

Celebrating 25 Years



The COVER Page

Fostering Hope & Building Community Since 1998

Fall 2023
Volume 23, No. 1



The Small Stuff Matters Too

Al at home with his new handrail to help him safely negotiate the stairs.

Al doesn't have it easy. After being diagnosed with diabetes, he started having serious problems with his feet. Despite a healthy lifestyle, he recently had five toes amputated. Al doesn't drive and he can't hold a job because of his health. He does have people and organizations he relies on to help him: he gets groceries from The Haven and LISTEN, his doctors at DHMC are treating his diabetes-related complications, a charity helps pay his lot rent, caring friends and family offer their support, and he's got COVER. Al called us after his amputation; he needed handrail for his stairs and his dryer had stopped working. Our Home Repair staff installed the handrail and a dryer was eventually donated to the COVER Store, which we supplied Al through our voucher program.

We often talk about the ramps, roofs, and weatherization projects we do, but the smaller stuff has a big impact too. In addition to our ramp work, our accessibility modifications include installing handrail and grab bars, creating transitions between uneven floors, fixing stairs whose risers are too high, and more to make a home safer. Beyond selling donated goods to help fund our home repairs, the COVER Store has a voucher program providing essential items to community members in need.

COVER Home Repair and Store is a part of a greater web that is trying to address people's basic needs. **Ten feet of handrail and a working dryer may not seem like much, but it meant a lot to Al.** "You guys have been great; exceptionally helpful."



Kirsten Arnesen-Trunzo
Home Repair Co-Director

25 Years of Fostering Hope Through Home Repair

FROM HUGH

Over the years COVER has journeyed far from an old, dented Ford Econoline van, scrounging recycled lumber, and risky roof projects using donated shingles. **Now quality materials, consistent standards, safety protocols, and up-to-date building science are the norm.** All of this enables COVER to engage in high-value repair projects with our homeowner partners.

From the early days, however, the “can-do” spirit, the willingness to take on difficult and always urgently needed home repairs, and the commitment to stepping into emotionally complex situations has been the core of COVER’s work. “Show up and be present” and “Pay attention to what has heart and meaning”—this is community spirit.

FROM JAY

It is truly wonderful to have hope and community at the center of every COVER endeavor I experience. This special place has been intentionally created by a cadre of very dedicated and competent people. During these 25 years, we have accumulated tool trailers, trucks, a historic repurposed building, a store,



COVER Home Repair vehicles, then and now.

staff, Americorps members, board members, a corps of volunteers, and amazing homeowners. Yet the mission hasn’t changed. The vision of Simon and Nancy, along with so many others, is embedded in the DNA of COVER.

Our jobsites are where the physical and community work gets done. I had a homeowner say to me that she heard and saw the community spirit that was occurring on a roof project next door and decided she wanted that kind of spirit to be at her home repair. It is this community spirit that brings me and so many others to COVER.



*Jay Mead Home Repair Co-Director
& Hugh MacArthur Past Home Repair Director*

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, as well as by facilitating the reuse of household goods and building materials at The COVER Store.

A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hope and Community

What you will find in this fall's newsletter are stories about **hope and community**. These values have been with us since the beginning of COVER, when Nancy Bloomfield and Simon Dennis started the organization in 1998.

25 years later, COVER has had its share of successes and growing pains, but **hope and community** continue to guide and inspire us. They are the “why” for what we do. Working at the COVER Store or on a COVER jobsite can be physically demanding and emotionally draining. Yet, **visit the COVER Store or volunteer on a jobsite and you will often find a lightness, laughter, and joy.**

As part of our home-repair services, we often encounter heartbreaking stories of homeowners living in poverty without basic necessities such as hot water or a working shower. Some homeowners cannot safely leave their homes without a friend or family member to help them—sometimes for months. Others struggle with debilitating health conditions. Nevertheless, **we keep showing up as staff, volunteers and donors because we believe in hope and community and we feel a deep joy when we come together to help a neighbor-in-need.**

As we celebrate our 25th anniversary, we embark on a new campaign to support COVER's work for the next 25 years. We invite you to join our campaign because today, more than ever, we all need a little more hope and community in our lives.



Helen Hong
Executive Director

Join COVER's “25 for 25” Anniversary Campaign

Donate \$25, \$250 or \$2,500+; volunteer for 25 hours; invite 25 friends to the COVER Store; and much more. New or increased donations will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$50,000!



25 YEARS OF FOSTERING HOPE & BUILDING COMMUNITY



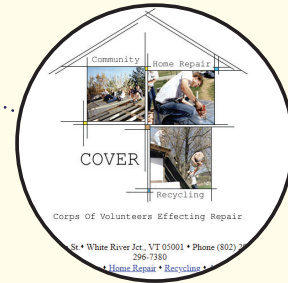
1998: COVER is established by Nancy Bloomfield and Simon Dennis under the umbrella of Tri-County CAP.



2000: COVER acquires its first vehicle—old but it still drives! The COVER logo is born.



