



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 2009

Daniel Pudvah, President
Kellogg-Hubbard Library
Stuart Williams, MD, Vice President
Berlin Family Health Associates
Cory Richardson, Treasurer
Northfield Savings Bank
Linda Roberts, Secretary
Retired, Verizon
Timothy Barre
Northfield Savings Bank
Bethany Chenette
National Life Group
John Gardner
Gardner Insurance Services
Jeff Hunsberger
VT Department of Health-Barre Office
Susan Kruthers
Central VT Medical Center
F. Clark Leonard
Chittenden Bank
Walter Oakes
Retired, Green Mountain Power
Connie Peck
BlueCrossBlueShield of Vermont
E. Hale Ritchie
Retired, VT Agency of Natural Resources

GMUW Staff & Locations

Nancy Zorn, Executive Director
Madeleine Roy, Community Development &
Marketing Director
Kate Binns & Nelson Baker,
Community Impact Directors
Wanda Baril, Executive Assistant
Brenda Thompson, Administrative Assistant

Main Office:

963 Paine Turnpike N #2
Montpelier, VT 05602-9163
Ph: 802-229-9532 F: 802-223-0273
E-mail: info@gmunityway.org

Caledonia/Southern Essex Office:

1325 Main St.
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
Ph: 802-745-0101
E-mail: nbaker@gmunityway.org

Orleans/Northern Essex Office:

P. O. Box 882, 424 Main St., Ste. 4
Barton, VT 05822
Ph. & Fax: 802-525-9597
E-mail: mroy@gmunityway.org

GMUW Receives Ben & Jerry's Grant

In keeping with their desire to assist new, grassroots projects, the Ben & Jerry's Foundation recently awarded \$1,000 to GMUW for its *Born Learning* program. This donation will be used to purchase *Born Learning* materials to share with parents in Washington County where the program is being launched.

This program, developed nationally by the United Way of America, focuses on teaching parents and caregivers how to ignite a child's curiosity amidst every day activities from the time of birth until the child enters preschool and kindergarten. A child's brain develops twice as fast as an adult's, especially during its first five years; thus, the best time to provide learning opportunities to insure that the child will be more than ready for school.

In addition to increasing success in school and workforce readiness, this quality early learning will reduce crime rates, early pregnancies, job training costs and grade repetition - all resulting in a positive economic impact.

GMUW has launched *Born Learning* in partnership with the Central Vermont Building Bright Futures Council. For more information, contact Kate Binns at our Berlin office.

Don't Miss the 3rd Annual

Kaleidoscope of Talent

Talent Show

7 PM – February 28, 2009

Spaulding High School Auditorium
Barre, VT

Kaleidoscope Level Sponsors:

*Gardner Insurance Services, Northfield Savings Bank, Oce',
BlueCross BlueShield of VT, VSECU, and Myers Container Service*

Performance Level Sponsors:

Black River Design Architects & Community National Bank

Benefit: Green Mountain United Way

For more information, call 802-229-9532 or go to:
<http://www.orgsites.com/vt/greenmountaintalent/>

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

Campaign Progress

With less than two months to go in our 2008-2009 fundraising campaign, pledges and donations are at about 77% of our goal. As of Jan. 21st, we have received approximately **\$502,000** toward the goal of \$650,000.

Sincere thanks are expressed to all who have contributed. We realize that this year will be one of extreme belt-tightening for everyone, but we all know many who are much less fortunate. They will be in need of our assistance more than ever.

With this in mind, please give some serious thought to making a gift, or increasing your usual gift, this year. Only with your help will we reach our goal and be able to provide a better life for many of your neighbors.

For information on how to donate, call any one of our offices or visit our website where you can give online.

Caledonia Co. Volunteers Raise Awareness of the Homeless

It was cold and snowing on Dec. 19, 2008, when two Homeless Encampments were established; one on the grounds of the North Congregational Church in Saint Johnsbury and the other at Bandstand Park in Lyndonville. Most volunteers stayed for two-hour shifts but a few brave souls were at each location for the entire 24-hour period. The purpose was to raise awareness that there *is* a real homeless population and this is a most difficult time of year.

Donations were not solicited but they were accepted. Small cash donations at both locations totaled over \$800. One couple, inspired by the event, donated \$1,000 directly to the Northeast Kingdom Community Action Program. Jackets, hats, gloves and scarves were also received at both locations and were immediately distributed to folks who needed them.

Born Learning Week at The Children's Room

As parents and caregivers, our everyday interactions with our children are shaping their learning. By making an effort to incorporate easy and free learning activities into each day, we are helping our children learn – not just new information but the *process of learning!*

In the second week of January, Green Mountain United Way partnered with The Children's Room in Waterbury to bring Born Learning Tools to the parents in attendance. Music, reading, healthy meal ideas, and milestones information were handed out on each day.

The main event was found at RJ's market. An interactive "Grocery Store Adventure" was placed throughout the store. In each aisle, parents were given a different activity to share with their infant, toddler, or preschooler. It was a grand success.

