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**For Immediate Release**

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**Northern New York Community Foundation Pledges \$200k to Mission Campaign**

Watertown Urban Mission Campaign Gets an Early Boost from the Region’s Philanthropic Leader  
Leadership Gift Puts Campaign on Right Track for Safer, More Efficient Facility, plus Endowment

WATERTOWN (June 19, 2012)—For more than 40 years, your Watertown Urban Mission has been helping neighbors with critical needs to rise above their struggles.

Now, with the support of the Northern New York Community Foundation, the Mission is in the early stages of embarking on its first capital campaign to make its facilities safer and more efficient, while establishing an endowment for the future.

A leadership gift of \$200,000 by the Northern New York Community Foundation now has the Mission positioned for success in its first ever campaign.

“This leadership gift from the Community Foundation is a most generous and much appreciated affirmation of the work of the Mission and the critical needs it addresses in the North Country,” said John Deans, who with his wife Mary Jo, and Rev. Fred Garry and his wife Kathy, is the co-chair of a committee helping the Mission to form this capital campaign effort.

“We are so appreciative of all that the Northern New York Community Foundation, its board and its executive director do for our community and for this leadership contribution which supports our strategic plan and critical programs of the Mission,” said Erika F. Flint, executive director. “What a boost this is to our volunteers, our strong leadership, employees and every neighbor in need of a hand up.”

This campaign was born of a strategic plan in 2010, which recommended an assessment of the Mission’s current facilities at 247 Factory Street. That assessment was done with the input of the area’s leading architects and engineers, including Bernier & Carr, Aubertine & Currier, GYMO, Purcell Construction, and several individuals with similar expertise, who gave their time and professional input to the Mission.

Their findings clearly showed that the former car dealership and electrical supply store is ideal for the Mission’s programs, but it needs work to optimize workplace efficiency, energy efficiency and make the environment more welcoming and safer for volunteers, employees and most importantly the neighbors who come in need of help. These recommendations led to the board bringing in Mr. & Mrs. Deans and Rev. & Mrs. Garry to provide their expertise in forming a capital campaign to pay for the improvements.

“From day one, we have seen leaders from throughout our community step up to be a part of helping the Watertown Urban Mission better serve those in need,” said Bev Brown, president of the Mission’s Board of Directors. “The Northern New York Community Foundation’s support so early in this process, certainly puts us on the right track for success and makes a statement to the community about the importance of this

project. We are so thankful to Rande, the Board of Directors and all who have supported the foundation in its work to better our community.”

To gauge the community’s support for a capital campaign, the Watertown Urban Mission conducted a feasibility study in March. The results indicated that the community would support a campaign. The respondents said the Mission’s strengths included its leadership from the board of directors and executive director to the volunteers working on this campaign, along with the depth and breadth of its programs to help individuals and families in need.

The study also recommended increasing public awareness of your Mission’s programs, which serve residents throughout Jefferson County and neighboring communities, to ensure the public knows about how:

- the Critical Needs Program helps more than 3,000 households with prescriptions, clothing, transportation costs, essential household items, beds and much more;
- the Bridge Program helps individuals with addictions who face a jail sentence to get their lives back on track, pay back all fines and restitution, and rise above the addiction that got them in trouble in the first place;
- the HEARTH II Program helps the homeless or those at risk of losing their homes in our community to find stable and sustainable housing;
- the Christian Care Center welcomes all, especially those without a traditional family to depend on, to share in a cup of coffee, prayer and volunteer service;
- the Food Pantry provides more than 300,000 meals each year to more than 20,000 individuals in need of a five-day supply of food; and
- the Impossible Dream Thrift Store offers low prices on everything from books, toys and household goods, to clothing, sporting goods and furniture, to both provide revenue for other Mission programs and ensure that everyone can afford quality goods.

“Each of your Mission’s programs depends on the generosity of this community, including our 45 member churches, businesses, individuals and foundations,” said Rev. Fred Garry, campaign co-chair. “This leadership gift from the Community Foundation is going to ensure that these programs have the resources they need to give a hand up to those in need, as well as put the Mission on solid ground for long term financial stability.”

“We are so grateful for the Community Foundation’s investment in our capital improvements and the long term stability of the Mission,” said Laura Wendt, immediate past president of the Mission’s board of directors. “The Northern New York Community Foundation’s generosity has given us the leadership gift we needed to renew, restore and revitalize your Mission and our community to be here as long as there is need among us.”

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