



THE COVER PAGE

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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COVER staff works to install a new shower

A Chance Encounter

Many of us know the bittersweet time that is the end of August. With crickets singing, the COVER repair team focused its energy and care in two days at the home of Richard and Jaqueline Snide of Springfield.

COVER weatherized this mobile home the previous winter. From that visit and an additional site visit COVER found an urgent need for a safe egress and a walker accessible shower.

With funding from the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL) and the assistance of a handful of frequent volunteers, the full repair staff, a volunteer plumber, and a visiting Venezuelan photographer, we built a new egress and tore out the old shower/tub and installed the new shower in two days. In addition, a handrail was installed in the hallway to add to the safety of the project.

One of our frequent volunteers is Hypertherm's Andy Barraby. Andy also happens to be one of Richard's nephews. Since it had been over 18 years since Andy had seen his uncle Dick, Richard had no idea who the fellow was walking

up his driveway to help on the project. When Andy called him "uncle Dick," Richard squinted harder to make out who this nephew was. At the end of the day it was clear that besides the tangible results of our work this project had also brought together a bit of the Snide family. Evidently, there is something special about this time of year.

—Jay Mead, COVER Home Repair Leader



Andy Barraby pictured front left and the Snides back right. Andy has volunteered for COVER for 4.5 years and has volunteered over 75 hours. More photos on back page.

COVER Celebrates 20 Years

On a beautiful fall Saturday, hundreds of COVER volunteers, store donors and shoppers, past and present Board members and staff gathered to celebrate and thank everyone for twenty years of community building, and re-purposing goods, while making homes safer, warmer, and drier.

The event featured music from Sensible Shoes, Magic from the Dartmouth club, and food from many local restaurants including Elixir, Tuckerbox, Big Fatty's, and Boloco. Great Eastern Radio provided live radio coverage of the event.

COVER founders Simon Dennis and Nancy Bloomfield and past Executive Director Rob Schultz and past Store Manager Diane Reinhardt were on hand for the festivities along with many others who served on the staff and Board.

As COVER Board Chair Dan Emanuele said, "COVER has been a tremendous community effort by all."

—Bill Neukomm, COVER Executive Director



COVER Founders Nancy Bloomfield and Simon Dennis, Executive Director Bill Neukomm and past E.D. Rob Schultz.

Working Together for a Common Mission

COVER and the Vermont Center for Independent Living

"It's the way a partnership should work!" Gail Guernsey, our trusted homeowner coordinator, says. Last week, Gail and I had the pleasure of meeting here at the COVER office with Patricia Tedesco, Coordinator for the Vermont Center for Independent Living's Home Access Program, and Susan Britto, their Intake Specialist.

Founded in 1979, VCIL was the first Vermont organization to have a majority of its board and staff be people with disabilities. The nonprofit actively promotes the dignity, independence, and civil rights of Vermonters living with disabilities. Their central office is in Montpelier, with branch offices in five other Vermont towns. VCIL's primary funding source is the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; additional support comes from the Department of Education, several federal and state agencies, 130 cities and towns, and private donors.

COVER has the kind of robust relationship with VCIL that is rare in the world of

nonprofits. We work together to achieve a key part of a common mission, to remove physical barriers to help people continue to live as independently and safely as possible.

Generally, homeowners who apply for help at VCIL are referred to resources to find funding (called "leverage funding") for their access ramps or bathroom modifications, but because COVER uses volunteers (not paid contractors), the value of the volunteer work is considered by VCIL to be the leverage funding, so COVER's homeowners don't need to seek extra financial support for a project.

Because we have such a long history of working well together, Patricia refers to our relationship as "a well-oiled machine." "Applicants," she adds, "can apply to either organization (COVER's or VCIL's), we cross-refer, and can then process the application from either end."

Once a Vermont homeowner has been accepted for a ramp project or a bathroom modification, COVER's Home Repair Director, John Heath, can buy the materials and move ahead with the work knowing that VCIL will pick up the tab. In turn, VCIL appreciates COVER because our wonderful volunteers keep the cost of the whole project lower than if regular contractors were doing the work. Truly, a partnership in the best sense of the word!

—Wendy Sichel, Volunteer Coordinator

It meant a great deal to me as this porch was dangerous, so old. The quality of work was the best, Jay was the best and so were the crew. I just want to thank you all very much.

—Homeowner

My roof is great, it doesn't leak anymore. Thank you so much, I really appreciate it.

—Homeowner

For helping me be independent and alive! Thank you so much

—Homeowner

From The Desk of the Store Manager

DID YOU KNOW COVER stands for 'Corps Of Volunteers Effecting Repair'?

