

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 1, 2019**

**Jodi Hart Receives VEOP Carolyn Donahue  
Friend of Equal Opportunity Education Award**

Jodi Hart, Guidance and Principals' Secretary at Blue Mountain Union School in Wells River, VT was presented with the Carolyn Donahue Friend of EOP Award at the Vermont Educational Opportunity Programs (VEOP) annual conference at VTC in Randolph last week. VEOP (Vermont Educational Opportunity Programs) is the state's professional organization that is actively interested in ensuring equal educational opportunity for the states college bound students. The students are First Generation College bound, from low to moderate income families and/or are individuals with disabilities. This award recognizes individuals who work tirelessly to improve access to and success in higher education for low-income and/or first-generation students and students with disabilities, and has made a tremendous impact on TRIO and GEAR UP students in their schools.

A Friend of Equal Opportunity Education is a strong supporter of TRIO and/or GEAR Up students and programs in Vermont, who works outside the TRIO /Gear Up community in high schools or at institutions of higher education. He/she works tirelessly to improve access to and success in higher education for low-income and/or first-generation students and students with disabilities, and he/she has made a tremendous impact on TRIO /Gear Up students.

Mrs. Hart has worked at Blue Mountain High School since 1998, and in the Guidance Department since 2003. Her dedication to the students she works with is unmatched, and she goes above and beyond to make sure every student is given the proper knowledge, support, and assistance they need to meet their educational goals, often going above and beyond her job description to do so. She is a passionate and caring individual who truly puts her student's education first and makes it a priority to give equal opportunity to every student that she works with. This is the level of support that she has given to the TRIO Upward Bound program at Northern Vermont University – Lyndon.

Mrs. Hart has stepped in to help first generation students with everything from setting up TRIO and GEAR UP visits, recruiting presentations at BMU and helping students with their early college applications. Since we started working with BMU the number of Upward Bound students at the school has doubled and this is solely because of Mrs. Hart's drive to support the student body and provide knowledge about our federally funded educational opportunity program. She advocates for the students and explains the benefits of the programs to students at BMU. Mrs. Hart truly understands the adversity that first generation students face and how difficult it can be for them to navigate the college application process. She dedicates much of her energy to making sure that students are supported at Blue Mountain Union School. Mrs. Hart is a true advocate for equal opportunity amongst students and her passion and drive has changed several hundred students' high school experiences and perceptions about college over the last 15+ years.

Upward Bound at Northern Vermont University - Lyndon is a college preparatory program funded through the United States Department of Education. The program is committed to providing modest income, first in family, college bound students with the academic background, college preparatory experiences and support to succeed in college immediately after high school. The Upward Bound program works with 75 students in 8 area high schools who are dedicated to achieving their post-secondary dreams. For more information, please contact Rick Williams in the Upward Bound Office at 626-5000.