Green Mountain United Way will be offering similar events throughout the communities. For more information about *Born Learning* or if you would like to become involved, please contact us at 802-229-9532!

Look, a square!
Squares have four equal sides.
Daddy's kind of a square too,
but that's another story.

Everyday moments can be learning moments with your kids. For more tips, visit bornlearning.org

Ad Council United Way

NEK Collaborative Addresses Telecommunications

The NEK Collaborative, a group of concerned Northeast Kingdom business leaders, non-profits and individuals, met on Jan. 23rd in Barton to hear a dozen panelists representing NVDA, NCIC, NEK Travel & Tourism, Comcast, Fair Point, the VT Public Service Board, VT Telecommunications Authority, Great Auk Wireless, local schools and the local VNA.

The recurring theme heard throughout the two-hour session was the need for full and reliable broadband and cell service throughout Vermont. Because the NEK has been federally designated as one of five Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) zones in the country, it is well poised to receive a portion of \$6 billion from the federal government that could be spent for improved telecom infrastructure.

This goal is essential for keeping up with the rest of the world for economic and health reasons. Students at the Jan. 23rd forum stated emphatically that they most likely would not remain in VT upon graduating if high speed internet is not available. New businesses are known not to establish in VT for the same reason. Health workers out in the field, like the VNA, are unable to properly care for clients without a reliable communications system.

The Collaborative will now further its efforts for the good of the NEK by formulating an action plan designed around access to the internet, reliability and speed, affordability, education, advocacy, new employment opportunities, and workforce development.

Fit and Healthy Coalition

The Fit and Healthy Coalition for Caledonia/So. Essex, based at Northeastern VT Regional Hospital in St. Johnsbury, has identified its community programs in the areas of fitness, nutrition and healthy life styles. A master plan has been developed and assessment of the community is a continuous process.

In December, Governor Douglas visited NVRH and addressed the Coalition in terms of the Blueprint for Health (an initiative through the VT Dept. of Health).

Current projects include development of the Three Rivers Bike Path, which hopefully will someday connect with the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail.

The Planned Giving Corner

The following may not be directly related to Planned Giving strategies, but in this year of a poor economy, these pointers should be incorporated into everyone's immediate priorities. They could avoid some of the suffering associated with a recession and make your long-term goals easier to achieve.

- List all present regular income and expenses.
- Determine what additional income can be attained and/or what expenses can be cut.
- Start a savings plan for emergencies, like a job layoff or a sudden illness.
- Examine all mortgages and other debt and use any income saved from above expense cutting to pay off this debt.
- If at all possible, do not stop funding your retirement plan(s).
- Remember that your favorite charity, like Green Mountain United Way, may also suffer during economic downturns and should be supported in any way possible.

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

Savings Keep Rising With FamilyWize

In its first year (2008), the FamilyWize Prescription Drug Savings Program, endorsed by the United Way of America, has saved people in the GMUW five-county region

\$24,916!!

As awareness of this program grows, we expect even higher savings in 2009. Nationally, over \$38 million was saved in 2008.

Do you know someone without prescription drug coverage? Call us at 802-229-9532 for savings cards today!



Green Mountain
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Montpelier, VT 05602-9163

Dates To Remember

- Feb. 11, 2009:** Quarterly agency training meeting at GMUW Conference Room.
Guest speaker: Jim Lefebvre on "Strategic Planning in Difficult Times".
- Feb. 11, 2009:** Vermont 2-1-1 Day at the State House, Montpelier. Festivities start at 1:30 p.m. in Rm. 10.
- Feb. 16, 2009:** Presidents' Day. All GMUW offices will be closed.
- Feb. 28, 2009:** Third annual "Kaleidoscope of Talent" Talent Show at Spaulding High School Auditorium starting at 7 p.m. Benefit: Green Mountain United Way.
For more information, go to: <http://www.orgsites.com/vt/greenmountaintalent/>
We're looking for sponsors for this important and fun event. It's a great place for you to advertise your business. Contact Tim Barre at timothyb@nsbvt.com or 802-485-5223.
- Mar. 3, 2009:** Town Meeting Day. Attend and make your voice heard.
- Apr. 29, 2009:** National Walk@Lunch Day. Be sure to mark your calendar and walk at lunchtime.

Coming Soon - GMUW Community Assessment

After several months of hard research and compilation of data on community conditions in our five-county region, GMUW will soon have available its Community Review document. Spearheaded by Community Impact Director, Kate Binns, Lyndon State College intern, Amanda Gilman, and other staff members and volunteers, this assessment tool was a huge undertaking, but a necessity in our efforts to study the strengths and weaknesses of our counties. Now begins the next phase during which we will work directly with the communities to study this data with a goal of improving the statistics to make life in these communities easier economically and health-wise.

Keep an eye on our website. The full document will appear there within the next few weeks.

Want To Receive Our Newsletter by E-mail?

Simply send us an e-mail at info@gmunityway.org and we'll put you on our listserve.

Or, call us at 802-229-9532 in Berlin, or 802-525-9597 in Barton, or 802-745-0101 in St. Johnsbury.

Thanks for helping us save on paper and postage.

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