



The COVER Page & Annual Report

Fostering Hope & Building Community Since 1998

Spring 2024
Volume 23, No. 2



The COVER Store, where Thriving is the Bottom Line

The COVER Store's voucher program provides essential goods, such as furniture and appliances, at no cost to our neighbors-in-need.

I often say that making money is not my top goal at the COVER Store. Sure, making money helps to fund COVER's home repair program. But my day-to-day priorities are to foster hope, build community and keep things out of the landfill.

We often hear about how COVER fosters hope and builds community through urgent home repairs. **The Store does this too** – as a welcoming space to all. The Store fosters hope by providing the material resources that people need at affordable prices. This could be dishes and pots; a working toilet, fridge and stove; a door or lighting fixture.

It also means having a soft place to sleep. Recently Tom came to the Store to furnish a home as he starts on a new path. He qualified for a free bed, but he didn't have a way to take it home. Tom was deflated as he contemplated sleeping on a hard floor. With little effort on our part, though, we located an air mattress that Tom could take home.

With tears in his eyes, Tom told us, "I am better but I'm not fixed yet. Thank you for doing what you do. I can't tell you how much this means to me." It was more than about a bed for Tom; it meant a hopeful start to a new life and the possibility to thrive.

The Store may not always have the exact tangible item that you need. But maybe you will find "hope and community support" to help you thrive in your survival. At the very least, you will find an inviting space where even human-sized chickens are welcome!



Jamie Loura
COVER Store Manager

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

What Money Can't Buy

Recently I found myself wondering whether COVER's work would be done if we suddenly received a cash windfall. In other words, if we raised enough money to make all the homes in the Upper Valley warm, safe, and dry, would we have met our mission?

Although a cash windfall would solve the need for home repair, our mission of "fostering hope and building community *through fellowship and cooperation*" cannot be met with money alone. That's because we need people to show up as equal participants in a shared endeavor in order to have fellowship and cooperation.

Last year, nearly 400 volunteers showed up in expected and unexpected ways. In addition to logging over 4,500 hours to repair homes and help in the COVER Store and bookstore, community members painted a mural and planted a garden outside our building. We had volunteers take photos and make videos of our work, and another volunteer is crunching solar feasibility numbers. A homeowner whom COVER previously helped is now supporting COVER as a board member. Bookstore volunteers are actively organizing author readings and gatherings to build a community of book aficionados.

I am grateful for all the ways our community shows up for COVER. As our board member, Tom Cormen, says, "**Time is the one resource you will never get back.**"

Thank you for sharing your time with COVER so abundantly. Together with your time, and the generosity of our financial supporters, we are one step closer to fulfilling our mission.

Sincerely,



Helen Hong
Executive Director

helen@coverhomerepair.org | (802) 296-7241 x5

Volunteer **25+** Hours in 2024



With an aging population that is struggling to keep up with rising costs, and a shortage of affordable housing, we are seeing more homeowners in need of our services. Help us reach our goal of repairing 10 to 15% more homes this year! Our outdoor repair season runs from April to November.

Meet your neighbors; learn new skills; make a difference.

Your employer may offer paid community service hours or a cash match.

Signing up for a home repair project is easy: visit www.coverhomerepair.org or email Conor@coverhomerepair.org.

Prefer not to work outside for eight hours?

Consider volunteering in the COVER store or bookstore. Or if you have a special skill (event-planning or media relations?), we will try to match you to a need.

Repair projects are led by COVER's professional staff and include low-pitched roofs, new steps, accessibility ramps and insulated skirtings.

Insulated skirtings address a major source of heat loss in mobile homes and can save over 500 gallons of heating fuel in one year.

ANYONE CAN VOLUNTEER



Help us COVER the Valley

Repair projects are located within a 45-minute driving distance from White River Junction in VT and NH. Some volunteers prefer to help in their own town or nearby, and others don't mind driving the distance. It is up to you! We can help coordinate carpooling for volunteers.



Towns with the highest number of home repairs by COVER appear in larger font.

Looking Ahead

Toot-toot! We raised \$100,000 in new and increased donations as part of our 25th Anniversary Campaign between 9/2023 and 3/2024! Thank you to everyone who participated, including 84 new donors to COVER. We are grateful to The Byrne Foundation and the McLaughlin Family Fund for inspiring our donor community to grow.

A successful campaign enables us to expand our home repair program this summer to meet the growing need for COVER's services. We will also invest in our infrastructure by paving our eroding driveway and explore roof-top solar.

Thank you also to everyone who donated to the COVER Store and to Cover to COVER Books in 2023. Because of your generosity, the store funded 29% of our home repair and weatherization program costs.

Gifts in Tribute

Our Savior Lutheran Church in memory of Dan Affeldt; Sarah Adams, Donna and John Atwood, David & Jennifer Costello, Clara & R.J. Gagnon, Laurie & Roland Heijn, Charles Lee, Dave Sherman, and Tim Traver & Delia Clark in memory of Leah Atwood; Marie Alvin in memory of Phil Demers; Josh and Lorraine Durst in memory of David Durst; Sunil Kumar in memory of our Grandparents; Mary Sutton-Smith in memory of Gail Guernsey; Vassie Sinopoulos in memory of Christopher Lloyd; MK and Hillary Beach in memory of Terry Osbourne; and Robert Maurer in memory of Nina Seaman.

Richard Grigsby in honor of Nancy Bloomfield; The Lakota Foundation in honor of Nancy Bloomfield and Simon Dennis; Judith Howland in honor of April Doherty; Amelia Kahl and Alan Green in honor of Thomas Kahl; Dave & Kirsten Eastman in honor of Jay Mead; Virginia Barlow in honor of Phillip Mulligan; Joan & William Clarke in honor of Barbara Nelson; Paul Schoenfeld in honor of Bill Neukomm; Mrs. Roy's 4th Grade Class at the Ray School in honor of Mrs. Joy Roy; and Mary Ellen & Joseph Flynn in honor of Delia Clark and Tim Traver.

