



THE COVER PAGE

NEWS ABOUT COVER HOME REPAIR & THE RECOVER STORE

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

Fall 2016 • Volume 16, No. 1



COVER Board members, staff and community volunteers building a roof together

COVER STORIES

Why do people participate in the COVER Home Repair program and shop in the ReCOVER Store? This newsletter tells some stories about the difference that volunteering with COVER has made in their lives and the lives of their neighbors in the Upper Valley. These stories are about how building ramps and new roofs demonstrate the power of a caring community; about how COVER turns your donated couch into a new relationship with a neighbor who needs some support.

You will hear about many ways to participate: volunteer on repair jobs, in the store, or on the Board of Directors; donate appliances, furniture, and building materials to the store; buy items in the store or make financial contributions that help pay for the repair program. All of these make a big difference in fostering hope and building community. Many do one— some do it all.

While the focus is often on individuals who volunteer, behind the scenes there is a company that represents the gold standard for volunteerism: Hypertherm. At least once a month a group of employees volunteer in the Home Repair program. During the week, individual employees volunteer in the store. Many shop in the store on a regular basis. Two employees volunteer to serve on the Board of Directors and the HOPE Foundation donates funds to help underwrite the cost of the program. That's commitment!

—Phil Vermeer, COVER Board Chair



What originally attracted me to COVER was my interest in affordable housing and the recognition that the housing needs of the Upper Valley cannot easily be met by one organization or one approach. What makes COVER unique is that we organize neighbors to volunteer their time and effort to work jointly with homeowners who have urgent housing problems like a leaky roof or the need for an accessibility ramp. COVER provides professionals, trucks, and tools. The staff train and supervise the volunteers so that the jobs get done safely and affordably. COVER's human impact is significant. Having a safer, warmer, and drier home is important but the stronger connection to the community and hope for the future are what make the real difference. After volunteering on a repair job, I also realized that it takes more than volunteer

labor to make COVER work. It also takes financial support. The staff, the truck, and tools all require financial support. So, I became a regular monthly contributor through the COVER website. It seemed like a smaller but automatic monthly payment might be preferable to a larger, one time check because COVER can depend on it and it also helps keep their fundraising costs lower.

As my commitment to COVER grew, so did my involvement. For the past several years, I also volunteered to serve on the Board of Directors along with thirteen other equally committed board members from the Upper Valley.

—Helen Hong, COVER Board Member



A simple mission statement----build community and foster hope----more like a "passion statement" than anything else.

Any organization's strengths revolve around those who believe and drive it to be successful. COVER's volunteer home repair program is chock full of caring people. Some work full time jobs. Some hold the hard-earned title of retired.

I fall somewhere in between...yet from the first day I spent a day with a crew of these volunteers on a hot August day building a accessibility ramp, I knew and truly felt the love and caring attitude that runs throughout COVER.

I often wonder what took me so long to join such a wonderful organization!

As wonderful as COVER is, it is just the beginning of the story...the Upper Valley is such a generous community and has helped COVER exist with donations, but more is always welcome and greatly appreciated.



Nothing makes me feel warmer than the satisfaction felt from eating a home-cooked meal with the resident of a home whose house we just put a new roof on and hearing "their story".

—Steve Bingel,
COVER Board Member and Volunteer



A Community Effort

Volunteers at the ReCOVER Store unpack boxes of treasures, housewares, books and building supplies. They help with the picking up of donation items that might include stoves, refrigerators and couches. Volunteers have built things like picnic tables and benches for customers and staff to use at COVER. They repair furniture so it can be functional. They help load and unload items coming into and out of the Store. We at the Store are entirely grateful to them.

Kat Martin is one of these wonderful volunteers, who works third shift at Hypertherm. She arrived at the ReCOVER Store ready for a day's work without having had a night's sleep.

My first reaction to hearing this was, "Wow, are you sure you want to do this?" Kat smiled, laughed and said she was very excited to give one of her three days that Hypertherm gives it employees for community service to COVER and the ReCOVER store. Kat expressed her own gratitude toward Hypertherm for providing her the opportunity to volunteer.

She also felt that her time spent helping at the ReCOVER Store had a greater impact because COVER took what we had gained from her help and passed it on to helping others in her community.

