



THE COVER PAGE & ANNUAL REPORT

NEWS ABOUT COVER HOME REPAIR & THE COVER STORE

158 South Main Street, White River Junction, Vermont • 802.296.7241 • www.coverhomerepair.org

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Albee and Margaret's New Ramp

Many Hands Make Light Work

In many ways, our public health crisis has exacerbated division and created painful isolation. At the same time, however, we have the opportunity to strengthen our networks of support, building our community safety net, and helping each other become resilient despite growing obstacles. As autumn faded into an uncertain winter at the end of our last home repair season, the COVER crew was granted a last, bright project: an accessibility ramp for longtime Hartland residents, Albee and Margaret Spencer. Albee and Margaret reached out to COVER through their affiliation with Scotland House when they could no longer get in and out of their home safely.



The ramp project was a collaboration between COV-

ER, the Vermont Center for Independent Living's Home Access Program, which helped fund the materials, and Scotland House Adult Day Care and Wellness Center in Quechee. Tonya Hoyt, the program manager at Scotland House, not only helped recruit a stellar team of volunteers for the project, but ran the chop saw herself every work day. The environment at Albee and Margaret's was bustling, the work crew was jovial, and the project a buoying reminder about the value of collaboration and cooperation.



Tonya Hoyt at the chop saw

—Rachel Smith,
COVER Home Repair Program Coordinator

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DIY Weatherization Program Helps Keep Upper Valley Residents Warm

Normally from November to March COVER staff and volunteers move indoors to help Upper Valley residents weatherize their homes using a number of air-sealing techniques. In response to the pandemic, COVER decided to put a hold on our indoor weatherization program this winter. In lieu of the in-person program, we developed a do-it-yourself weatherization program that provided free materials and remote assistance for residents in drafty homes. Many local organizations helped us spread the word about the new program and we were thrilled to have helped over 30 participants button up their homes this winter.

Even though COVER staff coordinated this program remotely, we were excited to see homeowners finding ways to feel empowered and help out neighbors as they worked to keep their homes warm.

Many thanks to the local businesses that donated materials to this new program—Amanda and Rick of Runnings in Claremont donated an entire pallet of window plastic, gaskets, weather-stripping, and more. West Lebanon Home Depot donated some cases of caulk and expanding spray foam, on top of their donation from the “Operation Surprise” program.

—Lisa Ricci, COVER Volunteer Coordinator

Hartford residents getting weatherization supplies



Thank You Home Depot!! Dan Emanuele, COVER Board Chair and SRVP at Mascoma Bank, accepts a \$1,000 check from Home Depot Store Manager, Nanette Carpenter-Brooks, and Asst Store Manager Noel Snow, as part of “Operation Surprise” a program that supports local vets and front line workers. In addition, West Leb Home Depot also donated several cases of caulk and expanding foam for our DIY Weatherization program.

The whole process was so easy from start to finish. The paperwork I filled out to determine what supplies I needed was so informative....I learned so much about weatherization from the video links! I had questions along the way and Lisa was always so kind, helpful and available....like I was talking to a friend! When I picked up my supplies Lisa explained how to use everything and had even marked my window plastic boxes with drawings indicating how to cut it! I even had the opportunity to connect with a neighbor when I dropped off her box. We were both so excited to get our supplies. I was able to go through the box and weatherize my home so easily! I live in an old home that is drafty and my supplies kept us warmer this winter! On those super windy nights I was especially happy for the window plastic and the pipe insulators! Also I feel so much safer with the new smoke alarms! I am so thankful for the supplies to weatherize my home and for Lisa's kindness and help along the way. Thank you so much!

—Melony W., A COVER Homeowner

From the Store Manager's Desk

It's been a tough few months since we last talked. Sales and donations declined, the second wave of the pandemic took its toll on all of us, and winter can be hard in any year, but seems particularly tough this year. BUT...sales and donations have improved lately and a faint light seems to be shining at the end of the pandemic tunnel. A bright spring is just around the corner!

We have recently made some improvements to the COVER Store. The back room where chairs and bed frames are stored has been given a much needed face lift with a new ceiling, newly painted walls

and redesigned displays. The unused garage doors have been enclosed and insulated. The lighting area has been insulated, sheetrocked and painted. The old floor in the entry room was made up of multiple layers of metal sheets covered by miscellaneous carpets and mats. Now it is one layer of high density interlocking rubber mats. Nice on the feet and free of 'trip hazards' wall to wall! Thank you Home Repair and store staff! Come on over to the COVER Store and check out our improvements.

We appreciate all the store improvement projects undertaken by the Home Repair team this winter when they could not go into people's home due to the pandemic.

