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**For Immediate Release**

Contact Drew Mangione, Director of Development

***You Helped More Than 1,200 Kids Start School Right Last Year...We Need YOU this Year Too!***

**School's Out for Summer! Bring Last Year's Backpack to the Mission and Give A Striving Student In Need a Head Start for Next Year!**

Your Mission is Gearing Up for the 2014-15 School Year, Collecting Backpacks, School Supplies  
Don't discard or store this year's backpack...*Donate it to Your Watertown Urban Mission!*

WATERTOWN (June 30, 2014) – With summer vacation here, now is a great time to start thinking about next year – and how you can help your neighbors in need start the school year right!

“Your generosity has helped more than 4,000 students over the past four years, including more than 1,200 who needed your help last year,” said Erika F. Flint, executive director. “This year, we will need your help again to make sure students have the resources they need to start the school year right. So if you plan on buying a new backpack for your child to use next year, we would be very appreciative if you donate this year's backpack for another student. And if you could, please buy some extra supplies and donate them as well. Your generosity has made a big impact on young people looking for an education.”

Every fall, the Watertown Urban Mission gives backpacks filled with school supplies to students in need. In 2013, more than 1,200 students received a backpack with a starter kit of supplies to prepare these children to get the most out of their education. This year, the Mission is working on a partnership with the local Salvation Army on State Street involving clothing vouchers to maximize the impact on the community.

Each backpack is tailored for different age groups so that pre-K and Kindergarten students receive age appropriate supplies, while elementary, middle school and high school students receive supplies appropriate for their needs. These backpacks are pre-packed and the students have the opportunity just before the school year starts to come to the Mission and pick out their favorite one, giving each child supplies they need, while also maintaining a sense of dignity for the family.

To donate your backpack or other school supplies to the Critical Needs Program, simply bring them to the drop off zone behind the Watertown Urban Mission and Impossible Dream Thrift Store at 247 Factory St., Watertown, or contact the Mission administrative offices at 315-782-8440.

Items that you can donate to help your neighbors in need include: Backpacks, Pencils, Pens, Crayons, Markers, Highlighters, Colored pencils, Dry Erase Markers, Lined Paper, Spiral notebooks, Index cards, 1” Binders, Calculators, Pencil boxes, Rulers, Scissors, Glue sticks, Hand sanitizer. For a list of supplies and even how to make pre-packed backpacks, go to [www.WatertownUrbanMission.com](http://www.WatertownUrbanMission.com) and download the “School Supplies Needed” flier. Thank you for your support.

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