



My Experience Living in Transitional Housing

By: Amy Manning, Rutland Dismas House

My time living in a transitional home began in 2014. I was sitting in jail again, broken and completely alone in the world. In just four years, I had gone from being a mom and partner who was lucky enough to stay home from work to take care of her family, to my being just my last name and an inmate number whose own young children would barely talk to. As I sat there in jail thinking I was at my bottom and wanting help to stop the insanity, there was still a piece of me that thought it would never happen. While I promised myself that day that I would at least try when I got out, I also knew that my addict brain's idea of trying was minimal at best. When I did finally get released to a transitional house, I went there with the attitude that I always had. I would give my best during my time there, be on my way back to doing what I always had, and thinking I could manage it all alone now. That is not what happened though. Instead, I found myself again and used that space and time to change my life.

When I moved out in 2016, something in me had changed that I still cannot answer all the questions to. What I do know is that it brings a safe space for individuals to slow down and process their lives thus far. That isn't usually possible before arrival because of always having to live in survival mode, along with all the other variables in people's lives. Transitional Houses bring structure and routine to those who have been living in chaos. I learned positive relationship building, and how to communicate effectively with others even when those conversations are difficult. I learned self-worth, confidence, and the belief that I matter. The opportunities that are provided were beyond anything I could have imagined, and the support I received is what brought it all together. I wouldn't be where I am today without it. None of these happen, or can happen, without the full support of everyone involved. The support that staff, other residents, and the community provide goes well beyond what you see on the surface.

The Line Up

"Reconciliation" in the Time of Covid
By: Alan Sullivan
Page 2

Rutland Dismas House Update
By: Eric Maguire
Page 3

A Story that Started at Dismas...
By: Adeline Praud
Page 4

Burlington Dismas House
Community Celebration
Page 5

Rutland Dismas House
Benefit Dinner & Auction
Page 7

Hartford Dismas House Update
By: Jeff Backus
Page 9

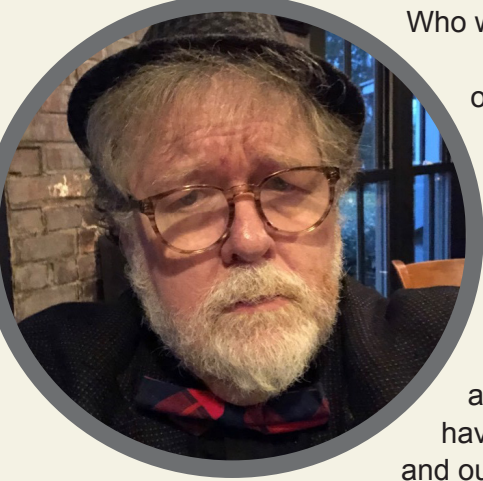
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“Reconciliation” in the Time of Covid

By: Alan Sullivan



Who would have thought we'd be dealing with this Covid mess a full two years later? Dismas, I'm happy to see, is coming out of these hard times (so we hope) a stronger organization than when we entered it. Our new Executive Director, Jim Curran, hit the ground running in mid-2020 and has been growing in experience and insight each and every month, lending Dismas great energy and positivity. We've opened up under his tenure a badly needed women's facility in Rutland to help meet the unique challenges of women newly released from incarceration. We have had successes in our Winoski house integrating new and expanded segments of the populations we serve. We are, through our extremely popular Speakers Series, continuing to raise our profile as "thought leaders" around the work we do. Our staff at our five houses is as strong as I remember it ever to have been. Ditto as to our three Local Councils and our statewide Board of Directors. Our donors have stuck with us – and then some.



But we really can't afford to paint rosy pictures around our current work. There will always be challenges. We do difficult work.

So, right now, I'm most enthused by the conversations we are having at this very moment about the Dismas of the future. Led by colleagues of mine on the Board, we have launched a really dynamic discussion about the paths that we might travel to help address the medium- and short-term housing needs of the residents we serve, to expand our geographic reach and to design additional program elements to better assure success in achieving lasting community re-integrations. We are also focusing on how we might refine our accountability "metrics" to allow us better to communicate what we've known for decades: grassroots community-driven efforts like ours can and do work to improve the lives and prospects of those exiting the criminal justice system.



As I listen to those discussions about the future, I think often about our mission. It's not "reintegration," "reparation," or "restoration." Our mission is all about reconciliation. It's a rich word. And it truly captures the spirit of the thing we do – healing, compassion, humanity, forgiveness and, ultimately, bettering the health and vitality of the communities in which we live. Reconciliation is the concept that drove Rita and Frank to give us our start decades ago. It's worked. Because it's the right thing to do.



