

## United Way of Merrimack County

GIVE, ADVOCATE, VOLUNTEER.

LIVE UNITED



ENEWS FROM UNITED WAY OF MERRIMACK COUNTY



### News from our Board President, Marty Van Oot

I am very pleased to announce that the Boards of Directors of the Merrimack County, North Country, and Heritage United Ways have each unanimously approved signing a letter of intent to merge our individual United Way organizations into a single United Way entity. A committee of Board members from each organization is now working through a due diligence process.

As an important friend of United Way, it is important for you to be part of this process. We share a commitment to positively impact the lives of those in each of our local communities, and this merger will allow us to have an even greater influence. This merger will allow our organizations to deliver a consistent "United Way experience" across a larger segment of our state. We are confident we will attain many positive outcomes, such as more effective fundraising, reduced operating expenses, and improved program offerings. We are confident that over time this merger will allow us to be increasingly supportive of the individuals and families that look to the many programs we fund for support.

The new, unified organization combines the many strengths of the Merrimack County, North Country, and Heritage United Ways. We will communicate with you frequently as we work through the organizational and operational details of the merger. We want you to know that the letter of intent ensures **local governance and funds raised locally remaining local**. Our volunteer leadership is working carefully on all details of the merger.

The new organization will serve the following New Hampshire communities: *Allenstown, Andover, Atkinson, Auburn, Bath, Benton, Bethlehem, Bedford, Boscawen, Bow, Bradford, Candia, Canterbury, Chester, Chichester, Concord, Contoocook, Dalton, Danbury, Danville, Dunbarton, Derry, Easton, Ellsworth, Epsom, Franconia, Franklin, Goffstown, Hampstead, Haverhill, Henniker, Hill, Hooksett, Hopkinton, Landaff, Lincoln, Littleton, Lisbon,, Londonderry, Loudon, Lyman, Manchester, Monroe, New Boston, New London,*

### Give.

So much can be done with a small donation...just \$1 per week can make a tremendous difference!! Maybe you have a friend or family member that you know currently does not donate to United Way...how about forwarding this along to them and asking them to consider a contribution of \$1 per week...it makes a difference!

### Give.

### Advocate.

Forward this eNewsletter

You can LIVE UNITED by helping us spread the word. Imagine how many people we could reach if everyone forwards this to five people.

+ TELL YOUR FRIENDS

### Volunteer.

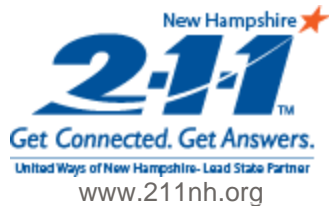
Have some extra time on your hands? Looking to make a difference in your community? There are many area non-profit organizations in need of volunteers. Please click on the link below and check out the great opportunities that await you! If you have any questions, please contact Val Guy [valg@unitedwymc.org](mailto:valg@unitedwymc.org) or 224.2595.

### Check Out Volunteer Opportunities

### How to Start the New Year?

*Newbury, Northfield, Pelham, Pembroke, Piermont, Pike, Pittsfield, Plaistow, Salem, Salisbury, Sandown, Sugar Hill, Sutton, Thornton, Warren, Warner, Weare, Webster, Whitefield, Wilmot, Windham, Woodstock and Woodsville.*

Liz Hager and I are available to answer any questions you may have. We have embarked on a challenging yet rewarding new endeavor, and are working toward completing the operational and organizational aspects of the merger with a common goal: to provide more program funding to our partner agencies, deliver that funding more efficiently, and become even more of a positive force in the state than ever before. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.



### **Red Cross Response in Haiti: The International Team Effort Starts at Home**

The recent catastrophic earthquake in Haiti illustrates the disaster relief network that is the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Because of the magnitude of this crisis, everyone in the Red Cross network is involved, including the local Granite Chapter and other NH chapters.

Since the earthquake struck on Jan 12, NH chapters have worked long hours to keep the public and the media aware of the ongoing critical Red Cross relief work; to provide comfort and support to the Haitian-American community in New Hampshire; and to receive and process donations from NH residents anxious to help.

