

A Family Affair



Angela Chamberlin, and her partner Craig, have been waiting very patiently for a new roof. Angela has grown up in this mobile home and is now raising her young family. “After a couple of years of having a leaky roof we were really concerned of potentially moving our family and not being able to afford a new home here” says Angela.

The road to getting a new roof was not short for Angela and Craig. Amidst COVID concerns in the spring of 2020 and staffing changes, we were not able to schedule their roof until June of 2021. Needless to say, everyone was really excited when they got their new roof.

This family was very invested in this project and fully embodied the community aspect of our mission. Craig was often there to cheerfully lend a hand; Angela found time in her work schedule and taking care of her newborn to provide delicious lunches and help organize the work site, while four-year-old Sophia Mason regaled us with her stories and observations. Homeowner, volunteers and COVER staff were very engaged with one another, a perfect expression of fostering hope and building community.

This was a framed roof with four valleys, so I had anticipated a full week of work but we had a wonderful group of volunteers on this project. Thanks to the good weather and a great team effort by all, we were able to complete this project in four days! Now Angela and Craig can raise their young family under a solid roof.

—Jay Mead, *COVER Home Repair Leader*

We appreciate COVER and what the volunteers have done in helping my family to stay in my family home. Working with the volunteers though this process was amazing and getting to know them made us feel even more a part of the project.

At the end of the day, Craig would tell me the stories and information going on... I can say, I couldn't have felt more for a community based project than I did with our project and Craig and I look forward to doing projects in the future with COVER.

—Angela Chamberlin, *Homeowner*

Volunteer Spotlight

It is my privilege to highlight the work that our amazing volunteer, Ian Goldberg, has gifted us this past spring and summer. Ian was a Junior at Hanover High School last year, and discovered COVER through the Hanover High School's "March" intensive program, in which students of HHS spend 4 days building an access ramp with COVER. Through this program, Ian helped us to build two accessibility ramps, and after their last build, he has continued to be one of our most dedicated volunteers.

Ian is unique because he will come every day of a home repair project that he signs up for; seeing the endeavor through to its completion. This past summer he volunteered 84 hours, helping to build two roofs and four ramps!

I can say from personal experience that it is a joy to have Ian on jobsites. He displays a love for the work and an eagerness to connect with homeowners that I deeply appreciate. I enjoy his subtle sense of humor and thoughtfulness. Ian says: "I enjoy COVER so much because working with the other volunteers -and homeowners -gives a great sense of



Ian on far right

camaraderie that I had yet to experience prior to volunteering. Each project brings together a new group of people, and I have met some incredible people, that I don't think I would have met had I not volunteered." Having worked with Ian, I can say that the kind of camaraderie he talks about is something that he actively participates in.

This fall, Ian was named Home Repair's "Rookie of The Year," but he could easily be awarded "Volunteer Most Likely to Become President." He also works as a florist and plays the clarinet, so I could see him winning an award for "Volunteer Most Likely to Host a Wedding."

—Xander Davenport,
COVER Assistant Work Crew Leader

The sense of accomplishment after a project is completed never gets old. Not only does it feel great to work with my hands and construct something that didn't exist before, but also to improve a fellow community member's life in a very substantial way. Working with COVER gives you a far greater appreciation for a water-tight roof, good home insulation, and safe accessibility, and it feels great to work with community members and homeowners to make that happen for others.

By far my favorite moments from working with COVER have been meeting and working with the homeowners. Sitting down and eating lunch with them is always a great experience, and I think sharing a meal is something that makes COVER special. Some of my favorite experiences have been eating lunch with a homeowner in Braintree, and working on a roof with a homeowner in Bradford. With COVER, I get the sense we are not working for the homeowner, but with the homeowner to improve their livelihood, and it is incredibly fulfilling to do so.

