

Susan Randall, Private Investigator, To Speak at Annual Community Celebration



Guest Speaker Susan Randall

Susan will share her unique perspective on VT's criminal justice system. She has her own private investigation firm called VTPrivateye, and has worked as a defense investigator on civil, state, and federal cases for over 22 years. She sees her work as helping to tell the human

story behind the charges. She seeks to answer the question, "How did we get here?" Prior to working as a private investigator, she worked as a journalist and documentary filmmaker in New York City for A&E television and the BBC. She also worked as a reporter for NPR's *All Things*

Considered and Morning Edition. Susan now provides investigative training and runs an investigative internship program for undergraduate students, one of whom lived as a student volunteer at Dismas House this past year. Susan will share some of her stories and the insights she has derived from them. ❖

HOUSE HAPPENINGS

Save the Date

Saturday, April 25th, 2020

**Burlington Dismas
35th Annual Community
Celebration**

at UVM Alumni House
on Summit Street, Burlington, VT
(see page 3 for details)

Dismas on
Facebook



Visit our FB page to see
the many photos and
happenings at the house.

[www.facebook.com
/Burlington-Dismas-House](http://www.facebook.com/Burlington-Dismas-House)

Sister Janice Ryan, RSM to receive the Jack Hickey Award

Burlington Dismas House announces that Sr. Janice Ryan will be the 2020 recipient of the Jack Hickey Award. The Award is named after Father Jack Hickey, OP, who was the founder of the original Dismas House in Nashville, Tennessee. Father Hickey was committed both to university students, with whom he started the first Dismas House, and to men and women who were incarcerated. Dismas finds it quite fitting to present this award to Sister Janice because she, too, has committed her life to educating students and to working for social justice. Sister Janice has advocated for criminal justice reform

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THIS JUST IN!

This is one of those "Only at Dismas!" stories. Last night our evening meal started out with the same pre-dinner ritual as it always does. I asked one of the guys to say a few words to get us started; we gave a round of applause to our cooks. Last night, it was three members of the Winooski Police Department, and, yes, they are regular volunteer cooks. We introduced ourselves, and then I asked if anyone had anything they would like to give thanks for. A hand shot up immediately. This was Scott's first day as a resident at the house, he said, "First I want to give thanks for being here at Dismas, but I also want to say to you, Officer McCormack, thank you for saving my

(continued on page 7)



High spirits on Super-Bowl night.

We Asked and You Responded

Maybe my name is starting to sound familiar to some of you, as I have been with Burlington Dismas House for 29 years. Returning home to Vermont after working for the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) with Salvadoran and Nicaraguan refugees in Honduras in the early 90's, I found Dismas House. I was immediately drawn to the mission of reconciliation by creating a supportive community. When I was in the refugee camps it was apparent that there were a number of organizations that addressed the basic human needs for food and shelter. At a young age I thought that covered everything, but I was always aware that there was something more going on behind the scenes in the camps. There were elderly folks and children



Kim with Dismas canine friends, Johnny and Gilly.

whose families were missing, or had been killed, and people with physical and emotional scars from wars and civil unrest in their countries. There was an un-official type of leadership and support in the camps that was similar to growing up in a small town in Vermont where

family and neighbors took care of each other.

There is a similar dynamic at Dismas House. Former prisoners, college students and volunteers living in the house have chosen to support each other, but we are also supported by the larger community. We are a grassroots organization, created by Vermonters, and the majority of our support comes from individuals, local businesses and foundations. A few months ago, we asked our donors for support after Dismas lost a large grant. We were surprised by how many responded by increasing their donations, or got in touch with us to let us know they were there for us. We are a small organization that has been a steady partner in the community and we asked for help and there was a mighty response. We will have to continue to work hard to replace the funding that we lost but are heartened to be a part of this Vermont community that values every member. ❖



Kimberly Parsons for Buell Street Dismas House



Kim serving up Thanksgiving Dinner at Buell St. Dismas.



Richard Gagne dishing it out at East Allen Dismas Thanksgiving.