Funds received through the NH chapters and throughout the American Red Cross are directly helping earthquake survivors in Haiti. To date (1/25/10), more than 38 flights carrying Red Cross aid have arrived in Haiti. The American Red Cross and its partners are distributing relief items-such as hygiene kits, blankets and water containers - for up to 6,000 people each day. So far, about 3 million pre-packaged meals from the American Red Cross have left Miami via ship and will be distributed in Haiti in partnership with the UN's World Food Programme.

Sheltering is a critical need. Together with relief partners, the Red Cross is setting up camps and other settlements, providing shelter supplies, and lending support for host families sheltering the displaced. They are also working on developing a long-term strategy to meet housing and reconstruction needs in the years to come.

This is already the largest single-country relief operation in

Start the new year off by becoming a Companion Visitor at the new Merrimack County Nursing Home in Boscawen. A couple of hours a week will be very rewarding!

For more information contact Del Kennard, Coordinator of Volunteers at 796.2165 ext. 242.

### **Junior Senior Friends Turns 35!**

This year the Junior Senior Friends Mentoring Program celebrates 35 years of introducing children age 6-18 to volunteer mentors in Merrimack County! We are pleased to continue to provide a unique opportunity for individuals to give their time and talent to enriching the life of a child.

We invite you to become involved by contacting the Junior Senior Friends Program today at 603.228.1193 or email [jstf@friendsprogram.org](mailto:jstf@friendsprogram.org). The next volunteer mentor training is February 16, 2010; please register in advance.

### **Vermiculture: The Wonderful World of Composting**

The Little Nature Museum will host its first program of the season, "Vermiculture: The Wonderful World of Composting" on February 20, 2010 in the Community Room at the Hopkinton Town Library, Contoocook, from 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm. The program is free.

Joan O'Connor of *Joan's Famous Composting Worms* will show anyone from farmers to apartment dwellers how to take any container and turn it into a worm bin. Learn how to create wonderful compost during the winter for your summer garden and help the environment. Joan's program is suitable for young people and adults.

global Red Cross history. More than 430 International Red Cross and Red Crescent workers from around the world are in Haiti supporting thousands of local volunteers. Of those, more than 100 are highly trained disaster specialists from the American Red Cross.

The residents of Merrimack County have been doing their part too, through generous donations to the American Red Cross International Response Fund through the Granite Chapter. This is truly an international team effort that starts at home.

## Martin Luther King Food Drive a Success!

Over 5000 pounds of non-perishable food and personal hygiene items were collected over the past three weeks during the statewide MLK Food Drive, providing a great example of how much can be accomplished through collaborative service efforts. Volunteer NH's Executive Director Tim Dupre said, "The success of this drive reveals the compassion and ethic of service that exists in the Granite State and shows that New Hampshire's citizens understand that hunger doesn't stop at the holidays."

The food drive, a collaboration of Volunteer NH, United Ways of NH, Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and local organizations and businesses, was one of hundreds of activities that cities and states throughout the country organized to honor Dr. King's legacy of service. Through the committed efforts of New Hampshire's strong volunteer base, 64 sites in 35 towns throughout the state were organized as public drop-offs for food donations. In addition, internal drives were coordinated at 40 different organizations.

With more than 60,000 people seeking food assistance in New Hampshire each year, donation programs are facing increased demand and pressure. The drive was organized in an effort to help replenish dwindling supplies at the NH Food Bank and local pantries throughout the state following the holiday season.

For more information regarding the food drive, please contact Kara Swedlow at 603-271-7211 or email: [vista@volunteernh.org](mailto:vista@volunteernh.org). To learn more about Volunteer NH, please visit [www.volunteernh.org](http://www.volunteernh.org), or call 603-271-7200

If you contribute \$5 per pay period and your contribution is forwarded to the Friends Emergency Housing Program it will help a family pay for hygiene products, baby food & bus fair.

Weather related cancellation:  
603.746.6121

Directions to the library:  
[www.hopkintontownlibrary.org](http://www.hopkintontownlibrary.org)

Museum Information:  
[www.littlenaturemuseum.org](http://www.littlenaturemuseum.org)

## It's Your Money...Keep It! You Earned It!

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program - Free Tax Preparation is Available to You

- Get your taxes done by a certified professional tax preparer
- Don't pay for filing, loans or rapid refunds
- IRS e-file is a fast, certified, no cost paperless way to file an accurate and safe Federal Income Tax Return. Get your refund in half the time, even faster and safer with Direct Deposit.

