



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DISMAS OF VERMONT WELCOMES INCOMING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JAMES CURRAN

Dismas of Vermont, Inc. (DOV) has named James Curran to be its new Executive Director. Curran is replacing Jan-Roberta Tarjan, who announced several months ago her intention to retire from the organization effective June 30. Tarjan, who has served as the Executive Director of DOV since 2011, will continue at Dismas over the coming weeks to assist Curran as needed. Curran has agreed to begin his duties immediately, and before Tarjan's departure, to ensure an effective transition.

Curran until recently was the Executive Director for the United Way for Lamoille County and has a demonstrated commitment to serving Vermonters and their communities. Beyond acting as Board President of United Ways of Vermont and Vice Chair of the Lamoille Regional Chamber of Commerce, Curran has served for 6 years as Operations Director for ReSOURCE, a community-based enterprise focusing on workforce development. Curran also has had 15 years of operations management experience at several Vermont businesses.

Dismas of Vermont operates four residential homes in Vermont that assist individuals transitioning from incarceration back into the community. The organization, founded 34 years ago by Rita and Frank McCaffrey of Rutland, provides community-based support and encouragement to persons committed to returning to productive roles, all in furtherance of Dismas' core mission of achieving lasting reconciliation between former offenders and their communities.

DOV Board President Jonathan Sylvia was impressed not only with Curran's strong credentials but with the depth of the response to the organization's search for candidates to replace Tarjan. "In Jim, we feel we have found a leader who will bring us deep management and fund raising skills – as well as a steady leadership style -- critical to guiding us through what may be challenging years ahead. While we were very fortunate to have received interest in the position from many highly qualified persons, our Search Committee and Board felt strongly that Jim stood out as exceptionally well-suited to lead Dismas."

Curran, a graduate of Johnson State College, lives in Hyde Park with his wife and three children. "I am very excited to take on this new role. There has been a lot of attention in the Vermont General Assembly these last two years about how the State can best return offenders to their communities while also furthering important public safety objectives. Issues relating to the fulfillment of the Dismas mission in the current health environment adds some complexity to its work. I'm totally committed to making sure that Dismas provides true value to the people and communities we serve for years to come."

President Sylvia further commended Tarjan's leadership. "Dismas has been exceedingly blessed to have been led these last nine years by Jan. She has contributed to significant changes within the organization while approaching our mission with enormous energy and a huge heart. She will be missed." During her tenure, Tarjan among other things guided establishment of the Dismas House in Hartford, was instrumental in the redesign of Dismas' statewide governance structure and its implementation of a comprehensive strategic plan, and led Dismas' efforts to navigate the challenge of the opiate crisis.

Tarjan for her part stated that she is looking forward not only to retirement but to maintaining the many close friendships she has made over the years in the communities DOV has served. Tarjan commented, "I am convinced that Jim Curran will continue Dismas' strong tradition of furthering social justice and of recognizing the value and dignity of the people we serve. I am certain Jim is the right dynamic new leader for Dismas' future."

The Vermont Dismas organization has been serving former inmates and Vermont communities since 1986. It was then that Dismas opened its first Vermont "house" in Burlington in collaboration with the national Dismas organization, which itself was established in the early 1970s in Nashville, Tennessee. Since 2002, DOV has operated as a standalone, independent Vermont not-for-profit. DOV currently maintains houses in Burlington, Hartford, Rutland and Winooski. As stated on its website, Dismas' goal is *"to learn, to grow, to change and to become the best we can be as individuals and as communities. Across the state, Dismas of Vermont homes provide shelter and support to men and women making the difficult transition from incarceration to new lives."*

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