So, if you're not already part of the discussion about our future, I encourage you to find a way to join in. We're looking for input about current needs. Let Jim know of your interest or suggestions. We will get you involved!

Rutland Dismas House Update

By: Eric Maguire, Rutland Dismas House Director



From my arrival on July 1st, 2019 I've had the pleasure of working with roughly forty unique individuals in which eight are currently residing. Each resident walking in begins their transition off the E.A.S.Y (Excuses, Assumptions, Self-Serving, Yonder) road and begins their journey on the H.A.R.D (Honest, Accountability, Responsibility, Discernment) road.

All residents who enter are provided the opportunity to learn different approaches to encounter their challenges, utilize the outstanding community resources available, grow in the understanding and value of community, receive advocacy and support with their Individualized Service Plans (ISP's consist of risk reduction, relapse prevention, recovery and personal goals). We here support the for-mentioned plan by utilizing the Supportive Case Management model and the Case Management Monitoring Instrument (CMMI) which allows us to evaluate the effectiveness of the services provided to residents, track changes in the resident status, and adjust accordingly when and where necessary.



I believe this approach has been well received by the residents because it is resident driven. The resident chooses what services they would like to explore then commit to the obligations and responsibilities outlined by the provider. With the development and implementing of the Reentry Initiative which is being funded by the United Way of Rutland County Community Action grant, Rutland Dismas House (RDH) has been able to provide another level of support and community integration. The initiative provides needed incentives to the residents to help meet the immediate needs of a resident coming from the correctional facility. We are looking forward to disseminating the Reentry Initiative as designed with the next incoming resident. Due to Covid the initiative has been conducted on a one on one basis, were it was designed to engage community partners and Dismas volunteers as a "circle" model. We are excited for the future of this endeavor. We are collaborating with Rutland Turning Point to have a recovery coach on the property. This collaboration is key to the resident's recovery plans. We believe the residents will engage the services consistently with Turning



Point on sight. Currently I believe the dynamics of Rutland Dismas House are excellent.

The environment is safe, stable, and sober with the residents performing and progressing in their goals and plans. The majority of the current residents have been residing at RDH for roughly five months; the main challenge of current residents is locating an independent living opportunity. We as a staff engage the monthly Continuum of Care housing meeting which gives us the opportunity to present residents to housing providers in attendance.

We are rolling along with preparation for our 30th Annual Dinner Auction to be held on Sunday, May 22nd, at Castleton Arena. Join us this year as we welcome Dr. Emily Salisbury as our speaker and honor the Vermont Women's Fund. Thank you all for your continued support to Dismas; I personally consider this an honor and privilege to serve the residents of Dismas, all those who call it home, and all

Dismas of Vermont communities.



A Story that Started at Dismas...

By: Adeline Praud



Do you remember Adeline Praud, the French photographer and former Volunteer for Peace at Rutland Dismas House back in 2017? Perhaps you were present at the 2017 Dinner Auction during the screening of a short documentary film that she had just edited in which she gave the floor to Tim and Shawn, two former residents.

Well, Praud returned to Rutland in February 2022 to continue to develop this ongoing project.

Praud is a photographer, and it is with the language of photography that she has finally decided to tell this story, her personal perspective on this crisis that America is currently facing: the opiate epidemic. The photo series is currently titled: *I want to change but I don't know how to. I feel lonely.* Once completed, it should take the form of a photo book and an exhibition. Praud is interested in how the small community of Rutland is coping with and responding to its collective trauma that stems from this epidemic. Her project depicts and gives voice first and foremost to those suffering from addiction, as well as community members working to support individuals at various stages of the addiction continuum. A photo book at its heart, the book will include other elements such as interviews, poetry, and any other material that will help tell this story.



For the photographer, this is first and foremost a collective story, one reflected today in testimonies from across America. Indeed, the Covid pandemic has increased the isolation of all, especially those suffering from addictions and mental health issues, and has brought the death rate from drug overdoses to record breaking highs. It is a collective story because the struggles of individuals suffering from addictions are not insolation. They are linked, in one way or another, to countless other members of the community, especially in a small community like Rutland. And collective again because it is at a national level that decisions are made which impact the lives of communities and individuals; which allow the pharmaceutical industries to take power through opioid prescriptions, which choose punishment over prevention or rehabilitation. Less political than humanist, Praud's intention is to share a sense of place, to portray a community fighting against a monster that devours and destroys families and communities. She also hopes to share an optimistic perspective. Optimistic because, created with both people involved in the fight and those who seek to avoid returning to drugs, she hopes her outsider point of view might bring a fresh perspective to our community and the greater conversation at large.

