



**For Immediate Release**

Contact Drew Mangione, Director of Development

## **Watertown Urban Mission Announces First Ever Capital Campaign “Mission: Possible” to Raise \$2M for Capital Improvements, Endowment**

More than 57 percent of Goal has been Raised, Your Support Needed to Reach Final Goal  
Improvements to Make Mission Safer, More Efficient and Better Suited for Programs Long Term

WATERTOWN (March 13, 2013) – The Watertown Urban Mission today announced that it will seek public support of a \$2 million capital campaign to make the organization’s facilities at 247 Factory Street safer, more efficient and better suited to serve thousands of families in need.

The Mission announced that prior to this public announcement of its first-ever capital campaign, more than 57 percent of the goal has already been pledged from individuals, businesses and foundations. The pledges and gifts to date total \$1,141,300 providing a tremendous foundation for success. The campaign has been named “Mission: Possible – Renew, Restore, Revitalize.”

“We are so thrilled by the outpouring of support we have seen already, giving us confidence that this campaign will in fact live up to its name,” said John Deans, one of the campaign’s four co-chairs. “We have come together with an impressive team of community leaders to get us to this point and now we are asking the public to join us in this effort.”

The Capital Campaign Committee is led by Dr. Deans, his wife Mary Jo, and Rev. Fred and Kathy Garry. More than 50 volunteers from throughout the community have been working with the Mission to ensure the success of this campaign.

“We have an excellent team of supporters putting their full weight behind this campaign to truly make a difference in our community,” said Rev. Garry. “The work planned for this facility will meet the standards of dignity and respect everyone at the Mission works so hard to provide for our neighbors in need. There is a great deal of work that needs to be done, but with your support, we will ensure the long term stability of the Watertown Urban Mission.”

The Mission moved into its current facility in 2004, putting all Mission programs under one roof for the first time at 247 Factory Street. The building was first built in 1926 as Empsall’s Buick and it was added on to during the 1960s and 1970s when it was the home of Halley Electric. Today, the building provides the right location and the right amount of space for all of the Mission’s programs. However, the Mission’s focus has always been the people served and now the time has come to make improvements to the building for the future.

The Mission: Possible Capital Campaign seeks to make the Mission’s facilities safer, more efficient and better suited for the Mission’s programs, all while keeping an eye toward long term sustainability both through the building project and an endowment portion of the campaign.

“Last year, your neighbors in need were helped more than 35,000 times with food, drink, clothing, housing, household goods, vouchers for prescription and medical transportation costs, and help overcoming addiction,” said Erika Flint, Executive Director. “To see the community come together in support of these improvements is truly overwhelming. Thank you to all who have given and each of you who after seeing this announcement, choose to be a part of this campaign’s success.”

The Mission: Possible capital campaign will provide for the long term stability in keeping with the strategic plan done in 2010. Included in this campaign is a \$300,000 endowment and a construction plan based on an assessment of the facility first done by volunteers from Aubertine & Currier, Bernier, Carr & Associates, GYMO, Neighbors of Watertown, Purcell Construction and other leaders in the community. This group determined that the building is in good overall shape, but needs work to make it safer, more efficient and better suited for the services provided by the Mission.

The work will include improvements to work spaces, putting in handicap accessible entrances and bathrooms, removing and replacing dangerous and inefficient electrical and heating systems, reducing energy costs, developing better storage, making loading zones more accessible, renovating the thrift store for increased profitability and setting in place the endowment for long term sustainability, all without changing the character of an organization whose staff and supporters seek to improve lives with the utmost dignity and respect.

In keeping with the Mission's long track record of stretching every dollar to make a maximum impact at minimal expense, the Mission: Possible campaign budget has allotted only 4 cents of every dollar to go toward typical fundraising expenses such as promotional materials, working with local businesses, media organizations and individuals to maximize the percentage of funds used on construction and endowment.

"This has been an incredible process and we continue to see tremendous generosity toward the Mission and this campaign as we get the word out about all that is done here at the Mission through your donations," Erika said. "When we first reached out into the community we learned that the Mission has a strong reputation for the work done here, but many did not know the depth and breadth of the programs offered. Through this campaign we hope to increase awareness of all that your generosity does through the Mission and continue to help our neighbors throughout Jefferson County and into nearby communities in our neighboring counties."

The Watertown Urban Mission serves as a critical safety net for individuals and families in need. With support from individuals, businesses, organizations and local churches, the Mission served neighbors in need more than 35,000 times over the course of 2012 through its six major programs.

Some who use services at the Mission need help on a regular basis. Others need help seasonally, such as seniors in the winter when heating bills rise and working families in the summer when school is out and daycare and food expenses increase. But many who come to the Mission are helped once or just a few times to get through a difficult time in their lives.

Here is how your neighbors in need are helped through your support of the Mission, which was founded in 1968 as a means for churches to come together as ecumenical community to help families with pressing needs, for which they had no other option:

- 1. Critical Needs** – Today, the Critical Needs Program helps individuals and families with clothing, household goods, beds, basic furniture, help with prescription costs, gas vouchers for medical appointments, advocacy and more. In 2012, this program served nearly 4,400 families, with nearly 1,000 of those families using the program for the first time.
- 2. The Impossible Dream Thrift Store** – A part of the Mission since 1974, the Impossible Dream serves as a warehouse for items provided by Critical Needs, as the lowest priced thrift store in the region for all to afford, and also as a revenue source for other Mission programs.

In 2012, nearly 30,000 items donated to the store were given to individuals and families in need through the Mission's Critical Needs Program. Additionally, the revenue generated by the store has helped maintain services in Critical Needs and other programs.

- 3. The Food Pantry** – Started in 1975, the Watertown Urban Mission’s Food Pantry is now the second busiest food pantry in all of Central and Northern New York providing more than 300,000 meals each year to nearly 550 unique families each month. The pantry provides a five-day supply of food once every 30 days.

The pantry utilizes a shopping method, whereby families in need can choose the specific items in their 5-day supply to meet USDA guidelines. For example, if a family can choose five items considered proteins, they can choose between beans, peanut butter, frozen meat, or tuna, so that the food they receive is not wasted and complies with any dietary restrictions. This ensures people are treated with dignity and respect.

- 4. Christian Care** – In partnership with the Mission since the 1970s, the Christian Care Center became part of the Mission in 1985. Today, it operates as a welcome center for all visitors to enjoy free coffee and participate in personal growth opportunities, such as bible study, prayer groups, budgeting classes, nutrition classes and more. For many who come to Christian Care regularly, the center provides a family for those who may not have a traditional family support system.
- 5. Bridge Program** – The Bridge Program started in 1985 and today, helps between 25 and 35 individuals each year who face jail time for a drug or alcohol related crime, such as DWI, to make amends for their crime by getting appropriate treatment, participating in volunteer work, and paying back all fines and restitution, while being part of a case management program that helps them get their lives back on track.

These individuals get the support they need to rise above their addictions and, in turn, the program saves county and state taxpayers more than \$1 million each year compared to the cost of having these individuals serve sentences in jail or prison at more than \$100 per day. More than 70 percent of the individuals who are sentenced to the program complete all aspects, compared to national averages of just 40-45 percent who complete rehabilitation alone.

- 6. HEARTH II** – The HEARTH program started in 2010 through a federal grant and to date, it has helped more than 1,000 families in Jefferson County to find or maintain stable housing. It is the only Mission program receiving a majority of its funding through a grant. The program serves individuals who are homeless or in danger of losing their housing.

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