
- July 4, 2011:** Independence Day - GMUW offices will be closed.
- Aug. 13, 2011:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual NEK "Ride the Realm" Bike Ride. Starting and ending at St. Johnsbury Academy, St. Johnsbury, VT. Registration at 8 a.m. Lots of other fun activities throughout the day. Watch for more information as it becomes available.

#### CNB/GMUW Financial Literacy Series

All are welcome

May 2 - Money Management & Internet Banking

May 9 - Borrowing/Mortgages; Credit Scores & Credit Reports

May 16 - Estate Planning & Investing

May 23 - Gaining & Sustaining Assets, Insurance & Identity Theft

Time: 6 - 8 p.m.

Location: Community National Bank  
Conference Room at their  
Broad St., Lyndonville Office

For planning purposes,  
RSVP: Anne Quirion at 802-487-3513 or  
e-mail her at  
aquirion@communitynationalbank.com

#### Good Beginnings Celebrates 20 Years

Congratulations to Good Beginnings of Central VT celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. This organization, originally based in Northfield, provides home visits by trained volunteers to new birth and adopted infants' parents in central Vermont.

Their Executive Director, Sara Nevin, recently advised that they have moved into new office space at 174 River St. in Montpelier. A great way to celebrate their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

For more information, call Sara at 485-8430.