In February, Praud was able to develop new connections with organizations she hadn't known before, such as the syringe exchange program, which works to reduce the risk that comes from reusing or sharing needles as well as "providing a bridge to drug treatment and other prevention services." She also met people who are spending the winter in hotels, especially in the former Holiday Inn. Through these encounters, Praud seeks to assemble the different pieces of the puzzle and create a more cohesive, diverse, and well-developed portrait of the individuals who have shared their stories with her. Praud is not a journalist. She's an artist. However, as a documentary photographer, she finds it an integral part of the process to investigate in pursuit of a deeper understanding of the complex reality on a town-wide scale.

Praud will return in the fall to collect the final images that will be included in her book. If all goes well, a photo book and exhibitions will follow. To help facilitate this, she is in contact with the Vermont Center for Photography, located in Brattleboro. Praud and the publishing house she plans on collaborating with want to organize events that create debate and awareness around the community's role in fighting addiction. In France, Praud is a professional photographer. She works among others with the national press and has developed a photo outreach program through The Speaking Eye, an association she created in 2018. Her artistic work is supported and appreciated by a variety of organizations including The French Institute and The British Journal of Photography.



35TH ANNUAL BURLINGTON DISMAS HOUSE COMMUNITY CELEBRATION GUEST SPEAKER | SUSAN RANDALL

6-7 PM | Social Hour with Music and Food

7 PM | Program

MAY 15TH, 6 - 8:30 PM | TICKETS \$60

THE ECHO LEAHY CENTER FOR LAKE CHAMPLAIN

1 College St., Burlington, VT 05401

This year's guest speaker, Susan Randall, is a Vermont private investigator whose work appeared in the award winning documentary film, *The House I Live In*, produced by Eugene Jarecki. The film chronicles the lives of 20 people caught up in various roles in the "War on Drugs" and demonstrates the devastating results of over incarceration and the failure to achieve its purpose.

Susan Randall began her career as a journalist in the newsroom at the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour in NYC, and then went on to work as an associate producer for the A&E Television Network on the hit series, *Biography*. She also worked as a reporter in public radio, filing stories for NPR's, *All Things Considered* and *Morning Edition*. Susan worked as a documentary filmmaker in New York City, producing pieces for the BBC, on such topics as the Russian mafia, and the Anti-Terrorist Task Force of the FBI.



Enjoy hearty appetizers by Vermont's premier farm-to-table caterer, **Sugarsnap** and bluegrass and folk music by Dismas alumni **Pat Ryan & Friends** on the terrace.

Master of Ceremonies | TJ Donovan, VT Attorney General

Ann Atherton Award | Rose Laba, Colleen McCauliffe and Judy Galdi

Jack Hickey Award | Sr. Janice Ryan, RSM

SCAN THIS

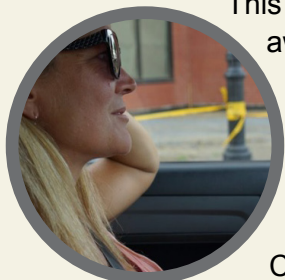


Tinyurl.com/BDHauction22

Online auction from May 6th to midnight on Sunday, May 6-15th

35th Annual Burlington Dismas House Community Celebration

May 15th, 6- 8:30 | Tickets \$60



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Susan moved to Vermont in her late 20's and has worked as a private investigator in Vermont for over 23 years. She has worked as a mitigation specialist on capital, federal and state cases and carefully weaves together defendant's stories. She also worked as an investigator and mitigation specialist with the Federal Public Defender's Office in Burlington, Vermont throughout 2012 and 2013. She sees her work as helping to tell the human story behind the charges and seeks to answer the question, "How did we get here?"

Sr. Janice Ryan, RSM, will receive the **2022 Jack Hickey Award** at the 35th Dismas Community Celebration.

The Jack Hickey Award is named after Fr. Jack Hickey, OP who was the founder of the original Dismas House in Nashville, TN. The award is presented to a person who has made a significant contribution to our community. Dismas finds it quite fitting to present this award to Sr. Janice, as she has committed her life to educating students, working for social justice, and advocating for criminal justice reform in particular. After a 40 year career as a teacher and then president at Trinity College in Burlington, Sr. Janice then worked at the state and national level to promote reform in education and justice. Among her accomplishments were working to allow DNA testing of prisoners to help overturn wrongful convictions. She also championed Vermont's Special Education Law, which was instrumental in



shaping special education law at the national level. She concluded her career as the VT Deputy Commissioner of Corrections.