35th Annual Dismas Community Celebration

April 25, 2020 4:30-8:00 PM

UVM ALUMNI HOUSE, 61 SUMMIT STREET IN BURLINGTON

Sister Janice Ryan to receive Jack Hickey Award.

Colleen McAuliffe, Rose Laba, and Judy Galdi to receive Ann Atherton Volunteer Award.

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

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

FOR RESERVATIONS

Reserve On-line at
www.burlingtondismas.org

OR Call
802-658-0381

OR Email
kim@dismasofvt.org

OR Mail the form to:
Burlington Dismas House
96 Buell Street
Burlington, VT 05401

Helping Our Lamoille County Neighbors Stay Warm This Winter

Three times a year members of both Burlington Dismas House locations volunteer as a group in support of other organizations serving our Community. For many years we have volunteered to provide crowd control at the waterfront for the New Year's Eve fireworks display. In more recent years we have regularly volunteered at the VYCC Farm in Richmond, helping with planting in the spring and harvesting in the fall. Perhaps the reader will recall seeing pictures from the farm in previous newsletters. This fall, we tried something different. The United Way of Lamoille County operates this wonderful program that provides cord wood for families in need who heat their homes with wood stoves.



Dismas Volunteer Woodcutters

Northern Vermont winters are long and cold and the average family heating with wood will go through a lot of it. Fortunately, the United Way received a large donation of lumber, but they needed help splitting and stacking the lumber in preparation for pick up. This was the perfect activity for us. We had several residents who had lived in rural

areas and were experienced using the log splitters. They enjoyed the opportunity to work the machines again. The rest stayed busy, stacking the just-split wood, and loading it onto pallets. There was no standing around, as everyone had a job to do. In the end it was an impressive sight to see all the work we had accomplished. Stay warm this winter, Vermonters! ❖

Reconciling Former Prisoners with Society, and Society with Former Prisoners for 34 Years!

What Happens Next - From the Executive Director

*“To exist is to change,
to change is to mature, to mature is
to go on creating oneself endlessly.”*

So said French philosopher Henri Bergson during the first part of the last century. His words are a good description of, and prescription for, Dismas of Vermont in 2020. We have, for a couple of years, been engaged in a process of maturing (updated bylaws, a new strategic plan, an extended state-wide Board of Directors). Also during this time, increased public and governmental focus upon the crises of over-incarceration in our prisons, and substance use disorders in our communities, has led to a call for change. A new bill in the legislature, based on recommendations from the Council on State Government study

“Justice Reinvestment II”, calls for big reforms in the justice system and also in transitional housing. With shifts in the Vermont correctional system to think about, Dismas will also be examining our programs, and how we can evolve and flex to best serve our mission and the public need.

Another change: I will commence a long-planned retirement at the end of June, and henceforth see much more of my grandchildren. Being Executive Director of Dismas of Vermont and serving this vital mission for nine years has been a culminating joy in my working life, and a great honor. The courage of our residents, the dedication of our staff, the compassion of our volunteers, the generosity of our donors and the profound kindness that defines Dismas



Vermont Representative Becca White (D-Windsor) and Jan Tarjan, Executive Director, at the General Assembly.

have fostered for me a deeply meaningful experience. I am confident that the next Dismas leader will guide Dismas well, supported by our foundation in the community. Any changes ahead are all part of growing and “creating (Dismas) endlessly”. Remember that, in ourselves, in YOU, we have everything we need to reach transformational heights. Margaret Mead said it best: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful people can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” ❖

Dismas Goes to the Legislature

In January we took Dismas to the Legislature. Our panel, supported by Representative Rebecca White (Hartford), was comprised, with me, of House Directors from Burlington, Rutland and Hartford Dismas houses and several Dismas residents.

House Directors who were on the panel are front-line in the work of reconciling prisoners with society and society with prisoners. They told of their work and provided data about our impact. The most affecting part of our panel was, of course, the experiences and perspectives offered by three Dismas residents. One, Jeffrey Lockyer, was living at Dismas. The others, Seth Osgood and Thomas Shea, have made successful transition to community life and employment. Their stories of



Dismas Panel Presenters at Legislature.

struggle were moving; the descriptions of their progress inspiring. It was a rare opportunity for those who make our laws and policies to hear directly from people who have been incarcerated, and are taking good advantages now of their second chances.

