

Dear Members of the New Ministries Team of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ,

I am writing in application of a grant from the Hope Fund from the Vermont conference of the United Church of Christ to ballast a recently launched outreach ministry that establishes disc golf communities. Through this recently founded ministry called "Access Disc Golf" I have already begun fundraising for, constructing, and maintaining public disc golf courses in and near the Deerfield Valley, as well as established coaching at 1 of the schools. With grant from the Hope Fund, my collaborators and I will be able to finish a second course at another local grade school and start educating children and community members.

Why Disc Golf?

Disc Golf is an important resource for school and civic communities because of its accessibility. Kids from different physical, psychological, and developmental ability backgrounds can all excel at the sport. There is strong anecdotal evidence neuroatypical kids and adults often thrive at the sport. In addition, it promotes inclusive play where other sports fall short. Whereas pick-up sports like basketball and soccer favor the best players (i.e. the best kids get picked first and get the ball more), disc golf is played individually, but with a card group of other players. So, in this way, the beginner, and the expert can fully play together. Finally, the best part about disc golf is that is financially accessible. Provided there is a public course nearby, the game can be played for as little as the cost of one \$8 disc. For these reasons, disc golf is the fastest growing sport in the United States. Disc golf has further grown during the pandemic with a general industry growth of over 115% worldwide in the past 14 months alone.

Integrating disc golf into local school campuses and public land provides opportunities for physical education, after-school programming, club sports and public use. Furthermore, it provides venues where kids who are in need of community support can find community contacts, resources and a constructive environment in which to play.

How is this a Ministry?

The Church's role in this athletic community-building work is twofold: 1) We are one of the groups that would use such an established community venue to reach community members in need and 2) We bear witness to God's abundance and love of poor, working-class and other communities by providing a free venue for exercise, fun and education in towns overly invested in the interests of affluent vacationers to the detriment of local working class and poor residents, especially children. Through our acts of love and generosity to people who take advantage of our disc golf courses, the Church prays we will earn the trust and curiosity of the religiously unaffiliated population to join us in the worship and work of West Dover Congregational Church, UCC.

A grant of \$2500 from the Hope Fund would be spent in the following manner:

\$1500 to Access Disc Golf for construction supplies

\$500 each to the disc golf programs at 2 local grade schools to be spent in consultation with their educators and principals.

Please contact me with any questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours In Christ,

Jeremy Kirk

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Congregational Church, UCC

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