



Restoring a Refuge

Making a home safe again: COVER's all-women volunteer crew replaced rotted floor boards and built a sturdy handrail.

Earlier this year, Rachel was in a serious car accident. Rachel is also a cancer survivor. In so many ways, life has not been easy.

When we are fortunate in the housing lottery, our house can be our refuge. It can be where we momentarily put our troubles aside to heal and regain our strength.

When COVER visits a prospective home, we often see challenging conditions. Roof leaks that are causing moisture problems. Front steps that prevent someone from entering or leaving without help. Front doors that don't fully close. Rotted floors or failing stairs that become trip hazards. In cases like this, instead of offering refuge, a home can cause distress.

Rachel called COVER after her car accident. She had been out of work for nine months, recovering from her injuries. Her budget was tight and she couldn't secure a contractor to make repairs. Her fatigue and pain left her mostly house-bound. Sitting on her back deck with a view of the woods beyond brought her momentary relief and comfort. But each time she traversed her back deck, she risked falling through the rotted floor boards. In August COVER repaired the deck and installed railings.

Although COVER can't help Rachel with the persistent pain and fatigue from lingering health issues, we've made it so that she can safely access her back deck to find relief. Rain or shine, the back deck is where Rachel can often be found, with her two dogs as company. In those moments, the world feels all right again and her home is a refuge.

- With gratitude to Rachel Stock for sharing her story.



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 Comes Next After the Party Lights are Off?

COVER turned 25 last year. We celebrated as a 25-year old might, reflecting on our past while looking boldly to the future.

We challenged our community to support and grow COVER's work by volunteering 25+ hours and/or increasing financial gifts by 25%. I am excited to share that 72 donors and 20 volunteers rose to the challenge. **It is not too late to join the challenge!** COVER has completed 70 critical repairs so far in 2024 with two full-time repair crews (and a third, all-women crew this summer). We can do so much more with your generous support.

Repairing homes and running a store is the tangible work we do. It is relatively easy to track the number of repairs and sales data, and we see the final product whether it is a new roof or a shopper leaving with a stack of books.

But behind the visible, so much of our work is about creating inviting spaces where relationships can come together. Our bookstore and store are spaces to browse and see your neighbors. Our mural and pocket park are a shared, public space where you might rest your legs or enjoy native plants. On a home repair site, we invite homeowners to be part of the work day – being present for lunch or helping alongside volunteers if they can. We believe that **everyone has a story to share** and our work is to create opportunities for the sharing to happen.

Our newly paved parking lot makes our site even more inviting. Come to the **COVER Store** or **Cover to COVER Books** and enjoy an easy drive in. We can't wait to see you.

Sincerely,



Helen Hong
Executive Director

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Home Is Where the Heart Is

Family Bonds and Finding a Sense of Peace

Robert Blair was 90, a veteran, and went by Bob. He had been a flat-top roller for a paving company and remembered all the roads he'd rolled. He owned a home in a mobile home park in Springfield and delighted in feeding the squirrels that visited him daily. His wish was to die in his own home.

Three years ago, Bob's daughter, Cheryl, moved in to care for him. Bob was legally blind and had serious health conditions. Cheryl gave up working outside the home to care for Bob full-time. For years, each time it rained, their old roof and skylight leaked, leaving the floors wet. But with a monthly fixed income of \$1561, Bob couldn't afford the \$6000 cost of a new roof after groceries, park lot rent and fuel were paid.



Bob was proud and lived independently for most of his life. Asking for help didn't come easy. But they worried about mold and all the repairs deferred.

The day after COVER staff and volunteers installed a new roof for Bob, it rained. Instead of worrying about wet floors, Bob could sit back and relax on his porch. The new roof gave him a peace of mind. COVER also built handrails for his front steps and installed energy-efficient lightbulbs. **Bob felt like he'd won the housing lottery.**

In between caring for her dad, Cheryl learned to use a jigsaw, and "had a great time learning something new."

After enduring a chronic health condition, Bob passed away in his home with Cheryl by his side. Cheryl cherishes the time they spent together in Bob's home, just as he wished. And she makes sure to feed the squirrels when they come by.

When homeowners are unable to pay for routine home maintenance, let alone critical repairs and modifications, they risk living in unsafe or unsuitable housing conditions. Adults over the age of 80 face the twin burden of needing accessible housing and supportive services in the home, all while living on a fixed or declining income.

24% of the households we assisted in 2024 had at least one adult who was 80 years or older.

Your support makes it possible for older adults to age-in-place safely and with dignity in their own homes and communities.



Wood strapping installed over the old roof, before new metal roofing is attached.

A Must See in White River Junction

“Hodges Figgis Bookstore is a must see when you are in Dublin,” I was told when planning a recent family trip to Ireland. I believe that says it all. Bookstores run deep with people. They are where a community comes together to share their love of books. So when I heard, almost a year ago, that a used bookstore was opening in White River Junction I was ecstatic.



What makes Cover to COVER Books unique is that **it is volunteer-powered**. We are nowhere near experts on running a bookstore, but we all love to read. You might come in and find a romance novel in the mystery section or an autobiography mixed in with fiction. That is okay! We encourage our customers to share their knowledge and move books to their proper place. As far as we are concerned, we are all in this together. I remember a customer pulling a book off the shelf that she absolutely loved and putting it on our “Staff/Customer Picks” shelf. Where else can you do that!

Since December 2023, Cover to COVER Books raised \$16,290 in revenue and sold over 4,000 books, funding the equivalent of three new roofs. Help fund more repairs by donating to and shopping at Cover to COVER.