—Mitch Ross, COVER Store Manager

Home Repair Pivot

Despite these "unprecedented" times, Home Repair has pivoted. In response to the pandemic challenges and limitations, Home Repair temporarily moved away from our standard in-home weatherization program to a safer DIY option and a dynamic partnership with food shelves in the Upper Valley.

This winter we offered our construction assistance to a handful of food shelves and pantries that have expanded to accommodate the food insecurities of our neighbors in the Upper Valley. During our first project of this kind, we built a shed to protect a generator for the Randolph Area Food Shelf. We also built cabinetry for Willing Hands, the Fairlee Food Shelf, and the Methodist Church in White River Junction. With three other projects in progress, we are excited to help our community partners keep the Upper Valley well fed.

—Jay Mead, COVER Home Repair Crew Leader

Planning for a Brighter Future

This autumn, COVER Volunteer Coordinator and former solar installer Lisa Ricci received a call about an unusual opportunity. An Upper Valley neighbor wanted to donate their young 6.4kW solar array to COVER, if we could help to have it removed! Although this mission was a bit beyond COVER's typical projects, or donations for that matter, Lisa joined forces with board member Kevin O'Hara and two of his colleagues to successfully take down the entire array on short notice!

COVER staff are currently exploring the best way to make use of this generous donation to best accomplish our mission of supporting the community. Stay tuned!

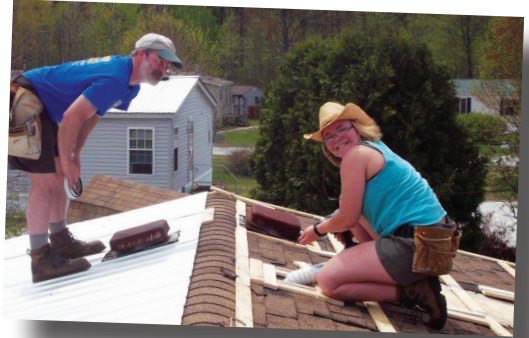
Did you know, a portion of the COVER Store's utility cost is covered by a net metered solar array?!



Bergren Keats Joins the COVER Staff

I am very excited and honored to join the COVER team as Assistant Work Crew Leader! COVER Home Repair and the COVER Store have been amazing parts of my life. Growing up in the Upper Valley, I loved shopping at the store and getting out on home repair projects with my family was a norm. I am so thankful for this next chapter with COVER!

I was introduced to COVER when my dad, Rob Schultz, became the Executive Director in 2006. We had just relocated to this area and one of my earliest memories were shopping for our dining table at the COVER Store. We still have it! My family rearranged and expanded to include Diane Reinhardt, my stepmom, who has worked for COVER since 2004 as a volunteer, Home Repair and Weatherization Co-Director, COVER Store Manager, and currently as a Store staff member. When my sisters and I were in our teens, Diane started the tradition of doing family volunteer projects with COVER as her Mother's Day wish.



Bergren with her Dad, Rob Schultz, working on home repair in pre-Covid times

These memories, and the impact of these incredible experiences were a huge part of my desire to come back to COVER.

The work of COVER that inspires me the most is working with lots of different people to not only do the physical work of repairing a fellow community member's roof or window or putting in a ramp, but doing so in a way that means all are included in working together to support and care for the community in which we live.

*—Bergren Keats,
COVER Assistant Work Crew Leader*

Meet Our New AmeriCorps Member

My name is Xander Davenport and I am delighted to be working with COVER this summer as an AmeriCorps member. I am an artist and an amateur carpenter from Maine. I enjoy any kind of labor that involves using my hands, but I have particular passion for wood carving, watercolor, pastels, and gardening. Last fall I graduated from Hampshire college with a degree in biology. Since that time, I have been working for my family's carpentry business and I have found this work to be very rewarding. I am excited to have an opportunity to continue to grow as a carpenter while using the skills I gain to give back to those around me.

*—Xander Davenport,
AmeriCorps Member*



Xander in the tiny house he is refurbishing during his time with COVER

Catamount Solar Helps COVER Grow

Every year, Catamount Solar in Randolph, sets aside 5% of its gross annual profits to support charitable causes. Catamount is a Vermont-based workers' cooperative and each employee-owner gets to choose a Vermont charity to support. In addition, Catamount's solar installers donate some of their time and labor to assist local non-profits with carpentry needs.

This year, Catamount's Liz Smithies chose COVER Home Repair to receive her donation. As a homeowner, she has shopped at the COVER store over the years. When it was time for her to select a local non-profit, she thought of COVER and wanted to support our mission to keep the community safe, warm, and dry. Their donation will be matched by the Dwinell Foundation and will help the COVER Growth Fund.