It was also empowering and affirming for our residents, themselves, to have a voice and to speak their “truth to power”. ❖

“Being part of the panel from Dismas House that spoke to various State Legislators was a memorable experience. The State Building, the ornate interior, the hustle and bustle of legislatures and constituents—it was politics in action. At home at Dismas we reintegrate with the local community; there, I had an opportunity to ‘reintegrate’ at a State level. It’s what Dismas is all about.”

- Jeffrey Lockyer, Resident

The Senator and the Shopping Cart

by Senator Cheryl Hooker

Cheryl Hooker is a lifelong Rutland resident, retired teacher, former Alderman, mother, grandmother, a long-time Representative and now Senator at the Vermont Legislature. With her husband George, she shops for the groceries at Rutland Dismas House every week. That's a lot of groceries and probably more than one cart. In the Legislature, Senator Hooker serves on the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs, Senate Committee on Institutions, Senate Sexual Harassment Panel and the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee.

“As a State Senator dealing with Corrections and Justice, I recognize the need for the type of transitional housing Dismas House provides.”

- Senator Cheryl Hooker

Even in retirement, it seems that my husband George and I don't have a lot of time to volunteer on a regular basis. But

a few years ago when, after being the weekly grocery shopper for Dismas House in Rutland for over 10 years, Marty Barclay was ready to hand over the list to someone else, we were asked to step in. Since we live only blocks away from Price Chopper and shop there regularly, it was easy to say yes.

We've supported Rutland Dismas House since Rita McCaffrey worked so hard to establish it in 1990. We've helped with phone-a-thons, auctions and dinners throughout the years, but those were only periodic opportunities to volunteer. Shopping each week gives us a closer connection to the House and its mission. We believe that Dismas is feeding the spirit and souls of the residents who, with staff and volunteers committed to helping them, are transitioning back to being fully contributing members of the community.



Senator Hooker and husband George unload weekly groceries at Dismas.

As a State Senator dealing with corrections and Justice, I recognize the need for the type of transitional housing that Dismas House provides.

Dismas cares for the whole person: body, mind and spirit. Grocery shopping each week makes us feel that we have a small part in helping to feed those who come through the door. ❖

Shout Out to Legislators and Public Servants

Dismas is proud to count among its history of volunteers and supporters many Vermont legislators and others in public service. These special people have volunteered at Dismas as Volunteer Cooks, Council members and Board members:

CURRENT LEGISLATORS:

Jean Ankeny, Johannah Donovan, Cheryl Hooker, Ann Pugh, Jean O'Sullivan, Butch Shaw, Mary Sullivan.

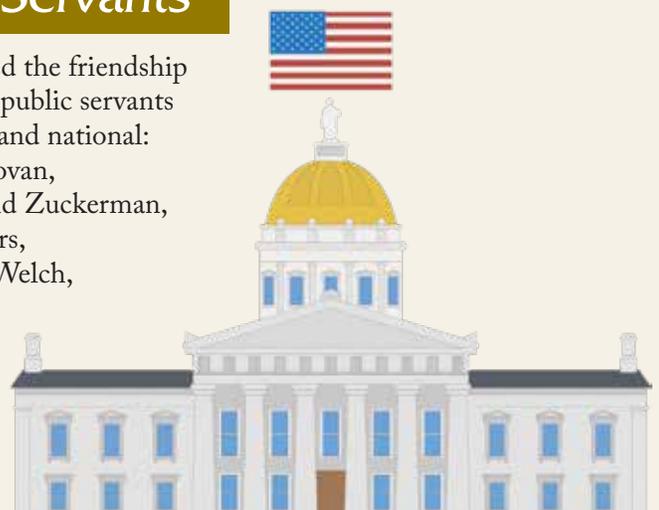
FORMER LEGISLATORS:

Susan Buckholz, Diane Carmoli, Joanna Cole, Ann Cummings, Dennis Delaney, Helen Head, Jim Leddy, Joanne Lenes, Bill Lippert, Gabrielle Lucke, Ginny Lyons, Rita McCaffrey, Carol Ode.