The 2022 Ann Atherton Award will be presented to Rose Laba, Colleen McCauliffe and Judy Galdi, posthumous. This award is to honor and recognize those volunteers who have chosen to spend a part of their lives in direct service with Dismas residents. Just by showing up they demonstrate that they care enough about residents to spend a part of their day in relationship with them.

TICKET & DONATION FORM

YES, I will attend, enclosed is my payment for:
_____ reservations at \$60 each,
_____ reservations for children and students at \$30 each,
and a \$_____ donation to benefit the programs of **Burlington Dismas House**.

SORRY, I am unable to attend. I am enclosing a donation of \$_____ to benefit the programs of **Burlington Dismas House**.

NAME(S) (Please list all attendees)

NAME(S)

PHONE

EMAIL

CITY

STATE

ZIP



30TH ANNUAL RUTLAND DISMAS HOUSE BENEFIT DINNER & AUCTION

MAY 22ND, 3:00PM | TICKETS \$75

Spartan Arena

100 Diamond Run Mall Pl., Rutland, VT 05701

GUEST SPEAKER | DR. EMILY J. SALISBURY

Dr. Salisbury's research and work centers around system-involved women and their families. She is the Director of the Utah Criminal Justice Center and Associate Professor at University of Utah College of Social Work. Dr. Salisbury is a graduate from the Castleton University Forensic Psychology Program.



Jack Hickey Award

Vermont Women's Fund

Vermont Women's Fund is a philanthropic fund for women and girls founded in 1994.

Their vision is a fund for women by women dedicated to economic and social well-being, opportunity and community.

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Loving Spoonful Award

St. Alphonsus Church

Mary O Award

Senator Cheryl Hooker & George Hooker

Honorary Chair

Phil Fernandez

No Tickets Sold at the Door - For Tickets or Information: (802) 775-5539
tinyurl.com/2bctzwaa

30th Annual Rutland Dismas House Benefit Dinner & Auction

May 22nd @ 3:00PM | Tickets \$75



George and Cheryl are two retired teachers who grew up right here in Rutland. They are both graduates of MSJ and Castleton State College. George taught Biology for 40 years and spent 40 summers painting houses. Cheryl was a stay-at-home mom when the kids were small, but then went on to a career as an English Teacher and politician, serving on the Rutland Board of Alderman, and both the Vermont House and Senate. They volunteer with Rutland Welcomes, Dismas House, and St. Peter Parish where George serves on the Finance Committee and Cheryl is a lay reader. They are also active in Vermont's 251 Club, where George is the President. Cheryl is currently a Senator for Rutland County. They have 4 grown children: Sam, Molly, Emily and TJ and have been blessed with 6 amazing grandchildren. We are pleased to award George and Cheryl with the **Mary O Award!**

Guest Speaker Overview | Dr. Emily J. Salisbury

Dr. Emily Salisbury is an Associate Professor and the Director of the Utah Criminal Justice Center at the University of Utah College of Social Work. She is trained as an applied criminologist and focuses her research on the science of correctional treatment interventions, particularly among system-involved women.

Dr. Salisbury has a Ph.D. in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Cincinnati and a Master's degree in Forensic Psychology from Castleton University. Her research focuses on correctional policy, risk/needs assessment, and treatment intervention strategies, with a particular focus on system-involved women, gender-responsive practices, and trauma-responsive care. Her research publications have appeared in several top academic journals and edited volumes. As a result of her scholarship on behalf of women, she was awarded the Marguerite Q. Warren and Ted B. Palmer Differential Intervention Award from the American Society of Criminology Division on Corrections and Sentencing.

Dr. Salisbury is a co-creator of the Women's Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA) instruments that were developed through a cooperative agreement with the National Institute of Corrections. The WRNA correctional assessments are specifically designed to focus on the risk and needs of system-involved women, and have been implemented in multiple international and domestic jurisdictions.

She frequently provides applied technical assistance to the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, various federal and state departments of corrections and international NGOs. For five years, she also served as Editor-in-Chief of Criminal Justice and Behavior, a top research and policy journal focused on the science of correctional (re)habilitation. Additionally, she is co-author of the book, Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation, currently in its 10th edition.