At our core we each have a passion for service to our community. Every book we sell helps keep low-income families in their homes safely and independently, through the money we raise. We have been lucky to partner with local authors who have donated their time to do

readings at the store. Norwich Bookstore has supported us by supplying new books for these events and donating a portion of the proceeds to COVER. Putnam Vine/Yards has donated space every month to host our Book Club.

Cover to COVER knits our community together through a shared love of books. I know when someone asks me what is a must-see in WRJ, Cover to COVER is top of my list.



Rob Johnson
Volunteer Bookstore Manager

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Instagram

Cover to COVER Books is a volunteer-driven operation that funds COVER’s home repair work in the Upper Valley and Twin State region.

Help us grow our bookstore! Volunteer, shop and follow us at **Cover to COVER Books** on Facebook and **@CovertoCOVERBooksWRJ** on Instagram.

Find Great Deals and Community Connections

To me, the COVER Store is a community-building operation that allows relationships to come together. Building community is the process of creating or enhancing a sense of belonging and connection among people in a specific group or area. It might be a regular group of shoppers who enjoy congregating by the tools section. Maybe they revel in their latest tool purchase while catching up on each other's lives. Or store staff might use Google Translate to communicate with someone whose first language isn't English.



Community-building can be so many things. I see my role as the store manager as creating a sense of belonging and connection for everyone who walks in the store door. After all, we may look different and have different life experiences, but we all share one thing in common. We come to COVER to save – whether it's to save items from the landfill, or to save money on household purchases, or to help others save on their heating bills, or to help save folks the chaos and heartache of leaving their family home because of overwhelming repair needs.



If you miss having a community, or you want more, become a volunteer at the COVER Store and Cover to COVER Books. You never know what (or who) you'll find!

Do you enjoy organizing a space? Need motivation to stay in shape? We are looking for volunteers to sort and display items in the store. Or to drive along in our truck to pick-up donations.

**Come build your community with us.
We'd love to see you!**



Jamie Loura
COVER Store Manager

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Saving Homes through Cost-Effective Repairs

In my first few months at COVER Home Repair, I've come to deeply appreciate just how vital COVER is to our community. Our mission of fostering hope truly shines through in every interaction we have with homeowners, as we listen to their stories and learn about their lives.

We see an overwhelming number of applicants who need urgent home repairs. We are grateful when we can address their repair needs. It is hard when we have to decline an application due to factors such as distance or because the repair needs are beyond what COVER and its volunteers can handle.

We love what we do, and we're incredibly grateful for the community's support and trust. Being part of a team that wholeheartedly believes in our mission makes all the difference in the work we do and the impact we have, whether it's in home repair, the store, or the administrative office—you can feel that passion in everything COVER does.

\$3,500/mo limit for a 1-person household to qualify for COVER's services.

\$2,146/mo average income for a COVER household in FY2024.

\$400,000: average cost to build one new unit of housing.

\$5,700: COVER's average cost to preserve one unit of housing



Homes that have water leaks or large cracks or holes in the floor or walls are considered 'inadequate housing' by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).



Kathy McCarty Home Repair
Program Coordinator

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Team-Building Outside the Office

In my job, I get to meet people who offer their valuable time to help repair the homes of neighbors and strangers. It's been really rewarding to facilitate job-sites that welcome folks to share life stories and learn new carpentry skills. The improvements we make to homes have a tremendous impact on the lives of our homeowners. I appreciate getting to know COVER's recurring volunteers who heed our call for assistance, our "Corps" members. I am just as equally excited to meet new people who push through the anxiety or uncertainty of volunteering and step up to help others.

COVER's roof and ramp builds are a unique team-building opportunity for local businesses as well as civic, religious and other groups. Volunteers learn new skills, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and experience the joy of working together toward a common goal. **Does your office team want to give back and build its sense of community? Contact Conor to discuss the options.** Individuals and smaller groups are always welcome too.

A Win-Win For All

"Volunteering with COVER was unforgettable! My Ledyard co-workers and I demolished an old deck and constructed the framework for a wooden accessibility ramp. I had so much fun using new tools. I felt so proud of all we had accomplished as a team. And that we made a difference in the life of someone in our community."

- Lee Nangeroni,
Ledyard National Bank, Marketing Assistant



We are grateful for all of the groups and employer-sponsored individuals that volunteered with us.

• Hyperthem: 140 hrs • Dartmouth College Senior Design Challenge: 85 hrs • Ledyard Bank: 77 hrs • St. Thomas Episcopal Church: 47.5 hrs • Bio X Cell: 35 hrs • Coop Food Stores: 35 hrs • Claremont MakerSpace: 15.5 hrs • Tuck School of Business: 15 hrs • M&T Bank: 14 hrs • Dartmouth College Public Health Week: 14 hrs • Dartmouth College, Alpha Chi Alpha Fraternity: 12 hrs • One Credit Union: 7 hrs • Huron Consulting Group: 7 hrs • Claremont Savings Bank: 5 hours



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For the latest bookstore news and events, follow us at **CoverttoCOVERBooksWRJ** on Facebook and Instagram

The Cover Page is published semi-annually and mailed to friends and supporters of COVER. Contact us at info@coverhomerepair.org if you would like to be removed from this mailing list.



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Volunteer

Build your community with us. 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

ANYONE CAN VOLUNTEER



Shop

COVER Store

Retail Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9-5
Donation Hours: Monday-Saturday, 10-4

Cover to COVER Books

Retail Hours: Thursday-Saturday, 11-4
Donation Hours: Monday 11-3 only

STORE DONATION GUIDELINES



Donate

We are grateful for your financial support and donations to the store.

Visit: coverhomerepair.org/donate
Email: helen@coverhomerepair.org

To request a store donation pick-up, go to bit.ly/COVERDonationPickup

WAYS TO DONATE