—Ian Goldberg, Volunteer



The Essence of Living is Giving

COVER welcomed Thelma Gerow onto our Board this summer. It is a relationship that has come full circle. In 2017 COVER first welcomed Thelma into the COVER community when we worked together with her and volunteers to put a new roof and an accessibility ramp on her home. This summer COVER installed insulated skirt-ing around the base of her home. In turn, Thelma is now giving back to COVER as a volunteer on the COVER Board. —Diane Reinhardt, COVER Home Repair Director

When asked about her experience, Thelma wrote the following:



Homeowner and new Board member, Thelma Gerow, pictured here, center, with TUCK students

“Whenever and whatever assistance was granted to me, I have much heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for the time and talent of the volunteers and COVER staff. They identify opportunities to improve living situations for people in need, and they willingly take on the challenges that others often shy away from, acting on them without hesitation.

Volunteers demonstrate their virtues through their act of volunteering. The virtue of generosity through their motivation and sacrifice of time and patience. Their humility as they remain humble and respectful of those they help, never bragging of their accomplishments but just sharing their talents and compas-

sion. Regardless of the living conditions of the people they are assisting. This defines them with the greatest qualities and characteristics an individual can possess. Doing without judging and condemning.”

—Thelma Gerow,
Homeowner and COVER Board Member

September 22 at the staff and volunteer appreciation event we celebrated Bill Neukomm’s departure, as he “passed the torch” to Helen Hong!

Thank you to Bill for your years of dedication to COVER.

Thank you to Colleen O’Neill for a beautiful evening of celebration.

Thank you to all staff and volunteers for your many hours of hard work.



I look forward to being part of the COVER team in the future. Great people. A stressful time made so fulfilling and fun.

—A COVER Homeowner

From the Store Manager's Desk

Have you heard about this great store in White River Junction that sells affordable furniture, appliances, tools, housewares, antiques...all kinds of cool stuff? *Oh? Where is it?* Oh and they also have mattresses and bed frames! *Cool, where is it, what's the address?* And lots of really great books! They play great music, the staff is friendly and helpful and all the proceeds go to building urgently needed ramps and roofs! And... *PLEASE tell me WHERE?* They are at 158 S. Main Street in White River Junction in Vermont. You gotta' check it out!...*I will, I will!*

We continue to make store improvements so your shopping experience is more enjoyable. We have installed new rubber flooring and lighting in the old cooler room and moved the housewares, electronics, some art and sporting goods to that room. This allows us more space to display tools. We have expanded our book area so we can offer you a wider selection of great authors and titles.

Thank you to all our store donors, customers, volunteers and employees for the

continued success of the COVER Store. I would like to welcome our newest store employees Makayla Macie and Jamie Loura. Thank you for joining our team. I would also like to acknowledge the promotion of Kinley Orr to Assistant Store Manager. Thank you Kinley, my back feels lighter already. You all make it possible for COVER to provide home repairs and weatherization to our friends and neighbors in the Upper Valley.

Last I'd like to extend a big THANK YOU! to Crown Point Cabinetry for their recent lumber and plywood donation and to MTD Building Contractors for all their kitchen cabinet purchases. You both make a huge difference in the success of COVER.

—Mitch Ross, COVER Store Manager



Meet COVER's Newest Corporate Sponsor

Crown Point Cabinetry is nationally recognized for handcrafting all-wood custom cabinetry. Located in Claremont, NH, Crown Point is a second generation family business. In September, Crown Point became our newest Ramps and Roofs sponsor with a generous donation of \$2500 and finish-quality plywood and high-grade lumber, which sold in the COVER Store in less than two weeks! A big thank you to our Board Chair, Kevin O'Hara, who approached Brian Stowell, owner of Crown Point.



Working Together

Outpouring of Community at the Springfield Family Center

On July 22 and 23, COVER had the pleasure of building an accessibility ramp at the Springfield Family Center in Springfield, Vermont. We were returning to the SFC after we had built additional storage capacity in their Food Pantry as part of COVER's pandemic efforts this past winter and spring. We were very glad to be working with the organization again. The number of people and the amount of energy that came together in support of the SFC was inspiring. After a whole year of restricting Home Repair projects to small groups due to the pan-



dem, it was encouraging and uplifting to **Volunteer Connection**

Dennis Richardson (pictured far left) first volunteered with COVER on the ramp project at the Springfield Family Center. He enjoyed the experience so much that he then volunteered to help insulate the skirting around Thelma Gerow's home. As fate would have it, Dennis and Thelma had been classmates at Springfield High, Class of '59, and had not seen each other in a very long time. He drives a pickup that he works on all the time and has a humorous old time sounding horn. He used to have a business where people called him "Mr. Fixit." For a time he was a policeman in Perkinsville too. He has a very sweet demeanor and loves to joke around. He picks up all of our spirits when he comes out to a COVER project ready with hard hat and tool belt.