You may be eligible for a larger refund if you qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)!

Call 2-1-1 for the site nearest you!

## Happenings at Franklin Senior Center

On Thursday, February 4, the TRIP Center will celebrate American Heart Association Go Red Day for Women.

- 10:45 am Guest Speaker: Melissa Rizzo-Community Educator from Franklin Regional Hospital will talk about how to keep your heart healthy. There will be handouts and a Q&A session.

## The Circle Program

The Circle Program is a non-profit organization that gives disadvantaged NH girls new opportunities to develop the skills, courage and confidence they need to handle challenges in their lives. Currently, girls from 29 area towns (from Concord to Plymouth) are participating in the program which includes a residential summer camp experience, and later teams each girl with a year-round mentor who supports her throughout the school year.

Last summer, the Circle Program completed another awesome round of activities at Circle Camp on Spectacle Pond in Groton! Now fully involved in their school year, the girls are meeting with their mentors on a regular basis. circle mentors are volunteers who provide their girls with positive female role models and unconditional acceptance. girls meet their mentors at least twice each month for fun activities, and then every other month everyone gets together for a field trip or community service project. The idea is to build relationships and learn skills while having lots of fun together as a group of friends.

The mentors are dynamic women dedicated to making a difference in the life of a girl. The Circle Program always has a waiting list of girls in need of a mentor in the Concord area. If you might consider being a volunteer mentor, please call Mary E. Joyce at the Circle Program at 536.4244 or visit [www.circleprogram.org](http://www.circleprogram.org) for information. We would be so grateful!



### Margaritas Full Moon Madness to Benefit United Way of Merrimack County

January 30th, February 28th, March 30th  
Margaritas-Concord, 1 Bicentennial Square

### Food Services Healthy Eating Forum - Concord Area Wellness Coalition

The objective of this forum is to bring together food service directors in the Concord area to exchange information on their organization's efforts to offer and promote healthier eating; explore the potential for collaborative community approaches; and to raise awareness of the Concord

- 11:30 am Special Heart Healthy Luncheon-Bring a relative or friend (gentlemen are welcome too!) to join you for lunch. Wear red this day to show your support. there will be door prizes, giveaways, and more. This event is FREE and open to the public. Lunch is \$2.00 for seniors; \$6.00 for all others.

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On Tuesday, February 16 at 10:30 am, Anita Oeofke from ServiceLink Resource Center will be available to help you with Medicare Advantages. She will have up-to-date information for you. You may have a one-on-one appointment with her.

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On Tuesday, February 23 at 10:30 am Wayne Blanchard from ServiceLink Resource Center will be on hand to help you with long term support counseling and Medicare. He will be available for a one-on-one appointment.

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Please contact the TRIP Center for information 934.4151.

## Make Tax Season Less Taxing

In this economy, smart financial decisions are important and spending your dollars wisely is a must! Why pay someone to do your taxes or buy expensive software when FREE tax preparation is available?

Starting the week of February 1st, IRS-certified volunteers from AARP Tax-Aide will assist low and moderate income taxpayers of all ages to prepare and e-file their 2009 federal tax return.

Tax-Aide sites in Concord are located at NH Federal Credit Union, 70 Airport Road; Merrimack

Wellness Coalition.

There will be a panel discussion with food services representatives from Concord Hospital, NHTI, Concord School District, St. Pauls School and Havenwood-Heritage Heights.

Panelists will address:

- changes made or planned to improve the nutritional quality of the food served
- changes to improve the nutritional quality that did not work as expected and lessons learned
- information offered on the nutritional value or health of the food and drinks offered.

There will be small group discussion on how interested community members and organizations can make healthier food and drink choices more easily available. You and your ideas are welcome!

**Concord Area Wellness Coalition**  
**Date of Meeting: thursday, February 4, 2010**  
**Time: 8:00 am to 10:00 am**  
**2 Delta Dental Drive**

The mission of the Concord Area Wellness Coalition is to support collaboration among public and private organizations that will provide awareness, education and related programs and policies to support wellness.