The ReCOVER Store transforms donated items into funds that buy materials that go toward a ramp or a roof that a family, friends, and COVER volunteers build. Kat's day meant more to her because it was spent being a part of this transformational process.

Thank you Kat and thank you to all ReCOVER Store volunteers that help transform toasters, tools and toilets into roofs and ramps. Thank you for being willing to be part of this transformation, a collective process that is greater than the sum of its parts.

—Daine Reinhardt, ReCOVER Store Manager



**Store hours are
Tuesday - Saturday
10-5
Sunday 12-5**

**Come in and see if
we can help with
a project you are
working on!**



Store volunteering comes in many forms.

A Community Comes Together

On two of the hottest days in July, a volunteer crew of mostly Windsor High School students helped the Simoneau family build a ramp. Six months earlier, Aaron Simoneau and his best friend were hit by a train in Hartford, VT. Tragically, Aaron's friend was killed and Aaron was severely injured. For months Aaron's friends were seeking a way to help get Aaron back to Windsor. Aaron's parents communicated to these kids that they could use help on building a ramp; when the COVER truck and trailer pulled into the Simoneau residence, on that sweltering Thursday, Aaron's friends showed up in force.

Throughout the day the 16 students joined the COVER staff along with Aaron Simoneau Sr. in the building of the 35' ramp. COVER had budgeted three days for this ramp construction but because of the



outpouring of support, the ramp was completed in just a day and a half! The spirit on the job site was palpably upbeat as so many young people came together to make this happen. For many, it was amazing to see how fast it all came together. Aaron's family was above all moved by this amazing mobilization of support. If ever there was a COVER project that exemplified Hope and Community this ramp was it. We all send the Simoneau



family our best wishes as they welcome Aaron home.

—Jay Mead, Home Repair Leader

Our New Americorps Member

My name is Heidi Underbakke, and I am the new Americorps member at COVER. I started in September as the Home Repair and Weatherization Assistant. My background is all in museums, where service, education, and conservation were a proud part of my daily work. However, it is my passion for home improvement, homeownership, and energy efficiency that brought me to this position at COVER. I am thrilled to be learning more about carpentry and weatherization while serving a wonderful organization and the community I have already been a part of for two years.



Heidi is pictured on the left. We welcome her to COVER and we are very grateful to have her with us!

The Magic of COVER

Many people in the Upper Valley have experienced the magic of COVER. We try to define and describe what makes COVER special, but sometimes casual conversations with homeowners capture the spirit of our work better than the mission statement does. Mary Lou is one of many homeowners who helped me to understand this powerful, but difficult-to-describe aspect of COVER's work. Mary Lou and her Basset Hound, Elijah, live in a small house in Randolph with a beautiful yard and garden where they love to work and play. Mary Lou's strength and creativity have allowed her to do many remarkable things throughout her life despite having mobility issues from the time she was a young girl. COVER's community of staff and volunteers built a ramp to make it safer and easier to get in and out of the house.

While volunteers were building the ramp outside, Mary Lou was inside working in the kitchen near an open window.



willingness to give to a stranger, was somehow healing to her. I was inspired and encouraged by Mary Lou's extraordinary physical strength, as well as her thoughtful and heart-felt words. The ramp will help to keep Mary Lou and Elijah safe and continue to do the outdoor tasks that they love to do, but Mary Lou also reminded me that the physical work that COVER does isn't the only way we can help each other.

— Briana Baker,
Americorps Member 2015-2016



When I went into the house to get some water, she told me how much she enjoyed hearing us laugh as we worked, as well as hearing the sounds of the equipment. It reminded her of her late husband working in his woodshop in the basement. She told me that the day started out as a difficult health day, but she was feeling better now and that the sights and sounds of other people, as well as their



"I loved that COVER treated me with respect - like a whole person. The ramp turned out much better than expected."

— Mary Lou, Homeowner

Building Community

Twin State Derby's volunteer experience with COVER allowed many unique groups (officials, veteran skaters, rookies, coaches) to work together. Individuals who are not typically leaders within the league shined in leadership roles while roofing. This experience enhanced relationships within our league and increased cohesion. We enjoyed learning new skills involved in roofing, and getting to know the homeowners. Twin State Derby will definitely look to volunteer with COVER again in the future.