VOLUNTEERS are the backbone of COVER, they keep us standing and moving forward. They come in every week to help out in the store. They are willing to do whatever is asked of them; clean out a dirty fridge, take out the garbage, sort, price, shelve, operate the register, lift couches, go on pick ups, whatever! I would like to thank the following volunteers from the bottom of my heart ; Fran, Nelson, Jim, Dave, Rich, Linda, Kate, Deb, Michael, and other past volunteers. These people are our heroes.

BE A HERO, BE A VOLUNTEER!

REPURPOSING is popular with store customers. There are endless ideas for repurposing items in the store. Visit our Facebook page to see customers creations purchased from the COVER Store. Come to the store and ask for Kathy. She is the repurposing guru and she can help!



IN CLOSING I'd like to thank the store staff family, volunteers, donors, and shoppers. You all make my job fun and rewarding. Remember, donating and shopping at the COVER Store supports our mission of fostering hope and building community by turning purchased items into ramps and roofs.

—Mitch Ross, COVER Store Manager

Board Profile

Do you remember the first time you volunteered with COVER? Perhaps you rode along with Paul to pick up a set of donated cabinets for the store. Or worked the chop saw cutting planks for a ramp. For me, it was adding insulation and a new roof over a room where a water heater kept freezing in the cold.

I love that anyone can show up to volunteer with COVER, even with no experience. I certainly didn't know a chop saw from a screw gun on my first day. I'm much more confident now and I'm using a lot of what I learned with COVER to fix up my own house.

Yet, what do I remember most about that first day? The delicious homemade muffins our host brought out for us mid-morning and the laughter at lunch as we learned all about the beautiful fish in her fish tank. After four years I still think of her and smile, knowing she's got hot water thanks to that day we shared together.

Volunteering with COVER makes me feel connected to my community. I think that's why so many of us come back to volunteer again – and we bring our friends!

There are so many ways to volunteer with COVER and feel that wonderful sense of connection, whether on the jobsite, in the store, or on COVER's board of directors, which I joined shortly after that first volunteer day four years ago. When is your next COVER volunteer day? Maybe I'll see you there!

—Sarah Brock, COVER Board Member



Sarah (right) and her coworker Paige recently volunteering. They were marking where to place roofing screws and having a blast. After hearing Sarah talk about COVER for ages, Paige joined her for her first COVER volunteer project.

COVER Builds Largest Accessibility Ramp Ever

For thirty-five years, Robert Glines and his wife Pauline lived on Spofford St where they raised their family. When Robert and his wife needed additional help, they moved into an assisted living facility in Claremont while his son Jonathon and daughter-in-law, Penny, lived in the family homestead.

Unfortunately, Robert's wife, Pauline, passed several months ago. Now Robert would like to move back home with his son and daughter-in-law. Since Robert depends on a

powered chair for mobility and there was no ramp up to his front door, he was unable to access the home.

The Glines family reached out to Granite State Independent Living who has partnered with COVER to fund the material cost of ramps.



COVER organizes volunteers to perform urgent home repair projects for qualified homeowners.

COVER builds to Americans with Disabilities Act standards which required a very large ramp in order to maintain a safe pitch. During the first three days, COVER deployed 20 volunteers including individuals from the Claremont Mascoma Bank Branch, Hypertherm, St Thomas Episcopal Church in Hanover, and staff from Dartmouth College. COVER builds 10-15 ramps in the Upper Valley every year.

—Bill Neukomm, Executive Director



Volunteer Appreciation, Todd Lloyd

COVER is so fortunate to attract skilled, dedicated, and upbeat volunteers. Volunteer Todd Lloyd fits that bill perfectly. Todd's engineering experience coupled with years of building experience make him a solid team player on any COVER project. On top of being skilled and motivated, Todd brings a serious commitment to the community service aspect of our projects. His sensitivity and respect for folks in need has grown out of many years of service to the people of Hartland especially through the auspices of Hartland's Unitarian Universalist church. It is thanks to volunteers like Todd Lloyd, that COVER can do the work that it does.

—Jay Mead, COVER Home Repair Leader



Todd Lloyd pictured on left at a COVER project.

AmeriCorps Transition

I began volunteering with COVER in January 2017 and fell in love with the work and the organization. COVER's previous AmeriCorps member, Heidi Underbakke, told me about the AmeriCorps position and encouraged me to apply, which is how I found myself working at COVER one year after I began as a volunteer.