Thank You Liz and Catamount Solar!

—Lisa Ricci, Volunteer Coordinator



Lending a Hand

Tom Kahl has been volunteering with COVER for the last seven years. He first joined a COVER work crew with other members of the West Lebanon Congregational Church in the fall of 2014 to build a ramp for an Upper Valley neighbor in Bradford, VT. Since then, he's worked on several projects each year in Vermont and New Hampshire including building ramps, repairing roofs, and weatherizing homes. Tom is a retired structural engineer who enjoys building things and continues to volunteer because COVER's organized approach and community commitment makes his time on a project fun and worthwhile.

"Since COVER provides all the materials, tools, and supervision, it's easy to spend a day and assist. I just need to show up and help," Tom shared about his experience volunteering. "There is a sense of accomplishment in finishing a job at the end of the day that you don't always experience on larger projects. COVER's commitment to the needs of homeowners promotes a relaxed, comfortable ambiance."

Over the years, Tom has helped foster hope during every project he helps out on and always contributes to the spirit of cooperation and caring that he considers a defining feature of a COVER project.



Thank you so much, Tom, for helping out our Upper Valley neighbors and for sharing your positivity, warmth, and expertise! It is volunteers like you that power our mission and make this work possible.

—Rachel Smith,

Home Repair Program Coordinator

From the Desk of the Executive Director

When COVER most needed help from our neighbors, your assistance exceeded all of our hopes. We are very grateful for all of our individual donors in 2020--this has been one of our strongest years of support ever! Your support of our work means that we are poised to be able to tackle all of the challenges of 2021. Our Store not only survived last year's shut down, but thrived during the summer and fall. Our Home Repair program now has a record number of urgently needed repair applications in the queue for this spring--about three times more projects than previous years.

Our two newest Ramps & Roofs sponsors, Home Depot (Lebanon) and Catamount Solar, will leverage matching amounts from the Byrne Foundation. All new or returning Ramps & Roofs sponsors will qualify for up to \$40,000 in matching funds. This fund pays for all building materials for the 60-70 urgent

repair jobs per season -- many of which are accessibility ramps and new roofs.

More repair help is on the way. We have already been joined by a new Assistant Work Crew Leader, Bergren, and a new AmeriCorps member, Xander, who will help guide our volunteer crews to complete projects as the weather gets brighter and warmer. Ali Sherman, a lieutenant transitioning out of the US Air Force, will be joining us as an Assistant Work Crew Leader for the spring and summer. Ali comes to us through the Skillbridge internship. She has trained recruits in the repair of jet engines and currently manages a missile unit in Montana, although she was born and raised in the Upper Valley. We are excited to have such strong junior leadership in the new repair season which will kick off again in April with outdoor, Covid-safe projects.

—Bill Neukomm, COVER Executive Director

Board Chair Announcement

Our current Executive Director, Bill Neukomm, has informed the Board that he intends to step away from his position by September 30th. He is planning a sabbatical to spend more time with his family -- especially his grandchildren. During Bill's tenure, COVER has grown in many ways. Home repair and store staff have increased; store sales have improved; trucks and tool trailers are upgraded; the COVER building has undergone several renovations; new programs have developed; and we have forged closer working relationships with other non-profits in the Upper Valley who serve those housing, food, or health care insecure. Most importantly, COVER's mission to foster hope and build community has taken on an even more important meaning during the pandemic. The COVER Board has formed a Search Committee chaired by Kevin O'Hara. We expect a smooth transition and Bill has offered to assist with the transition to a new E.D. We look forward to continued support from our volunteers and funders. Should you have any questions, feel free to reach out.

—Dan Emanuele, COVER Board Chair, Daniel.Emanuele@mascomabank.com

COVER is Hiring!

We are currently searching for a Home Repair Director and a Work Crew Leader. Think you would be a good fit? Visit our website for full job descriptions and email your cover letter and resume to office@coverhomerepair.org.

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.

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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

COVER Store Hours
Monday-Saturday:
10 am – 5 pm
Sunday Store Hours Have
Changed to: 10 am– 3 pm

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



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COVER Home Repair & The COVER Store

COVER Home Repair FY2020	
Urgent home repair projects	54
Weatherization projects	38
Gallons heating fuel saved	9,464
Heating dollars saved	\$26,025
Metric tons carbon saved	94
Volunteer hours	3,352
The COVER Store for the Past 12 Months	
Appliances saved from landfill	478
Furniture saved from landfill	2,256
Books/CDs/DVDs/records	4,119
Store sales reinvested in program	100%
Volunteer hours:	1,713
Fiscal Year FY2020	
Revenue	\$797,234
Expenses	\$686,384
Net	\$110,850