—Sarah McKinney ~ Wild Rumpus,
Twin State Derby Board Member



*Twin State Derby came out for a day to help build a roof!
We hope to see them back again soon.*



Community
Building Comes
in Many Ways



"I had such anxiety about taking the steps and now with the ramp I feel more independent because the walkway is safe and sturdy thanks to everyone especially Briana and Dave.

I feel fortunate to live in this community where there is a place like COVER.

P.S. Our older dogs love it too!! Thanks so much."

—Homeowner

An Eight Year Journey

Over the past 8 years, the ReCOVER Store has been a partner in building my home, a real partner, a necessary partner. I moved to Vermont in 2008 and bought a small (one room) house. I discovered the ReCOVER Store, and it was the beginning of a wonderful friendship.

The ReCOVER Store has been a resource for just about everything it takes to build a house: lumber, sinks, toilets, tiles, doors, lighting fixtures, counter tops, cabinets... on and on. And slowly (very slowly), the house has taken shape. I can't say enough how coming to this store has made my project possible. Without this resource, I just couldn't have done it. Without deep pockets to buy the mountains of materials needed to build, a place like ReCOVER has been invaluable... it's been essential.

The ReCOVER Store is part of a needed, small network of places scattered around the Upper Valley where people can go to cobble together what is needed. Over the years, I've kept an extensive list in my head (doorknobs, windows, light bulbs, hinges, power tools...) and, as they've been donated and appeared at the ReCOVER, I've bought each piece, taken it home to continue my project. ReCOVER kept my project moving, all this time. At last, my home is nearing completion.

But, in the end, it's not just a financial benefit I've gotten from the ReCOVER



Store. What remains, the lasting impact is style, as well as a thoughtful approach to building.

The process of frequenting the ReCOVER Store regularly, has brought treasures into my orbit and populated my home. Those Italian, hand-painted tiles bought flair and specialness to an upstairs bathroom. The colorful Mexican tiles still haven't found a permanent home, so they adorn the dining room table.

The hand-punched copper lampshades project exotic shapes of stars onto my ceiling. The fantastic full glass sliding door installed upstairs, next to the antique oak table that sits under the strangely shaped tall green silk lampshades that came from some odd chandelier all come together to give my house a sense of art and beauty that couldn't have come from any other place than the combined worlds of all the wonderful people, and all their senses of taste, and all their travels, and all of their generosity, through the doors of the ReCOVER store and the amazing group of volunteers and workers who help all this to exist.

Many thanks to COVER and the incredible community that has helped me follow this path, build my home, discover beautiful materials I could never have found otherwise, house my small family... and day after day, getting to achieve it by interacting with the caring, thoughtful, great staff at the ReCOVER Store past and present!

It's an amazing legacy, partnership and collaboration with the store, tucked into every corner of my home. It's been a beautiful friendship. Thanks so much!

—Harrison Seano Drinkwater



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 including churches and other religious organizations.

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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 ReCOVER Store. We envision a community where the need for home repair is an opportunity for people to come together.

Check out our website!
www.coverhomerepair.org

VOLUNTEER! 802-296-7241 x104

DONATE! 802-296-7241 x102

ASSISTANCE! 802-296-7241 x105

RECOVER STORE! 802-296-7241 x106

OPEN TUESDAY-SATURDAY, 10-5

SUNDAY, 12-5

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



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COVER Home Repair & The ReCOVER Store

2016 So far

We have done 87 home repairs this year! 16 roofs, 19 ramps, and 52 miscellaneous home repairs.

We have had 228 volunteers come out to help COVER with 3330 hours of volunteer time on home repair, weatherization and work in the store. We welcome new volunteers all the time to try us out and see if we are the right match for your time. Individuals or groups, we can find the right project for you!

"What this project meant to me was that my family has a safe home. As a single parent, the worries of how you're going to make it, how you're going to get through the challenges-you can feel alone. I am so thankful that COVER and the volunteers helped me and my family. To see people care, and help- was amazing. I was so impressed with the organization of everyone working together. Strangers, various backgrounds, yet at all times the job moved on with no issues. Amazing experience. Thank you."

—Homeowner