The work is important. Sometimes we are plugging up holes in a home whose owner has been choosing for months between paying the gas bill or buying food. Other times, we build ramps for people who are trapped in their homes without a safe way out, or we build a new roof on a home whose owner has had to make do with a tarp to keep out the elements. Powered by volunteers, grants, and donations, COVER keeps low income households safe, warm, and dry even in the harsh New England weather.

The magic of COVER, however, really revolves around the lunch table; the stories of homeowners, volunteers, and COVER employees paint a rich picture of the Upper Valley's community members. The breaking of bread has always been significant in human history, but it is paramount to facilitating the feeling of coming together as equals and celebrating the human experience during a COVER project.

I was out on projects most days of the week, helping the crew leaders and volunteers, building, and interacting with homeowners. It was an opportunity to develop skills in carpentry, deconstruction, and weatherization, while getting a deep sense of the community in the Upper Valley. AmeriCorps' monthly presentations accompanied my journey, with topics ranging from restorative justice and stigma, to conflict resolution,



which helped to contextualize the work and emphasize the importance of what we do.

My last month of work has been filled with people curious as to what I will do next. Finally falling into place, my plans are simple: move in with a roommate I met presenting for COVER at various events, work for a board member continuing within the realm of construction, and build upon the knowledge I began to gain at COVER. I proudly handed off my keys to the next AmeriCorps member, Eliot, who will be undergoing similar adventures as I did this year.

The Home Repair and Weatherization Assistant position at COVER has uncovered my eyes and revealed the struggles and hardships often hidden from view in our Upper Valley. But it has also shown me the kindness, camaraderie, and compassion in community members, and the power of what can be achieved with community support (and sometimes outpouring). Walking away is hard, and I know that COVER's hand, which has guided my growth through this segment of life, will continue to guide me in my next.

—Leah Atwood,
Departing AmeriCorps Member
(pictured above on the right)



We welcome
new AmeriCorps
member, Eliot
Crow, to the
COVER team!

E.D. Fall Update

NEW PHONES & COMPUTERS

With help from the Byrne Foundation and a volunteer IT committee, COVER has joined the 21st century with new computers and a voice-over-internet phone system. Led by Board member Phil Vermeer, the IT committee included Dave Sherman and Rich Acker running all new CAT 6 cables for the phone system; Phil installing wireless routers throughout the building; and Dave Joyce buying all new laptops and installing all new software.

RAMPS & ROOFS Fund

COVER's Ramps & Roofs Fund helps pay for the building materials cost of our urgent home repairs and is a great example of collaboration with our many community partners and the Byrne Foundation.

During the 2017 home repair season, we completed 11 ramps and 13 roofs: 80 urgent repair jobs in total.

- One ramp that COVER did, helped a homeowner leave her home safely for the first time in 4 years.
- We put in a shower for a woman who cried with joy over having access to her very own shower which she had not had for years.
- COVER helped a young family complete their addition for their new baby.



We have begun a number of new such projects for the 2018 home repair season.

The new or increased sponsors of the Ramps & Roofs Fund to date include:

The Jane B. Cook Foundation
An anonymous donor from Woodstock
The Claremont Savings Bank Foundation
Casella Waste Management Systems
A Vermont Community Foundation donor advised fund
Community Lutheran Church in Enfield
Our Savior Lutheran Church in Hanover
The Upper Valley Vixens
The Hanover Community Coop
Lebanon Paint & Decorating
Upper Valley Realty Association
Anonymous

Repeat sponsors include:

Town of Hartford
Ben & Jerry's
The Hanover Rotary
Ledyard National Bank
and 38 individual donors all of whom rose to meet the Byrne match of \$40,000.

We expect a number of existing sponsors to repeat this fall.

—Bill Neukomm, Executive Director

I would like to thank COVER for the wonderful program you have. Three very polite men came to put in a new step so I could get into my house. I will be forever thankful. I feel a lot safer and I don't worry about falling now. Thank them for me. Great Job

—Homeowner

The Cover Page is published semi-annually and mailed to friends and supporters of COVER in the Upper Valley including individual contributors, businesses, foundations, and civic groups including churches and other religious organizations.



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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COVER Home Repair & The COVER Store

Check out our website!

www.coverhomerepair.org

Call the **COVER Office or Store**
at **802-296-7241**

**The COVER Store is open
7 days a week!
Monday - Saturday 10-5,
Sunday 12-5**

Continued from front page.

*Porch and shower work being done at the Snide home by John Heath and Jay Mead.
Photos by Sandro Oramas.*

