

# Community Connection

United  
Way



Green Mountain  
United Way

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

## December 2009

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**Connie Peck**

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**Phil Zunder**

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### GMUW Staff & Locations

**Nancy Zorn**, Executive Director

**Madeleine Roy**, Community Development &

Marketing Director

**Molly Gleason & Nelson Baker**,

Community Impact Directors

**Barbara Christie-Garvin**, Community

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## The 2009 - 2010 Campaign Is Launched

Here we are in December and already our fundraising campaign is well underway. A very successful kick-off breakfast was held at The Steak House on the Barre-Montpelier Road on Sept. 22 with nearly 100 local business leaders and campaign coordinators in attendance.

To create the awareness needed for a successful campaign, the Green Mountain United Way (GMUW) annual appeal letter was sent out in August to central Vermont households preceded by some marketing endeavors. Throughout the fall, business campaigns were started in earnest and a similar appeal letter was issued in the Northeast Kingdom.

We are very happy to report that as of early December, we have received pledges and donations totaling \$193,884 (30%) toward the goal of \$650,000. It is still early as many companies do not complete their campaigns and are unable to report their final tallies until the first quarter of the calendar year.

GMUW Executive Director, Nancy Zorn, convened the kick-off meeting with a welcome to all and an introduction of Board President, Stuart Williams, who eloquently spoke of the value and purpose of the United Way in our communities. Don George, President and CEO of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont and this year's GMUW Campaign Chair, encouraged everyone to eagerly participate in the campaign because of the good that the United Way accomplishes locally, especially in these difficult economic times. Michael Nordstrom with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont and Campaign Loaned Executive, spoke about the campaign details and materials. Board member and Funding Resources Chair John Gardner presented the awards for last year's campaign. (See article below.)

From her personal experiences as a bank loan officer, Diane Rowlee of the Community National Bank, our kick-off guest speaker, provided vital information about the importance of people acquiring financial literacy. This is one component of the United Way's Financial Stability initiative that GMUW is involved in and committed to as a way toward economic advancement for our neighbors.

Be a part of your company's campaign. Make your pledge today and participate in all the fun special events that are planned.

### 2008 - 2009 Campaign Awards

<i>Business Community Impact Award:</i>	Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont
<i>Community Spirit Award:</i>	Merchants Bank
<i>Worksite Coordinator Award:</i>	North Country Health System
<i>Campaign Champion Award:</i>	Steve Post, VSECU
<i>Tom Pelletier Loaned Executive Awards:</i>	VSECU and Lynette Kemp

## **Economic Advancement**

Over the past 20 years, the cost of living has increased by almost 90 percent, due in large part, to significant increases in the costs of food, housing, health care, transportation, insurance and utilities. To make ends meet, families and individuals are borrowing more heavily and relying on credit cards to cover many of these daily living expenses. The cycle is one of increasing debt to cover a higher cost of living, without a corresponding increase in wages.

Green Mountain United Way (GMUW) participated in the United Way Worldwide's training in early 2009 and has eagerly joined the Financial Stability Initiative.

The focus of Economic Advancement is on education and awareness and the steps to Financial Stability are to Increase Income, Build Savings and Gain and Sustain Assets through the following various methods:

1. Increase Income:
  - a. Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
  - b. Work Development and Training
  - c. Credit Repair and Debt Reduction
2. Build Savings:
  - a. Savings Campaigns
  - b. Split Refunds
3. Gain and Sustain Assets:
  - a. Individual Development Accounts
  - b. Asset Protection

GMUW has determined, after assessing the needs of our five-county area, that Financial Literacy is a topic that deserves our immediate attention. This is especially true of our high school students who will soon be entering the workforce or going on to college or the military. Important and relevant questions about how to apply for a loan, how to manage credit, how to balance a checking account and the value of a good credit score need to be addressed with our youth.

As a leader in promoting Economic Advancement opportunities in our area, GMUW this fall partnered with the Community National Bank and presented "Financial Independence Workshops" at Canaan Memorial High School in Canaan and North Country Union High School in Newport. This was a pilot project and was a

huge success. GMUW will join with other businesses, agencies and organizations to continue this effort throughout its service area. Discussions are underway with the IRS, VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) sites, schools, banks, state agencies and others, to expand the scope of the project into the other counties we serve. We believe this will truly impact our communities.

## **2009 Loaned Executive**

GMUW was extremely fortunate this fall to have received the expert assistance of Michael Nordstrom, who served as Loaned Executive at the beginning of the fundraising campaign.

Michael, a Human Resources Specialist at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont, volunteered many hours over the course of about eight weeks putting together the Campaign Tool Kit, making business contacts and assisting those businesses in conducting their campaigns.

Thank you, Michael, for a job well done. And, thank you to Blue Cross and Blue Shield for providing us with a great employee to serve in this capacity.

## **GMUW Invited to Participate in Exciting Research Project**

The Dartmouth Institute Prevention Research Center has selected three communities, Keene and Manchester, NH and St. Johnsbury, VT, to participate in measurable research between now and June 2011 toward the prevention of cardiovascular disease. St. Johnsbury was chosen because of its Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital (NVRH) longstanding participation and success in the Blue Print for Health.

NVRH, in turn, has asked GMUW to be a part of this project along with representatives from the hospital and the VT Dept. of Health.