This list represents donors 1/1/23-2/28/24.



COVER's work is made possible by the generosity of volunteers, foundations and donors.



COVER'S IMPACT

Keeping our neighbors warm, safe and dry.

COVER completed 80 home repairs in 23 Upper Valley towns in NH and VT at no cost to homeowners.

- 10 wheelchair-accessible ramps
- 12 new roofs
- 9 insulated skirtings
- 49 repairs/replacement of stairs and subfloor; fall prevention measures

... and built 185 interior storm windows and buttoned-up 32 homes...

air-sealing around windows, caulking cracks and holes, weather-stripping doors, insulating box sills and sealing and insulating ductwork.

160 neighbors could stay in their homes safely and affordably

- 41% living with disabilities
- 33% over 65 years old
- with an average monthly income of \$2140 and minimal savings

92 affordable homes preserved, averting abandonment or conversion to more expensive housing.

Over 8,000 gallons of heating fuel saved.

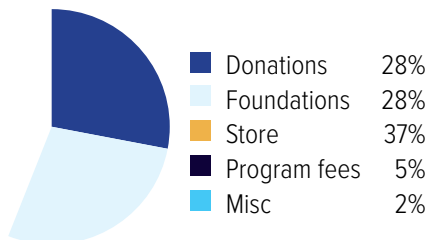


DID YOU KNOW?

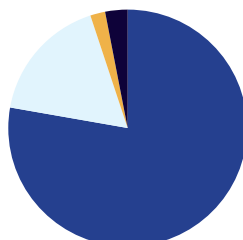
Interior storm windows reduce fuel usage by about 10 gallons per window each winter. In addition, buttoning-up a home can save 70 more gallons. By building ISWs *and* buttoning-up homes, COVER's weatherization program maximizes efficiency gains.

Fiscal Year Financials, July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023

TOTAL REVENUE \$921,834



TOTAL EXPENSES \$798,607



Revenue exceeded expenses due to an unfilled staff position and higher store sales. The surplus will be used to install drainage and pave our eroding dirt and gravel parking lot at the COVER Store and office.

Community Engagement

Strengthening the fabric & well-being of our communities.

- **300 lunches** shared between volunteers and homeowners
- **53 volunteers** on all-women repair projects, 88% new volunteers
- **50 volunteers** painted COVER's community mural
- **61 building renovation volunteers** created a woodshop, ground-floor home repair office and bookstore



387 volunteers
OVER 6,790 hours
(up 63% from prior year)

COVER's average cost of home repair is \$3,350 per project. Volunteers help keep our costs down.

The Unexpected Gift of Volunteering

Erik Brine was a former weekly volunteer during COVER's formative years. He recently stopped in and reminisced. "I recall being nervous driving to my first COVER worksite, feeling insecure about my lack of carpentry experience and my ability to relate to the homeowner. When I met Simon Dennis at the site, any anxiousness quickly dissipated. We accomplished a lot that day, and the modest lunch we shared with the homeowner was something special.

Simon taught me that creating community takes courage on both sides, and that as volunteers we were receiving just as much from the homeowners as they were receiving from us."

Erik's experience continues to be the spirit of a COVER work day. Any anxiety dissipates as volunteers begin working together toward a shared goal.



Lunch is a time for new social connections. Homeowners are invited to make lunch and join in meal-time, if they can.

The COVER Store

Turning donated goods into roofs, ramps and safer stairs.

75

TONS

of appliances, building materials, and housewares diverted from the landfill.

40,903

items sold (9.5% more than the prior year) for an average price of \$9.08 per item. Top revenue-generating items: media, art, toys, cabinets and tools.

\$12,000

worth of beds, furniture and appliances given away free-of-charge to clients referred to us by area agencies.

29%

of COVER's home repair and weatherization program costs funded by store profits.



*The store picks up donations on a schedule. Email photos of your donation to see if it qualifies for pick-up:
store@coverhomerepair.org*



At Cover to COVER Books, you never know what book treasures you might find.



A bookstore volunteer demonstrates paper-folding techniques. Bookstore events are planned by volunteers and open to the public.

ENGAGE WITH US!

Non Profit
U.S. Postage
Paid
WRJ, VT
Permit No. 38

Follow Us

For general COVER news and events:
@coverhomerepair on Facebook and Instagram

For bookstore news and events:
@CoverToCOVERBooksWRJ on Facebook and Instagram

To receive our monthly e-news:
Visit www.coverhomerepair.org and click on "Join Our Mailing List."

The Cover Page is published semi-annually and mailed to friends and supporters of COVER including volunteers, donors, and homeowners assisted by COVER. Please contact us if you would like to be removed from our mailing list.



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



Volunteer

Volunteer on a home repair project, in the COVER Store, or at Cover to COVER Books.

Call: 802-296-7421 ext. 4
or visit: coverhomerepair.org
Email: conor@coverhomerepair.org
books@coverhomerepair.org
(for bookstore-specific inquiries)

ANYONE CAN VOLUNTEER 



Shop

New arrivals daily – you never know what you will find!

COVER Store
Hours: Monday-Saturday, 10-5
Cover to COVER Books
Retail Hours: Thursday-Saturday, 11-4
Donation Hours: Monday 11-3 only

STORE DONATION GUIDELINES 



Donate

We are grateful for financial gifts and store donations.

Visit: coverhomerepair.org/donate
Email: helen@coverhomerepair.org
(financial donations)
store@coverhomerepair.org
(store donations: please include photos)

WAYS TO DONATE 