Please contact Audrey Burghard at 230.7311 or [aburghar@crhc.org](mailto:aburghar@crhc.org) for more information.

■ **Thank You Sal's Pizza!!!** During December 2009 Sal's Pizza held a fundraising raffle to benefit United Way of Merrimack County. A big THANKS to Sal's for raising over \$1500!! Congratulations to the winners!



■ **Announcing the 2020 NH Partnerships for Education Conference, May 15**

The Parent Information Center is organizing its third annual NH Partnerships for Education Conference for May 15, 2010. The event will be held at the Grappone Conference Center in Concord.

The conference will explore the power of family-school-

County Savings Banks, 503 South Street; and United Way of Merrimack County, 46 South Main Street.

Tax payers must call 211 to schedule a convenient date and time, as this FREE service is available by appointment only.

## Your Medicare Prescription Coverage

Just because your Part D plan worked well for you in 2009, doesn't mean it will be your best choice in 2010. This is ServiceLink's message to seniors, "Review your Medicare prescription coverage for next year." Every year the drug plans can change the drugs they cover, the co-pay amounts charged and the premiums.

On Monday, November 16, 2009, ServiceLink offered the first Medicare Clinic. Each Monday at 10am every staff member turned into a Medicare counselor. They helped eighty people over the course of the annual Enrollment Period, November 15 through December 31st, to compare Medicare prescription drug plan options. Using their list of medication, they were able to show them the lowest cost and best coverage available for 2010.

ServiceLink has helped thousands of seniors with Medicare issues for years. It can be scary when maintaining your life or health requires expensive medications, even though your income is fixed. Helping people find the best coverage for their health care dollars is where ServiceLink comes in! When you are turning 65 or getting Medicare because you've been on disability for two years, call ServiceLink at 866.634.9412, anytime!

## Financial Literacy Poster Contest

Consumer Credit Counseling Services of NH & VT is proud to

community partnerships to improve outcomes for NH students. The conference will offer workshops aimed at parents, teachers, students, administrator, business leaders, community and faith-based organizations.

Tentative workshop topics include: Bullying, Early Childhood and IEP Referral, Extended Learning Opportunities in NH Schools, Financial Aid 101, Reducing & Resolving Special Education Disputes, Getting Smart About Children and Social Media, Parent Involvement in Middle & High School, Partnership Teams for Success in Special Education, Preparing for 21st Century Careers, Promoting Effective School-business Partnerships, Supporting Language and Literacy for Children Birth-5, Strategies for Increasing Father Involvement, 4-Year Planning for Transition to College and Career, Transition to kindergarten, Competency-based Report Cards and others.

A conference flyer can be downloaded at [www.picnh.org/p4e](http://www.picnh.org/p4e). Registration details will be available at the same web page by March 1. For additional information, please call the Parent Information Center at 800.924.7005.

## Reach4Hope

Reach4Hope is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization providing outreach to the homeless and less fortunate in the Concord area. Reach4Hope was started in February of 2005, when a small group of people became aware that there were people in Concord who were living in tents outside the winter elements. Reach has grown in its ability to provide outreach services to the homeless and less fortunate. Reach now has over 40 volunteers and many generous sponsors.

Since its formation, volunteers with Reach have provided weekly visits with the homeless and less fortunate making a connection with those struggling and assisting them with their basic needs. Volunteers visit the homeless at their camp sites, provide two meals a month at The Friendly Kitchen and set up a van every Saturday morning across from The Friendly Kitchen providing people in need with supplies to meet their basic needs. Those supplies include soap, toothpaste/toothbrushes, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, lotion, laundry soap, razors/shaving cream, toilet paper, tissues, socks, t-shirts, underwear, clothing, boots tents, sleeping bags, bug spray, bottled water, sun screen, hand warmers, gloves and hats.

Reach4Hope is a street church. On Saturday mornings, there is a sermon, sharing and prayer in Concord across from The Friendly Kitchen. Reach brings hope to those that are hopeless by showing the love of Jesus and helping them find the salvation that comes from a life in Him.

