

## October 2012

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## Hold the Phones!

What a busy start to the year for Penquis JMG! Just last week, several Career Association officers attended the annual JMG Leadership Education Conference, and many helped out with a benefit dinner for two of our students who lost their home to fire.

Students new to JMG are fully involved in the Real Game career and life simulation curriculum. As we speak, they're creating their communities on poster paper with an unmatched level of creativity. Veteran JMG students saw the culmination of visits to Mars Machines/Eastern Maine Shooting Supplies and interviews with co-owner Ron Desmarais with the presentation of a nicely done poster featuring their products and information about the businesses housed there.

Below, JMG students present used cell phones to Cynthia Freeman-Cyr, Director of Womancare. The cell phones are refurbished and given to the domestic violence prevention agency's clients to help ensure their safety. Ms. Cyr also took the students for a tour of the facility.



## Nokomis Students Hold "Box Out" for the Homeless

For the second year in a row, Melissa Coppa's JMG students at Nokomis Regional High School in Newport held a "Sleep in a Box" event to raise funds for and awareness of homelessness in their communities. Twenty-four people participated, including five chaperones, 17 high school students, and two middle school students.

"The event is a way to create awareness in our community and among the student participants about the large number of people who are homeless in our communities," says Coppa. "Every 1 in 3 homeless in the State of Maine is under the age of 18, and on any given night there are 281 families without a place stay."

"The students get sponsors to sleep out in boxes overnight to raise funds for local area homeless shelters in our surrounding communities. We raised approximately \$600. This was an eye opener for many of the students who participated."

Coppa says many local businesses offered up support for the event. "Tim Horton's allowed us to use their restrooms and provided free hot chocolate for the students in the morning. Kelly Printing donated flyers. Sears, Rent-A-Center and Dunham's Furniture in Dexter and Newport saved boxes for us. Bud's Shop-N-Save allowed us to utilize their lawn outside the store to set up and camp out. We are planning on doing this again next year as well. We opened the event up to the entire school body, and many kids gave up the homecoming dance to participate in such a selfless way. I am so proud of the kids, thankful for the teachers who chaperoned, thankful to all those who made donations, and thankful for all the local business who supported us. They all helped this to be a success!"



# Team Building = Building Connections in Freeport

On September 18, 20 Unum employees, led by Anne-Marie Connor and Steve Alpren, attended a team-building session at Freeport High School with Freeport JMG students. These kinds of opportunities are beneficial for everyone involved - the students experienced leadership development and interacted with adults from the business community in a positive way, and the adults built team dynamics in an adult-youth mentoring setting.

First, the JMG student officers presented the four main goals of the JMG program and talked about the type of activities the Freeport chapter has been doing. The group lunched on pizza provided by Unum, and then Unum employees shared their work experiences. Afterward, the group headed out to the tennis courts, where Connor and Alpren led team-building initiatives.

“This truly was a special day for my students and myself, one of the best days I have ever experienced as a JMG Specialist,” said Freeport JMG Specialist Jay Harper. “To see my students and Unum professionals engaged and enjoying themselves was simply amazing.”

Alpren said of the day, “I applaud the maturity and engagement of the students. Trust me, we learned WAY more from them than they did from us. They were great! Thanks for the opportunity!”

“I don't know where to begin as far as thanks is concerned,” added Connor. “Cary [Olson-Cartwright, who is co-chair of JMG’s Board of Directors and also Dir. of Corporate Social Responsibility at Unum] helped us make the connections. Steve Alpren did a FANTASTIC job engaging our employees and our JMG students!!! Jay has every right to be proud of his group. You can see the future unfolding right in front of us with emerging leadership skills abounding! I have had a steady flow of Unum employees streaming into my office asking how they can stay involved.”

Other Unum employees commented:

“I just wanted to send you a note this morning thanking you for yesterday. The entire day was amazing, and I am so grateful we had the opportunity to learn about JMG.”

“Years ago I use to work with high school students to relay a very personal message in some experiences I had gone through in high school. This reminded me of the service work I participated in and has reignited my desire to do it again!”

“I just wanted to personally thank you for everything, as I truly enjoyed it... It is amazing we have these opportunities at Unum and more inspiring as we learn how our leaders are personally connected to these organizations!!! PHENOMENAL!”



Steve Alpren of Unum sets up an initiative.



## Sanford Students Walk for Suicide Prevention

Melissa Small, the JMG Specialist at Sanford High School, and three of her students participated in the Out of the Darkness Walk in Sanford's Gowen Park on September 29. The event raised a total of \$1,197 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), which exceeded the goal of \$1,000 that event organizers had set.

Small says, “The Out of the Darkness walk was open to the Sanford community. When I mentioned it to my class, a few students felt strongly about participating because they've lost friends to suicide. The walk is an annual event and is organized by a woman in the community who has lost her child. My students and I showed up prior to the walk to assist with the set up. We handed out t-shirts, sold raffle tickets, and spoke with participants. It was a quick and easy way for the students to volunteer, and it was nice having them help at a non-JMG sponsored event.”

The Out of the Darkness Community Walks are 3 to 5 miles long and take place in over 250 communities across the country this year. In Maine, walks were held in Brunswick, Fort Kent, Orono, Portland, Sanford, and Waterville, raising a combined total of \$26,079.



Pictured from left to right are Leighana Muise, JMG Specialist Melissa Small, Cassidy Bennett and Brooke Cote.