



Reconciling Former Prisoners With Society and Society With Prisoners Since 1986



The Rutland Council at the new home



The new Women's Home

Dismas of Vermont is so excited to announce the opening of a fifth Dismas House-the Women's Dismas House in Rutland, Vermont. The women's house is a new endeavor for Dismas and will serve women all across the state of Vermont. We have the capacity to hold eight women and at least half are community beds, meaning a woman does not have to be supervised by Corrections in order to reside at this location. With this change comes a new director, Maggie Ganguly, and assistant director, Kara Doherty, at the Royce Street location. The Women's Dismas House is a sister house to the Rutland Dismas House, so the programs will run in tandem when it comes to fundraising events and volunteers.

This project still aims to reconcile prisoners with society and society with former prisoners, but we are putting a spin on that by bringing other community collaborators into the brick and mortar that is Dismas. The vision of this housing opportunity would not be possible without the collaboration with the Rutland Housing Trust who own the building that we are making home. Dismas of Vermont will be working with the Turning Point Center of Rutland as they have allocated 20 hours a week to be available for female residents in their satellite office that is located on site.

Dismas of Vermont felt it was so important to step up for our community in a time of need. Women face unique challenges coming out of incarceration that many would not even consider when they think about reintegration. That is why it is imperative the community come together to support this population so they can successfully move on and become your everyday member of the Vermont community especially during this time of the COVID pandemic.

With all of that being said, we are still Dismas, we will still have our community dinners Monday through Friday at 6 PM. (For more information on being a volunteer cook, contact Geraldine@dismasofvt.org)

It has been a great challenge to find a dining table robust enough to serve our 12+ person dinners during these COVID times. We have partnered with Poultney Reclaimed to have a custom table built for the dining room so once it is safe we can all gather again and share our gratitude for one another. You can check out the fabulous community work Poultney Reclaimed is doing at <https://www.reclaimedvermont.org/>

From the Desk of Maggie Ganguly – Women’s Dismas House Director

I once had a resident tell me that sometimes changing your life is all about seizing an opportunity. People tell you that you can and that now is the moment. Even if you don’t believe it, you do it. That mentality is what helped him successfully transition from Dismas back into the community.



There have been so many times I have walked into a position and wondered if I had the skills, grit, and experience to do it, commonly known as imposter syndrome. There are days I have wondered and questioned myself; days where the words of those who told me I couldn’t, or asked if I actually have ability to do something have kicked around in my mind. In the working world I have learned quickly that for every ten people who tell you “you can’t” or “you are not strong enough” there is one who sees the potential in your abilities, and I am so delighted that Dismas, as an organization, is that one for me. I have had more people tell me “you can”, “There is not another person better for the job”, and “You have what it takes, don’t overthink it, just do it” in the last six weeks than at any other point in my life. This culture of empowerment and encouragement speaks more of Dismas and the greater Rutland community than it does to me, and it is this gritty positivity that I know I will bring with me to this position.

I am just one person, a cog in this Women’s Dismas House. However, knowing that every woman who walks through those doors will be treated with the same dignity, support, and love that I have received is what will keep me going in this position. This women’s house symbolizes more than just housing. This is an opportunity for these women to have a whole community tell them they can, and I am so grateful to be part of an incredible team that will help people move past barriers and into the rest of their lives. I recognize that not every single person will make it successfully through this transition in their life, but even in that case I hope that they take a seed of hope planted here and watch it grow when the time is right for them. I hope that building the spirit of ‘we can, together’ will provide support, encouragement, and empowerment to each woman in the moment that they need it most.