For more information on Reach4Hope please email Lorinda Monroe at [themonroefamily@comcast.net](mailto:themonroefamily@comcast.net).

announce its Financial Literacy Poster Contest. School age children from grade 3 through 12 can submit their poster entries reflecting on the theme: Smart Money Choices=Bright Futures.

Deadline for submission is February 19th. Submit entries to Sara Varela, Consumer Credit Counseling, 15 Loudon Road, Concord, NH 03301

Three local winners (one from each category) will receive a \$100 savings bond and the group that submits the most entries will also receive an additional \$100. The first place winner will be presented with a \$500 US savings bond and a trip (with a parent or guardian) to Washington, DC in April, recognized nationally as Financial Literacy Month.

For more information please visit: [www.takechargeofyourmoney.org/news.html#postercontest](http://www.takechargeofyourmoney.org/news.html#postercontest)

The contest is a great way to get young students thinking about how to manage money effectively and offers them a creative outlet to demonstrate their knowledge. It offers the opportunity for local and national recognition for student artwork and rewards winners with US Savings Bonds and other prizes.

## 4th Annual Owl Prowl at Sheldrick Forest Preserve

Join The Nature Conservancy along with Eric Aldrich of the Harris Center for Conservation Education at The Nature Conservancy's Sheldrick Forest Preserve in Wilton on Thursday, February 25th from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm as they listen for denizens of the forest...whoooo else?

Please bring warm clothes and proper shoes/boots for walking through the snowy forest at night, as well as a headlamp or flashlight- snowshoes are optional.

The hike is free for Nature

## **A Special Meals-on-Wheels Donation and a Great Big Thank You!**

Wal-Mart has a volunteer program and they encourage all of their employees to participate. An employee volunteers 25 hours of service to a non-profit agency. Upon completion of service, Wal-Mart will then make a \$250 donation to that agency.

Scott provided 25 volunteer hours at the Pittsfield Area Senior Center, Elder Services of Community Action Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc., Meals-on-Wheels program. He worked at the center cleaning and helping to decorate the facility for the holidays. It was fun for the senior's to get to know Scott and have a younger person around!

Thank you to Scott and thank you to the Wal-Mart Foundation.

## **Concord Connections Open House ~ Spreading the word about local collaboration**

Concord Connections, a collaborative family resource center, recently held its open house at the Boys and Girls Club of Concord to introduce its newly developed programming to the public. The family resource center is made up of several agencies in the Concord area including: Child and Family Services, Riverbend Parent Child Center, UNH Cooperative Extension, Merrimack Valley Child Care, VNA, The Children's Place and the Boys and Girls Club of Concord. Concord Connections offers parent support groups, education, play groups, workshops about budgeting, nutrition and more. Many of the parent education and support offerings are located at the Boys and Girls Club of Concord.

The open house allowed area residents to learn more about the participating agencies and what they do individually and collaboratively. There was also a presentation about teen brain developed by Thom Linehan of the UNH Cooperative Extension.

For further information on Child and Family Services and Concord Connections, visit [www.cfsnh.org](http://www.cfsnh.org).

Conservancy and Harris Center members as well as non-members. Reservations are requested. To RSVP or for more information, please contact Megan Lepage at [mlepage@tnc.org](mailto:mlepage@tnc.org) or 224.5853 ext. 23.

## **A Great Volunteer Opportunity**

Community Action Program is seeking a Dining Room/Kitchen Assistant to help with the senior lunch program at Horseshoe Pond Place, 26 Commercial Street, Concord, any weekday, approximately 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. Volunteers should enjoy working with older adults, be clean and neat in appearance, and possess a positive, caring attitude. Please contact Polly Fife, Director of Senior Services, at 228.6956 for more information.

## **Now Open ~ OutFITters Thrift Store Boutique**

5 Market Lane, Concord

Real.Good.Buys

Proceeds for your purchase will help support FIT a non-profit agency that provides affordable housing and supportive services to homeless individuals and families. For more information, please visit [www.fitnh.org](http://www.fitnh.org)



United Way of Merrimack County, 46 South Main Street, Concord, NH 03301  
[www.unitedwymc.org](http://www.unitedwymc.org) 603.224.2595

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