In Addition, we have valued the friendship and assistance of Vermont public servants in other arenas, both state and national:

Attorney General TJ Donovan, Lieutenant Governor David Zuckerman, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, U.S. Representative Peter Welch, Governor Madeleine Kunin, Judges McCaffrey, Cashman and Griffin. Rita McCaffrey, our Founder, and a former Representative from Weston, is especially proud that a handmade,

log cabin design Vermont quilt hung for many years in the Washington D.C. office of the late Senator James Jeffords—an award token from Dismas—recognizing the Senator's concern for justice and reconciliation. We appreciate the continuing opportunity to work together to solve critical challenges in Vermont. ❖



Ways to Give

Discover the many ways to support Dismas and make a difference in someone's life

No matter how you give, why you give, or how much you give, your gift is vital to Dismas of Vermont's programs. You can give to support one of our local programs, or to Dismas of Vermont in general. Please contact either the program you wish to support, or our Executive Director, Jan Tarjan, for more information or assistance.

GIFTS BY CHECK:

Checks should be made out to the local program you wish to support, or to Dismas of Vermont Statewide if you prefer, and mailed to the addresses listed on this page.

GIFTS BY CREDIT CARD:

Credit Card donations may be made by visiting us online at <http://www.dismasofvt.org/donate>

MATCHING GIFTS:

Your employer may offer an employee matching gift program to support your charitable giving. Please check with your employer to determine if they offer this option.

HONOR AND MEMORIAL GIFTS:

These gifts offer a meaningful way to pay tribute to loved ones.

GIFTS OF STOCKS, SECURITIES:

You can make a gift of stock by contacting our brokerage account with MassMutual.

ACCOUNT NAME: Dismas of Vermont Inc.

ACCOUNT NUMBER: R72025577

DTC NUMBER: 0226

MASSMUTUAL RE: Roger Webster

Phone: 802-264-6620

RECURRING GIFTS:

Sustaining gifts can be made by credit card.

Visit us online at <http://www.dismasofvt.org/donate>

PLANNED GIVING/BEQUESTS:

You may include Dismas in your lifetime charitable giving plans through a bequest, charitable gift annuity, insurance policy, charitable trust or other planned giving vehicle.

Planned gifts can be constructed today to benefit Dismas of Vermont at a future date.

Contact our Executive Director to learn more!

DISMAS PROGRAM LOCATIONS:

Burlington Dismas House

Locations at:

96 Buell Street, Burlington, VT 05401

103 East Allen St., Winooski, VT 05404

Kimberly Parsons and Richard Gagne,

House Directors

(802) 658-0381

kim@dismasofvt.org

richard@dismasofvt.org

Hartford Dismas House

1673 Maple Street, PO Box 174,

Hartford, VT 05047

Jeff Backus, House Director

(802) 698-8661

jeff@dismasofvt.org

Rutland Dismas House

103 Park Avenue, Rutland, VT 05701

Eric Maguire, House Director

(802) 775-5539

eric@dismasofvt.org

Dismas of Vermont, Inc.

103 East Allen St., Winooski, VT 05404

Jan-Roberta Tarjan, Executive Director

(603) 795-2770

jan@dismasofvt.org

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Jan-Roberta Tarjan

Executive Director

Richard Gagne

Program Manager

Jennifer Blair

Business Manager

Rita McCaffrey

Founder & Adviser

Donors Promote Pride of Workmanship by Darby, Dismas Resident

"I am a recovering addict. I went to Valley Vista for twenty-three days and then was asked to be a part of the Dismas House program. WOW what a great decision I made. There are many men living here



Darby helps keep Dismas in good shape.

with many talents, mine is fine carpentry. Thanks to all the caring people that have donated to the Dismas house, we were able to buy necessary building material for the house. I am so proud to be able to put my craftsmanship to work, so we can keep this beautiful house alive and looking its finest. And my work as well as my name will always be a part of this house and the wonderful program that it is. God bless to all that have donated or given their time to this warm caring home." (abridged text) ❖

California Dreaming

Many personal stories of Dismas residents include incidents of abuse, neglect, tragedies, and an eventual slide into drug or alcohol addiction. But not all. Bill grew up in the mountains of southern California, not too far from Los Angeles. As a young adult he established a small but successful business in the building trades. He came to Vermont to be with a girlfriend, but he got into trouble, was arrested and convicted and spent time incarcerated. He was, after a few months, eligible for immediate release on furlough, but because he did not have approved connections for housing in Vermont, he remained incarcerated for seven additional months before he finally was able to secure a bed at Dismas House.

