

UNION SQUARE MAIN STREETS HIRES JESSICA ESHLEMAN AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Union Square Main Streets is proud to announce Jessica Eshleman as its new Executive Director, following an extensive search and interview process. Jessica brings a broad array of experience and skills to the position of Executive Director, including those learned in her past role as Executive Director of Main Street Concord, Inc., in Concord, NH. Jessica will begin her new position at Union Square Main Streets on March 5th, 2018.



Photo Credit: Stephanie Smith

Jessica has experience at multiple organizations building broad coalitions to work together effectively toward common goals; developing and enhancing organizations' fiscal and membership bases; creating and implementing complex events; marketing organizations and businesses and responding effectively to change and challenges. In addition, through her work in Concord, NH, Jessica has developed knowledge and insight about what it takes to create and maintain a vibrant and thriving urban center in today's changing world.

"On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am very pleased to welcome Jessica to Union Square Main Streets. We have gotten to know her already through her involvement in the community and are excited for what she will bring to the organization." said Board Chair Lindsay Neu. "Jessica has shown herself to be a trusted convener who can bring people together, as well as to think creatively to help an organization succeed in

their mission. We had a number of excellent candidates for the ED position, and Jessica rose to the top due to her demonstrated ability to support local businesses and bring diverse stakeholders together around common goals. As a Union Square local, she is committed to the success of the community."

As Executive Director of Union Square Main Streets, Jessica will oversee continued advocacy and promotion of the Union Square business district and neighborhood. She will also lead the organization in its efforts to build on its mission to improve the vibrancy of Union Square by advocating for local businesses, and for positive change; promoting dialogue among business owners, landlords, residents, and other stakeholders; and acting as a bridge between stakeholders and City government.

Union Square Main Streets has been central to the recognition, identity, and "buzz" that Union Square has developed over the past 10 years. The organization hosts events that engage tens of thousands of people, including the annual "What the Fluff?" Festival and the Saturday Farmers Market; provides on-the-ground assistance for local businesses;

and promotes the Union Square district and its businesses through advocacy as well as social media and press awareness.

“The opportunity to empower those who live, love, and invest in Union Square is an honor that fills me with great excitement.” said Eshleman. “In many ways, it is my own American Dream: a chance to champion smart growth principles in a truly vibrant community, to advance economic opportunity through collaborative placemaking, and to advocate for fantastic local businesses, all while walking to work!”

A new resident of Union Square, Jessica has already been very active in the community, and also feels very connected to Somerville and the Union Square community. “Never could I have imagined a chance to continue this vital work in my own neighborhood—never mind in a district on the brink of such transformative change.”

EXPERIENCE IN DETAIL

Jessica Eshleman is a relationship builder inspired by the power of connecting people, place, and opportunity. Jessica got her start in downtown revitalization in Nashua, NH, where she produced The Winter Holiday Stroll, which attracted 40,000 people to the district and featured the city’s first-ever public beer garden. When she moved to NH’s capital to become executive director of Main Street Concord, she debuted The Upstairs Downtown Walking Tour to promote upper-story development and the spirited Adult Spelling Bee to raise funds and visibility for her organization’s work while stirring friendly competition among downtowners of all stripes.

As a lead organizer for the Rethinking Main Street project, which led to the city’s wildly successful Complete Street Project, Jessica regularly convened a spectrum of downtown stakeholders. Designed to spur economic development while preserving Concord’s character, the multimillion dollar project continues to gain national recognition. Most recently, Jessica has brought her passion for working with purpose-driven people to Impact Hub Boston, a coworking community that fosters social impact.

Jessica earned her BA in American Studies, with a minor in philosophy from Franklin Pierce University in Rindge, NH. In 2012, she was recognized by the Union Leader in its “40 Under Forty” class and named Concord Young Professional of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce. In 2016, she completed a thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail, and in 2017, she achieved her quest to summit each of New England’s Hundred Highest peaks. She is exceptionally proud to make her home in Union Square, where she gleefully patronizes outstanding local businesses that keep her hair style funky, her car running safely, and her body and soul well-caffeinated as well as deliciously well-fed.