Specifically, this St. Johnsbury Active Learning Collaborative Team has chosen for its research a male population between the ages of 18 and 44 and will be working with Weidmann Electrical Technologies in St. Johnsbury to conduct research at their work site. The teams from the three communities involved will be receiving training on research and measurement in January 2010.

### **GMUW Wins CHAMPPS Grant**

This fall, GMUW was notified by the VT Dept. of Health that it had been chosen as one of the winners of a CHAMPPS (Coordinated Health, Activity, Motivation and Prevention Programs) grant. This means \$40,000 for year two of the planning process to oversee a comprehensive fitness, nutrition and health project in Washington County. The purpose of the grant is not to actually conduct health and fitness programs, but to coordinate a county-wide effort to make it easier for young families to eat healthier and become more physically active, thus improving their overall health.

In hopeful anticipation of the second round of funding, a community assessment was done in early 2009 to determine the access to and availability of nutritious foods in several venues in Washington County communities. This assessment also included existing physical activity opportunities as well as those needed.

In order to coordinate the CHAMPPS work under Community Impact Director, Molly Gleason, GMUW is pleased to have hired Barbara Christie-Garvin of Waitsfield. Barbara is a professional facilitator with 30 years of experience in direct services and administration. Her background includes early education, prevention, strategic planning, systems and policy.

In the coming months, Barbara and Molly will be convening focus groups and other meetings to discuss the assessment findings and build capacity through which local planning can be done to increase the possibilities for healthy eating and more physical activity.

This funded initiative is one more example of how GMUW is working to create positive and lasting changes in our local area. In addition, GMUW is also involved in discussions in Orleans and Northern Essex counties where a similar \$40,000 CHAMPPS grant was won by the Northeast Kingdom Community Action.

### **GMUW Maintains Low Fundraising Expenses**

GMUW is committed to improving the lives of everyone in its five-county service area, not only through its many initiatives and

### **Consider a Different Kind of Gift This Holiday Season**

Like so many of us, you may be faced with not knowing what to give certain friends and family members during the holidays. Do they really need those cute trinkets or more socks? They might prefer knowing that a donation has been made in their honor to Green Mountain United Way, the non-profit organization that works hard at making positive changes in the local community.

For more information on how to arrange your donation, call any one of the GMUW offices listed in the left sidebar on Page 1 of this newsletter.

And while you're at it, please consider talking with your attorney or estate planner about including GMUW in your will/estate plan. Be a part of the guaranteed future of GMUW and the work we are accomplishing.

*(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.)*

collaborations, but also via the most efficient and cost-effective means possible.

With this in mind, we are proud to let our donors and supporters know that in fiscal year 2008-2009, our total fundraising expenses were a mere 4.5%. Actual management and general costs came in at 2% for a total of 6.5%, an almost incredible low expense rate.

Your first question when learning this is probably, "How can they possibly expend so little and yet accomplish so much?" The reason is simple. In addition to always being conservative and conscious of our budget and keeping the people we serve in the forefront, we are very fortunate to receive the assistance of hundreds of volunteers. They are dedicated Board and Committee members, campaign coordinators at worksites, clerical assistants in our offices, loaned executives and more. We cannot say enough about the help and number of hours these volunteers provide us.

The United Way, and specifically GMUW, do not use outside paid fundraisers – another reason contributing to the efficiency of our organization.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

- Dec. 25, 2009 – Jan. 3, 2010:** All GMUW offices will be closed for the holiday season.
- Feb. 6, 2010:** Auditions for *Kaleidoscope of Talent* talent show at Spaulding High School Auditorium – 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Feb. 26, 2010:** Dress Rehearsal for *Kaleidoscope of Talent* talent show at Spaulding High School Auditorium
- Feb. 27, 2010:** 4<sup>th</sup> Annual *Kaleidoscope of Talent* talent show at Spaulding High School Auditorium, Barre, VT starting at 7 p.m.

### Don't Miss the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Kaleidoscope of Talent

- Auditions on Feb. 6, 2010 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Spaulding High School Auditorium
- Application forms for auditions available at [www.gmunityway.org](http://www.gmunityway.org)
- Dress Rehearsal on Feb. 26, 2010
- The Show: Sat., Feb. 27, 2010
- Spaulding High School Auditorium
- Show starts at 7 p.m. \$10.00 adults; \$5.00 Children under age 12 and Seniors age 60 and over
- Showcasing the best local talent in voice, instrumental, comedy and dance.
- Cash prizes will be awarded.
- It's a fun evening. Plan to attend.
- Interested in sponsoring an ad in our program? Simply call 802-229-9532.

### Help Support GMUW Through TD Bank Affinity Membership Program

- TD Bank will make corporate donations to GMUW based on customers' average account balances. It's free to you.
- Simply ask your teller to link your account(s) to GMUW's Affinity Code **#A1119**.
- If you do not have a TD Bank account, just visit one of their offices and open either a checking, savings or IRA and be sure to have them link it to our code number.
- The more who participate in our name, the bigger the bank's donation will be.
- Join now and help support Green Mountain United Way.

**FROM EVERYONE AT GREEN MOUNTAIN UNITED WAY, BEST WISHES FOR A HEALTHY, PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.**