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## Press Release

### *Erasing the Lines Inclusion Training*

Lines remain — lines of separation, misunderstanding and misconception, even fear.

All of us hold the eraser. Let’s erase the lines together!

The Franklin Volunteer Network is hosting a unique opportunity to begin *Erasing the Lines* of “differences” in our community. An Inclusion Training will be held on Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup> from 2-5 pm at the North Dining Hall in the Olsen Student Center at University of Maine at Farmington. The facilitator for this unique training will be Janet May, Coordinator of Transition and Adults at the University of Maine’s Center for Community Inclusion & Disability Studies.

Participants will learn strategies for engaging volunteers and others with disabilities. In addition, the training will address organizational self-assessment strategies to determine the degree to which program/agency policies, procedures, and practices promote inclusivity; be shown examples of best practices; and find out about specific tools and methods to assist organizations in offering reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities.

With an overall goal to promote more diversity and inclusion in both the volunteer and employment sectors in Greater Franklin County, *Erasing the Lines* is a “multi-faceted” Inclusion Project for the next six months. Five phases include:

<u>Panel Discussion</u>	<u>Training</u>	<u>Survey/Assessment</u>	<u>Results Presented</u>	<u>Follow-Up</u>
An amazingly productive panel discussion was held on Thursday February 16 <sup>th</sup> as six panelists (made up of local advocates for/and consumers with disabilities) answered a questions relating to where we are in Franklin County, where would we like to be while identifying the successes and challenges we face in regards to inclusion.	Erasing the Lines Inclusion Training with Janet May from the Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies at the University of Maine on March 15 <sup>th</sup> .	Evaluations and feedback from both events will help form a survey assessment. This will be conducted by students from UMF Introduction to Social Services Class in collaboration with local agencies, organizations, and businesses.	The results of their work will be presented during UMF Rehab Awareness Day on April 19 <sup>th</sup> by student volunteers and shared throughout our community as we continue to Erase the Lines of “differences.”	Janet May will assist in conducting a follow-up during this coming summer to see where we are, as a community, regarding the findings and make further recommendations.

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*The goal of the Franklin Volunteer Network is to promote volunteerism and volunteer opportunities, serve as the catalyst for addressing challenges and opportunities in the volunteer sector, promote collaboration, and empower those who informally manage volunteers, or whose professional responsibilities include volunteer management. The Network is open to all volunteers and managers, and currently has more than twenty active organizations participating.*

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