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Casey went on to say “About a month after I moved out of Dismas House I was helping my 7 year old nephew with an art project. I made a suggestion for a solution to a problem he was having and he looked at me hard and said “yea and you are ALWAYS right”! For some reason this coming from a 7 year old made me reflect on how I can come across to people. I’m not sure I would have seen it that way before living at Dismas House but I like that I am able to hear it that way now. This is the longest time I have been sober and out of jail and I know that I have more work to do but being a part of the Dismas community gave me a safe place where I learned that I can deal with conflict clear headed and the desire to work on who I want to be”. -Kim Parsons Buell Street Dismas House Director



dismasofvt.org

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

JOIN US FOR THE FEATURE EVENT
IN OUR HARTFORD DISMAS HOUSE
VIRTUAL SPEAKER SERIES



AUTHOR OF "DEAD MAN WALKING," ACTIVIST,
FOUNDER OF THE MINISTRY AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

SUNDAY, JUNE 20TH, 5:30PM

**SISTER HELEN
PREJEAN**

OUR VIRTUAL EVENING WILL INCLUDE:

- A TALK FROM SISTER HELEN
- A RESIDENT SPEECH
- A PERFORMANCE OF THE ARIA FROM "DEAD MAN WALKING," PERFORMED BY OPERA NORTH

***ADVANCE PAID TICKETS ON SALE MAY 1ST
& BUSINESS SPONSORSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE***

ADDITIONAL UPCOMING SPEAKERS

THE NEED FOR JUSTICE REFORM

APRIL 30TH, 12-1PM

JESSICA BROWN

SUPERVISING ATTORNEY

CHITTENDEN COUNTY, PUBLIC DEFENDER OFFICE

COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES:

THE SUSPENSION OF RIGHTS AFTER CONVICTION

MAY 21ST, 12-1PM

ALEC EWALD

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

cordially invites you to our

VIRTUAL CELEBRATION and LIVE ZOOM AUCTION

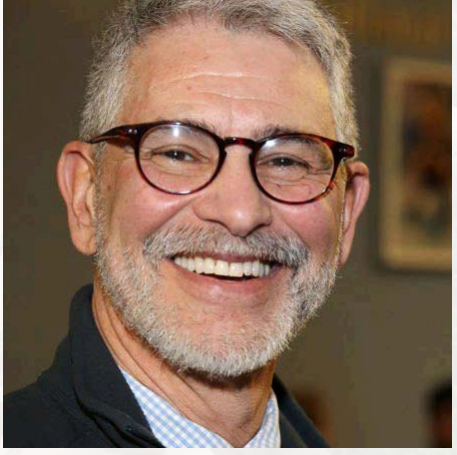
MAY 7th @ 7:00 p.m.

With special keynote speaker:

Paul Assaiante

Coach and author of

Run to the Roar: Coaching to Overcome Fear



Program will also feature:

Music from local artists

Awards presentations:

Fr. Jack Hickey Award

Mary O' Award

Loving Spoonful Award

Rocking Chair Raffle Drawing

The MacLachlan Family

John Casella

Nate Merrill & Dorset School

Hosted by: Dave Tibbs of WEXP's Mornings with Uncle Dave

Go to:

<https://dismasofvt.org/rutland-dismas/donate-to-rutland-dismas/>

Email geraldine@dismasofvt.org or call

(802) 775-5539 for a Zoom Link!

\$25 minimum donation

Thanks to our event sponsors:





DISMAS OF VERMONT ONLINE AUCTION

to benefit Burlington, Hartford and Rutland Dismas Houses

Dismas of Vermont is a grassroots organization that continues to provide a vital service to our communities. Due to COVID we have had to cancel fundraising events but we hope you will continue to support us by participating in our online auction.

