



JUMP Update



JUMP assists 65 low-income households every week.

September 2012

JUMP: It's Us at Work in Our World

JUMP is about
PEOPLE:
Clients
Volunteers
Business Leaders
26 Faith
Communities
& Many
Contributors!

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In this issue —
stories about
some of the
People of JUMP!

It was my first summer as Pastor of First United Methodist Church in Burlington. “Alan” came into my office needing to talk, needing cash, food, housing. Several hours later, I had learned two things. First, I learned about Alan’s needs. Second, I learned that his needs were far beyond my capacity. And a third thing: I began to think “*What if someone like Alan were to come into my office every day of the week?*” I would be overwhelmed. That was the beginning of my education about the Joint Urban Ministry Project.



Reverend Mark Demers

JUMP is an interfaith effort to provide for our neighbors in the way our various religious traditions command. The Prophets of Israel and the Christ of Christianity underscore the need to be sensitive to the sojourner, the poor, the refugee. All but one chapter in the Quran begin with mention of Allah’s mercy. One author writes that if we learned to live with half the love for others that Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad had, the world would be a better place. Longtime residents of our city and new Americans who are becoming part of our community find themselves in need of a listener every now and again. JUMP provides material assistance, and the spiritual and emotional encouragement people need.

JUMP is the extension of my ministry and that of First United Methodist Church. At JUMP there is someone who has the time to listen, to love, to respond. I am grateful for the people from our congregation who volunteer at JUMP, and for the many who support the work. I am grateful for this opportunity to say “Thank you” to you, to the people of your and other faith communities in our region. I would be delighted to come speak with you about the good work JUMP does, and encourage you to grow even more in your generosity. Please get in touch!

mdemers@fumcburlington.org

“Alan” goes to JUMP every day. There he or she is loved in ways no single faith community could love by itself. The Joint Urban Ministry Project is us at work in our world, loving our neighbor as we have been commanded to do.

Support JUMP’s Coming Events!

15th Annual
Run for JUMP:
 Saturday, 9 am
 September 22, 2012
 Burlington Waterfront

CROP Hunger Walk
 Sunday, 1:30 pm
 October 14, 2012
 First Congregational
 Burlington
bvt.crophungerwalk@gmail.com

Best JUMP
Supper Ever
 Saturday, 5 and 6:30
 November 3, 2012
 First United Methodist
 Burlington

JUMP’s Vivacious Volunteers!



Editors:

Lucy Samara
 Jean Palmer
 Kathy Mihok



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Board President: Ginger Hobbs JUMP Director: Jean Palmer

Suzie Crews “Runs” for JUMP: *“I am committed to helping because JUMP works so well for people in our community.”* Suzie Crews is hooked on the JUMP mission as a way to help Vermont children and adults who deal with the realities of poverty. She has found many ways to strengthen JUMP including leading the **15th Annual Run for JUMP on September 22.**

Suzie says, *“the event connects the running community with many of our supporters in a fun way. I love seeing the kids run the 1K and the teens and adults of all ages who take on our Waterfront 5K. Our walkers do a great job fundraising, cheering on our runners as the race begins! It’s a joyful event that brings vital support to JUMP. Many participants win prizes at our awards ceremony. We’re looking forward to many more teams this year from our faith communities and local businesses!”* You can learn more and sign up to run and donate at: www.jumpvt.org



A Project with Soul: Getting sneakers that fit to all who need them is at the heart of a steady local effort. Founded by a volunteer who had befriended new Americans from Africa and Bhutan, the project was designed to get sneakers to the many kids and adults who need them. Two area shoe and sneaker businesses were invited into a mission: *keeping footwear in useful condition out of the landfill and matching it with someone in need.* Donations are picked up regularly from the SkiRack and Danform Shoes in Shelburne. Burlington’s Skirack staff have worked to keep this project running and have a basket of donated footwear ready weekly.

First Congregational of Burlington’s Possibility Shop, which donates \$12,000 in merchandise annually to JUMP clients, is a key partner in distributing the footwear. At JUMP we celebrate the sole-ful support of all who donate shoes and sneakers, SkiRack staff Joe and Kyle and Kadi at Danform Shoes and the Possibility Shop - together they are getting hundreds of pairs of usable shoes and sneakers into the community.



Relationships are like gold to Heather Gilbert of Burlington’s Mercy Connections. Speaking recently on a social justice panel hosted at First Congregational Church in Burlington, Heather talked about her work and life story. “Dealing with poverty is hard; one of the biggest challenges is social isolation. Most of the time I felt invisible. I still do at times.” Heather added, “I feel so good being in this familiar place. I came here for help - now I encourage my students to come to JUMP because I know that they will have a positive experience. The volunteers and staff at JUMP listened to me, encouraged me, and gave me specific assistance and referrals that my family needed.”

Heather’s family had lost a relatively affordable apartment when her landlord evicted them to renovate the building. While they were homeless, Heather and her husband searched for months for an affordable living space. Finally finding it, they were forced to give up their dog. “Our dog was part of our family; we had to give him up to get housed. It has been six years and we still miss him so much.”

In a recent interview, Heather emphasized her experience: “In poverty, relationships are like gold. The supportive connections that I found in the community through the Women’s Small Business Program at Mercy Connections and at JUMP - these relationships were and are like gold to me.” Heather completed the Mercy Connections program, started a successful childcare business and went on to complete her Bachelor’s Degree at Johnson State College. When Heather returned to Mercy Connections to celebrate her graduation by thanking one of the Sisters of Mercy who had been so encouraging, she was invited to apply for an AmeriCorps position.

Now on staff at Mercy Connections, Heather brings understanding and experience to her students. “I know what they are going through. Staying on a budget with limited resources is very challenging.” Heather teaches the Getting Ahead and Kindling Connections curricula. Both are designed to help adults living in poverty gain the skills, knowledge, awareness of resources, and personal support needed to step out of poverty. She cares about each student and encourages keeping in touch. “I get calls and e-mails from students months after their class has ended.” Heather knows the value of her support. She is sharing the gold of relationships with her students.— *Lucy Samara*