—Jay Mead, COVER Home Repair Leader



be a part of the outpouring of community support and enthusiasm I saw on this project.

People of all ages and skill levels showed up, learning from and supporting each other. This is the nature of the work COVER does, but this job exemplified what can be achieved, especially during such challenging times, and is part of what makes this work special and meaningful. It means even more when individuals and groups come together from within their community to give back to their community.

It was wonderful to see so many different people come out in support of a place that plays a crucial role in Springfield and in setting an example of excellence in supporting and serving their community.

—Bergren Keats,
COVER Assistant Work Crew Leader



This ramp opens so many doors for us in terms of how many more people we are now able to serve because of it. We are eternally grateful! It was fun working with you all! THANK YOU SO MUCH! —Trisha Paradis, Springfield Family Center

Hanover High 2021 May Intensive

There were so many positive, learning and also eye-opening experiences that our students got to have over the four days of our time with

COVER. A number of them had never been to Charlestown or to Chelsea, never touched a sawzall, chop saw, or impact drill, never built something with their hands, and had never participated in any kind of volunteer community work - certainly nothing like what COVER does. I believe that they will remember the sights, sounds, and lessons from those few days way longer than many of their other high school experiences. Whereas I like to think that my math classes motivate students to learn and have “real world” problems, those few days were clearly more motivating than anything I can deliver to a student sitting at a desk. Those few days were the real “real world”.

It was so good to work with the patient, calm, and instructive Jay, Xander, Bergren and Ali. I’m really not sure what kind of inner magic Jay has that allows him to be aware of what everyone is currently doing, who isn’t doing things properly, and what will soon need to be done. That was quite impressive. Also, Jay did such a great job of circling us all up at the start of the day to set the proper tone and goals. A big thank you for the May Intensive experience! I know there was a lot of energy and planning that COVER put into it to make the week a success.

—Warren Tucker, Hanover High School Teacher



Student Reflections

“Jay, thank you for encouraging me to learn new things and do my best, and turning mistakes into learning opportunities. Bergren, thank you for giving me tips and always keeping a positive attitude. I’ve never done this sort of community service work before, and I really got a lot out of helping people and working with my hands.”

“I appreciate you allowing me to be a volunteer of this great group that helps out the community tremendously. It is very meaningful and I am looking forward to volunteering in the future.”

“Working on the ramp taught me valuable skills, and seeing it all come together was so gratifying. I would say that the environment made the week all the more memorable. Meeting all of you and getting to work with you was so enjoyable.”

“Thank you COVER staff for being patient with everything you taught me and not getting frustrated when I messed up but instead worked with me to help me improve. I appreciated how I felt like I was working together with a team rather than working for a boss. I hope to work with COVER more in the future! “

“Everyone was very patient, and treated us with a sense of maturity and independence that certainly improved my confidence. I was astounded at the progress we were able to achieve by the end, and I got the sense that what we had done was truly life changing for the residents. Thanks for such a great experience.”

“Jay did an incredible job making sure everyone kept busy and had a chance to learn new skills. Xander, thanks for all of your help making sure that everything we did was “just about perfect!” Bergren, thanks for sharing all of your tips and tricks with using the chop saw. “

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Welcome to our new Executive Director Helen Hong

Before moving to the Upper Valley, Helen practiced real estate law at a firm in Washington D.C. After billing one too many hours, Helen decided to make a career change and moved to Vermont in 2005 to take sustainable building and woodworking classes at the Yestermorrow School in Warren, VT. Helen quickly became involved with COVER as a steady home repair volunteer. She spent the next 13 years at Twin Pines Housing, where she built and renovated two affordable rental developments and also ran the homeownership program. Helen also served on the COVER board from 2012 to 2018.