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SORRY, I am unable to attend. I am enclosing a donation of \$_____ to benefit the programs of **Rutland Dismas House**.

NAME(S) (Please list all attendees)

NAME(S)

PHONE EMAIL

CITY STATE ZIP

Hartford Dismas House Update

By: Jeff Backus



The cold winter months can be difficult. They can be even more difficult for those who feel looked down upon and unstable... even unclear about what the short-term future may hold. Often residents arrive at Hartford Dismas House because of a lack of a positive support system, and a positive support system is exactly what is found here in our community.

Holidays are a time to come together. We all know somebody in our personal lives who may have made one or several decisions that we'd consider unwise, maybe they've even caused harm in one way or another— but we still welcome them to the dinner table.

To shun and marginalize those around us based on isolated moments in their lives doesn't equate to a more fruitful life, it accomplishes exactly the opposite in creating distance and isolation. So yes, we do invite our most troubled family members to the dinner table and create the opportunity for warmth and healing for all involved.

At Hartford Dismas House we focus on creating an ambiance of forgiveness and feeling welcomed. This is evident in our community dinners and we put a little extra pizzazz on the holidays. This past year we celebrated Thanksgiving as a family including our generous volunteers, Jane and Joyce (and their canine companions), and had a buffet of a meal that any other Upper Valley family would be proud to feast upon with their loved ones. Then like many families, we spent time together sharing stories and watching dog shows and football on TV right before our food coma naps.



Christmas also was a time of gathering and celebration. In a four-part, week-long event we set aside time to celebrate each other and who we are as a whole.

On Monday, we had our annual "Council Potluck," and it was an evening of laughter and memories of what we all look like in person after two years of exhaustive zoom calls. On Tuesday, we, the immediate house members and one volunteer cook, Matt, had our own internal "Dismas Christmas" at house meeting which included a Secret Santa, Yankee Swap, and we were

swimming in an incredible volume of gifts from our generous community of donors. On Friday, we had our annual Christmas Eve lobster dinner which is always an event in itself with the live lobsters arriving on our doorstep in a package from Maine!

And lastly, on the big day itself, Christmas, we had a low-key celebration with volunteer Joyce and with food prepared and donated to us by Jim and Sandy and we just took this time to soak in the atmosphere of having a second chance, a fresh start in the warmth and compassion of a strong support network.

Hartford Dismas House is continually grateful to our incredible Upper Valley community and beyond our gratitude, we want to express that this community is what makes us a success. Individual efforts on the part of residents and staff go a long way, but without the strong commitment of support, that reinforces that there is a world so much bigger than oneself we wouldn't have a fighting chance. The Upper Valley community gets us through each hour, each day, each week, each month, each year, and we want to offer a heartfelt **THANK YOU!**



A Student Perspective

By: Emma Jarnagin, UVM Graduate



I was introduced to Dismas by Alec Ewald, a professor at UVM who presented in one of my Political Science classes. He said that students could live at Burlington Dismas House, and the story he painted about Dismas made me interested in the cause. His presentation ended with how valuable to him and to the community a Dismas House is. Shortly after, I got in touch via email about staying at the house. I liked meeting new people and I looked at it as an opportunity to learn more about the community programs in Burlington. Professor Ewald got me in contact with Kim Parsons and I submitted my written statement of intent on why I wanted to live there for the summer.

I lived at Burlington Dismas House in the summer of 2019, which was my sophomore year of college. I don't remember if I had dinner there before or if I visited, but when I moved in I was nervous. I knew it wasn't going to be like college, but, then again, I was going to have roommates. It was weird to get to know new people again, but as the night went on from there I felt more comfortable. Meeting the director and team made me feel great. I could tell there was a passion for recovery, and getting people to the next stages of their lives.

My favorite memory was a house picnic at Oakledge Park. It was pretty relaxed and laid back, we didn't have to set the table, and people were swimming in the lake. It was nice to see people out of the house and in a different element enjoying freedom with one another. Dinners at Dismas spark joyful memories for me. It's where we get to talk about life and truly bond over our ideas, thoughts, and personal experiences. All though I felt different, almost like an outsider, I felt comfortable knowing that everyone was there to build trust and support one another once I sat down at the Dismas table. The residents genuinely want to help their communities, and Dismas of Vermont helps raise awareness of the need for reintegration.

I can say now that I have a different, fuller perspective on how the prison system afflicts the minds and lives of countless people within my local community. Being able to experience Dismas from the inside is something I'll never forget, and I will always visit and stay in touch.

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