When Bill arrived at East Allen Dismas in Winooski, the thing that surprised him the most was how normal it felt. He was expecting something that felt a little like prison, but Dismas felt like what he knew as home. The things expected of him were similar to the things that he would be doing in his own home. "But what I enjoyed the most is how we celebrated the holidays!" Bill said, "I really liked going to cut our Christmas tree. That is what we do at home except, there, the Christmas tree farms are near the desert. The trees are the same, but there are two differences— it's not so cold, and instead of the plastic toboggans used to slide the tree from the field to the parking lot, at home we used those old Radio Flyers."

Bill wants to go back home once his supervision commitments in Vermont are over. He has a business and a life to go back to. While Dismas, most often, provides support to those who are making their home in Vermont, we are always open to the odd case where supervision requirements hold an individual in our state. Even if a person's goal is to go home to California, everyone wins when we can help make that particular dream come true. ❖

This Just In (cont. from pg 1)

life!" That really got everyone's attention. Scott went on, "So you guys probably don't know this, but about six months ago, before I went to jail this last time, I was going to be arrested in Winooski, on the bridge, and I just jumped off the bridge into the Winooski River. It was Officer McCormack, who was trying to arrest me, that ended up saving me!" For his part, Officer McCormack responded, "I am really glad to see you. It is so good that you are here." And after dinner he told Scott, "If you ever need to talk, know that you can call me any time." ❖



Christmas Tradition: choosing the perfect tree. Richard Gagne on left, Dismas Board member and volunteer cook Marykate Rowan at right.

The Ann Atherton Award will be presented to our good friends!

Colleen McAuliffe, Rose Laba, and Judy Galdi have been monthly volunteer cooks at East Allen Dismas since November 2010. Come rain or shine, they were there. They have never missed a month. One of the things that made them popular with everyone in the house was they always solicited recommendations regarding what they should make for dinner the following month. And while it is with great affection that we honor this group of friends, it is at the same time bittersweet. This past November, on the eve before they were scheduled to cook, Judi called Colleen to ask that she take Judi's turn preparing the main course; and she wanted to make sure that Colleen could prepare something special. She made this request because she was scheduled to go to the hospital the next day. We were taken by surprise when we learned that Judi was very ill. She passed away only a few short weeks later. Judi had made a real connection with staff and some house members who had been at Dismas for some time, so her passing hit us all hard. But, her spirit is still with us, and we celebrate it every second Thursday of the month. ❖



Judy Galdi

Burlington Dismas House

BURLINGTON DISMAS HOUSE COUNCIL

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DISMAS STATEWIDE

Jan-Roberta Tarjan Richard Gagne
Executive Director *Program Manager*

Jennifer Blair Rita McCaffrey
Business Manager *Founder (Advisory)*

The Wishlist

Tableware • Blankets
Twin Size Mattress Pads

Wax-less
Cross Country
Skis & Boots



Dismas residents look forward to fair-weather fun soon!

Sister Janice Ryan

(cont. from pg 1)

in particular. After a forty-year career as a teacher, and then president at Trinity College in Burlington, Sister Janice took on a number of positions at the state and national levels, promoting reform in education and justice. Among her accomplishments are working to allow DNA testing of people already in prison, which helped to overturn wrongful convictions. She also championed Vermont's Special Education Law, which was later instrumental in shaping special education law at the national level. She concluded her career as the Vermont Deputy Commissioner of Corrections. ❖



*Jack Hickey
Award Recipient,
Sr. Janice Ryan.
Join us on April 25th*

BURLINGTON DISMAS HOUSE

96 Buell Street, Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 658-0381 | burlingtondismas.org