2001: COVER moves into the old Catamount Brewery Building in WRJ. Lots of work is done to make it into a store, office, and storage space.



2001: COVER joins the internet age with the launch of its first website.



2007: The annual COVER Store Auction is launched.



2008: March Intensive program begins with Hanover High.



2010: COVER Stories collaboration begins with Terry Osbourne's class at Dartmouth College.



2011: COVER commits to rebuilding efforts after Tropical Storm Irene.



2014: COVER's home repair program grows into two crews in the field. Weatherization becomes a formal program.



2016: Bill Neukomm becomes COVER's next Executive Director.



2018: Store renovations to improve accessibility, lighting, and fire safety.



2002: The "Roberts House" is cut into five pieces and moved from Hanover to WRJ for the Johnson family.



2004: The COVER Store gets its own truck.



2006: COVER sends a crew to Louisiana to help rebuild after Hurricane Rita.



2006: COVER becomes its own 501(c)(3). Rob Schultz becomes its first Executive Director.



2021: Helen Hong becomes COVER's next Executive Director.



Nov 2022: Building renovation begins to create a bookstore and an accessible office facing the street.



2023: Mural painted by Ragko and community volunteers on the side of COVER's building.



"COVER is about more than nailing things down or screwing things in. To volunteer requires generosity and initiative, an embrace of opportunity and a willingness to take a chance." — Bob Russell, Former Board Chair

Musings by a Bookstore Volunteer

As a longtime UV resident, I had always admired COVER's space, mission, and location in a town that has had to balance changing circumstances. On a recent visit, my friend Michelle and I were amazed to see a musical instrument displayed for sale. (Did we try it? Yes, we did! Was it o.k. with the staff? Yes, we think so!)

The store manager often refers to "family" to characterize a unique, earnest, heart-first group of interesting people who stream in to work, volunteer, or access goods and services without judgement: this is a place for renewing hope. We come from a myriad number of life experiences, detours, and celebrations, but the privilege is ultimately one of familiar recognition. Personally, volunteering at Cover to COVER Books offers a chance to be with my community in a way that is mutually supportive. Every village should have at least one used-book store, in my estimation, and like Field of Dreams: provide it and people will come.

I arrived at COVER to volunteer having been a publisher, library director, and—as I am still—a writer, parent, and community member. But I'm better in the company of others who offer their best, who are trusting and open, and in whose company I feel good about putting the best books we can find on the shelf for just the right reader. We know there's going to be something for everyone to uncover at COVER! Come see what you discover at Cover to COVER Books.



Peter Money
Cover to COVER Bookstore Volunteer

Women Embracing Opportunity



This summer, COVER collaborated with the Vermont Works for Women's Program at the Hartford Area Career and Technical Center. Finding new community partners is exciting and we look forward to continuing to work together in the future.



Fondly Remembering Leah Atwood (1988–2023)

Whether as an Americorp Member or a volunteer, Leah was dedicated to COVER on and off work sites. She loved to see the humor in everyday serendipity moments. Leah believed in helping others less fortunate than she was. She definitely loved the camaraderie of a COVER job site. I will always remember her friendly smile.

— Jay Mead

Leah: kind, thoughtful, omnivorous dancer, builder of many things. The friend who talked me through 1 am panic attacks. She was the one who first introduced me to COVER. I am thankful for all the times she encouraged me to try things beyond my comfort zone.

— Zyla Nuite



Leah as an Americorp Member (photos above and above left), and on a recent project as a volunteer (photo to the left, in the back middle ground).

STAY IN TOUCH!

♥ Volunteer

Volunteer on a home repair project or in the COVER store!

Call: 802-296-7421 ext. 3
or visit: coverhomerepair.org

🛍 Shop

New arrivals daily! Come in and browse – you never know what you'll find!

Store hours:
Monday - Saturday, 10-5

📺 Donate

Financial gifts and store proceeds fund home repair and weatherization for neighbors in need.

Visit: coverhomerepair.org/donate

🖱 Follow Us

Find us on Facebook and Instagram!
@coverhomerepair

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

If YOU are an electrician or plumber and are willing to donate your time or charge a reduced rate, we would love to talk to you!

Contact Jeff at: jeff@coverhomerepair.org
or 802-296-7241 ext 3.

Thank You to All Our Wonderful Volunteers

This year is turning out to be a strong year for volunteering at COVER. Since January, we have had 304 people volunteer almost 4,500 hours. The average volunteer has spent 15 hours working with COVER either in the store on a home-repair project. About 40% have volunteered more than once. Close to 45% of the volunteers are brand new to COVER this year!

Taking the cake however are super-volunteers Pat Hill, Liz Ambros, and Board Member Colleen O'Neill who have contributed nearly 800 volunteer hours together. These three women combined contribute almost 20% of our total volunteer hours! Thank you Pat, Liz, and Colleen for helping to keep the store running. Next time you are in the store, stop by and say hello. You'll likely see them there!



Jeffrey Dumont
Community Engagement Director

**ANYONE CAN
VOLUNTEER**