Helen is married to Sergi Elizalde, who is a math professor at Dartmouth College. They live in Hanover with their two children, aged six and 12. They enjoy skiing and traveling together.

—Kevin O'Hara, COVER Board Chair

Helen says “When I first walked into the COVER building over 20 years ago, I felt a sense of hope and possibility. Although I was new to the Upper Valley, the COVER community welcomed me with open arms. I saw hope in the eyes of my fellow volunteers and homeowner after building a badly needed ramp or roof; I found possibilities in the reuse of furniture and other materials.

COVER is bigger now - it has grown from two founders to a staff of 11, we have recruited over 350 volunteers, we've expanded our home repair team, we've nearly doubled our store sales over the last five years and we have significantly expanded our book operations. And yet, every day that I walk into my new office at COVER, I continue to feel hope and possibility. Our staff, board and volunteers are full of ideas and the can-do spirit. We know we are making a difference, one home at a time. And I am convinced this energy is contagious. When was the last time you came to the store? Or went on a job site? Come see how much has changed - and has not changed - since the early days of COVER. And see how you can make a difference.”

—Helen Hong, COVER Executive Director

Looking for a positive, community-focused experience where you can make a difference? COVER is always looking for volunteers to help on Home Repair projects and in the Store. There are many opportunities for a variety of interests. Currently we are looking for regular volunteers to help in the store for one or two half days a week and for Home Repair projects scheduled through December.

To discuss or sign-up for volunteer opportunities, visit our website or email volunteer@coverhomerepair.org.

For employment opportunities, visit www.coverhomerepair.org.

Extremely pleased with the ramp to assist me to get to my car. I love COVER. I need COVER. Thank God you were here when I needed help.

—A COVER Homeowner

The Cover Page is published semi-annually and mailed to friends and supporters of COVER in the Upper Valley including individual contributors, businesses, foundations, civic groups and religious organizations.

158 S. Main Street
White River Junction
Vermont, 05001
(802) 296-7241
www.coverhomerepair.org



COVER's mission is to foster hope and build community in the Upper Valley.

We do this by bringing together volunteers and homeowners to complete urgently needed home repair projects, and by facilitating the reuse of household goods and building materials at The COVER Store. We envision a community where the need for home repair is an opportunity for people to come together.

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Check out our website!
www.coverhomerepair.org
Call the COVER Office or Store
at 802-296-7241
to donate or volunteer

COVER Store Hours

Monday-Saturday:

10 am – 5 pm

Sunday Hours: 10 am – 3 pm

COVER
158 S. Main Street
White River Junction, VT 05001



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COVER Home Repair & The COVER Store

Staffing Announcements

Diane Reinhardt is once again putting on a new hat for COVER. Similar to what she has done in the past, Diane has reinvented herself into the new Home Repair Director. In addition to leading the Home Repair team, Diane will be the primary contact point for our homeowners and program partners. Prior to becoming the Home Repair Director, Diane served as the Store Manager during a time of transition and also co-led as one of two Home Repair Directors. Despite her many different hats, Diane has remained steadfast in her devotion to COVER's mission.

"I am enjoying wearing the new hat as Home Repair Director, it feels both new and familiar to me. I also look forward to wearing my toolbelt! COVER is a great organization, doing good work for our community."
—Diane Reinhardt

Xander Davenport served as COVER's AmeriCorps Member last year and has accepted a full-time position as an Assistant Work Crew Leader. Xander brings an element of fun and goodwill to every job site. Fellow colleague, Bergren Keats says, "As much as Xander listens well, it is important to listen to him to hear his quirky sense of humor and wise insights." When Xander is not crawling under mobile homes or scurrying atop roofs, you can find him in his tiny house.

"It has been an honor to work with COVER and the incredibly inviting and wonderful team of people. When I first came to COVER I was told that the organization had the goal of working within the "New England barn raising tradition." I think COVER does this rather well. My favorite part of working with the organization is getting to partner with volunteers and homeowners. There is something about the way COVER brings a group of people together and creates a bond around shared work that is really special."
—Xander Davenport