When: Auction opens for preview April 24 – 30 and for bidding May 1 – May 9.
Where: dismasofvt.org/auction-products

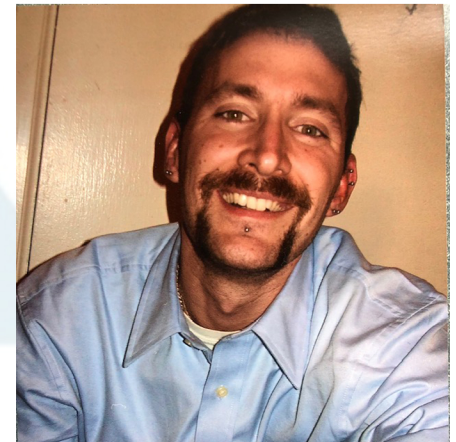


Dismas welcomes Mark to Hartford Dismas House

Hello, my name is Mark Bissonnette, the new Assistant House Director at Hartford Dismas. I am originally from the Boston area and have had the opportunity to travel and live in many states in my 28-year career with the Federal Government. My Wife and I are now living in the Groton, VT area raising six of our grandchildren which we have guardianship of. I am very excited to be working here and looking forward to being part of the growth and development of the house.

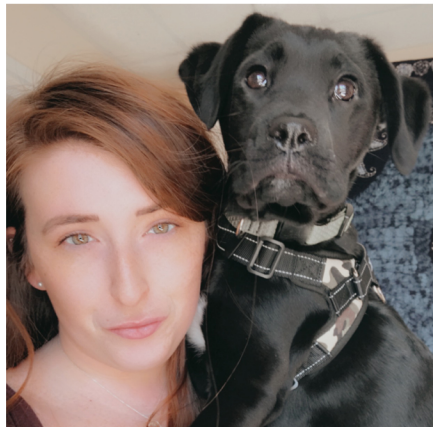
Dismas welcomes Eli to Buell Street Dismas

My name is Eli Ferree, prior to joining Buell Street Dismas, my experiences span the criminal justice spectrum -DOC to Community Justice Center work. I hold a M.A. degree in Criminal Justice from John Jay College. As a Part-Hawaiian, my ethnicity allows me to bring a cross-cultural perspective to my work. I work with community partners and volunteers to support our collective housing goals. Outside of Dismas, you can either find me riding my Harley-Davidson along the blue highways of VT or in the sky, jumping out of airplanes.



Dismas welcomes Kara to the Women's Dismas House

My name is Kara Doherty, I graduated from Castleton University in 2015 with a bachelor's in Social Work and Sociology. I have been working in the Rutland County community for the last 6 years. I have enjoyed working with diverse populations from adults, to adolescents and young children. My overall goal is to help create a positive, supportive, and creative environment for women in the Rutland community. On my off time I enjoy being in the mountains either skiing or hiking. I also love spending quality time cuddling with my two dogs.





Casey recently moved out of Dismas House after calling Dismas home for over a year. Casey grew up in Vermont with his mother, father, and 3 siblings. When he talks about his childhood he says that he was a wild child. He was diagnosed with ADHD and looking back he says that his parents had no idea what to do with him. He didn't attend school very often as he was either suspended or chose not to go. He first went to jail when he was 17 and was in and out every year before coming to Dismas House.

It doesn't take long in a conversation with Casey to realize that he is whip smart, curious, and retains everything. But what isn't so obvious is how hard he has to work on himself every day. After Casey moved into Dismas in September 2019 he quickly found a good job. He could do almost anything from rebuilding kitchens to building houses. He was incredibly generous with new residents and helped them get set up with a job, clothes, and would share whatever he had. He was serious about his sobriety and invited others to AA meetings.

But everything doesn't just fall into place when you get sober. Casey told me one day, "Dismas was an incredible place because it gives you everything you need to succeed. I really enjoyed the volunteer cooks and hearing about their lives and I loved doing things together as a house. I realized that I wanted to take advantage of what I had at Dismas House and work on becoming human again. I wanted to be able to have conflict and deal with it without drinking. Little did I know that I would go through the toughest period of my life when my father passed away unexpectedly. It wasn't easy but I had the Dismas community behind me and for the first time in my life I was able to stay sober and clear headed. I was finally able to help support my mother, sister, and brothers rather than them worrying about me blowing up. That was a real milestone in my life". *(continued on page 2)*...