



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

Fall 2019 • Volume 19, No. 1



A Ramp Connects Homeowners to Community

Once again COVER and their fabulous volunteers have done an exemplary job on our home.

Last year they rebuilt our front steps that had, after a hundred plus years, deteriorated to the point of breaking and becoming dangerous to walk on. And that included the walk out to the road in front of the house. With the handrails, Mom and I were safe to walk in and out all winter.

This year they built a 40 foot switch-back ramp from our driveway up to our porch, having to meet the State requirement of one foot for each inch of rise.

The COVER crew, with the help of the Mascoma Bank volunteers and the Upper Valley Vixens roller derby team worked tirelessly in exhaustive heat, to achieve a true work of art that should be as useful

and appreciated this winter as the steps have been.

Mom is already "walking the ramp" several times a week, no longer having to dangerously walk on the side of the road between the garage and the front steps. Thank you COVER!

—Robert & Maria, Homeowners

The house is an historic house in Perkinsville and was originally built by the founder of Vermont Soap Stone. We worked four days on this ramp with several different groups of volunteers. The ramp not only allows this family safe access from their house to their vehicle but it has also enabled friends who are dependent on wheelchairs or walkers for access, to visit.

—Jay Mead,
COVER Home Repair Leader



Helping Regularly

I would love to share my experience volunteering for COVER. I retired in 2015, and like many retirees, searched for volunteer opportunities in the Upper Valley.

I wanted something that would involve a level of physicality that would be reasonable for someone approaching his seventies. COVER was an appealing choice, and I started volunteering in the winter of 2015. I have been volunteering on a regular basis since that time, except for a brief hiatus for back surgery in late 2017.

Volunteering for COVER created a succession of feel good moments for me on each and every job. The homeowners COVER serves are very genuinely in need of urgent home repairs due to low income levels, disabilities or both of these challenges.

I was on a job recently that involved building an accessibility ramp that connected to the entryway of the home of a young couple in their thirties. The wife has dealt with muscular dystrophy since the age of eight. The disease had



progressed to the point that she essentially had become a prisoner in her own home. The first time her husband wheeled her down the ramp, she broke into tears of joy. It is wonderful being a part of an organization that gave her that gift.

I can't finish this piece about volunteering for COVER without giving kudos to John Heath and Jay Mead, the two full time professionals who plan, organize and lead us on-site from start to finish on every project. They are both absolute gentlemen. They lead us with intelligence and their skilled leadership keeps us safe. I've learned a lot from both of them. I

plan to continue volunteering for COVER.

—John Dresser, COVER Volunteer

Another COVER Store Hero

The donations have been coming in fast and heavy all summer but thanks in large part to Pat Hill, a COVER store volunteer since March 1, 2019, we've managed to keep up with the deluge. Pat is a semi-retired architect; she can't quite keep away from the work she loves, so she is still involved on a part-time basis with her old firm. Luckily for COVER, she also volunteers with us one or two days a week. Pat helps with everything from sorting, pricing, and shelving donations to cleaning and sweeping the floors, ringing up customer purchases, and more, always with a pleasant attitude.

She heard about COVER a long time ago, as she's lived in Hanover for many years. In fact, two of her children volunteered with us some years ago – one who helped build a ramp with our annual March Intensive, and one who organized the paints we had in the store at that time.

Whatever brought her here, we're grateful to Pat for everything she does in the store, and we hope she's here for a long time to come

—Miriam Jones, COVER Store Staff Member

AmeriCorps

I was pleased to be an AmeriCorps member at COVER this summer. Let me tell you about my first day in July. Eliot, near the end of his AmeriCorps service, showed me around.

We visited an old man who had been partially immobilized by a car accident and was confined to his apartment. His electric wheelchair couldn't help him out of the building because of the single step down from the threshold to the sidewalk. In a few short hours, we tailored a portable ramp to his step and he happily propelled himself through his doorway and into the sunny day outside his window.

Later that day I had two thoughts about his situation. On the one hand, it is hard to know that there are people in our community who struggle with housing conditions. On the other hand, it is great to be part of an organization that can make a positive difference.

In the face of all the world's anguish, which can be paralyzing in its vast and impersonal scope, I think this provides a hopeful sign that we can reach out to people in our community and take up manageable problems with our own hands. I urge those reading to consider setting aside some time to help COVER's mission.

—Robert Wright III, AmeriCorps Member
(pictured above with volunteer Keren Katz)



Many Hats

Our COVER volunteers often have ties to many non-profits in the community, volunteering with many organizations. We celebrate this community building spirit with one example of the many hats worn by our steady volunteer **Fran Oscadal**. Here is his list of community connections and responsibilities:

- *BAYADA Hospice - Companion*
- *Willing Hands - Crop Gleaner*
- *Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park - Trail Ambassador*
- *Lebanon Public Libraries Board of Trustees*
- *Lebanon Public Libraries Foundation - Board Member*
- *Skip Matthews Memorial Run - Registration Coordinator*
- *COVER Home Repair - Donation Pick-up Master*

It meant that my husband could get out of the house on his own. They did a great job! We are both very pleased and the staff was awesome. Thank you very much for making this happen.

—A COVER Homeowner

Hey did you hear..

...about this thrift store in WRJ, VT? They sell furniture, appliances, tools, housewares, cabinets and all kinds of other things to outfit and repair a home. All merchandise is donated and sold at unbelievable prices, and the proceeds go to their Home Repair program helping friends and neighbors with urgently needed home repairs.

Sounds great! What's the name and where is it?!

The COVER Store
158 South Main St
White River Jct, VT

Contest Winners!

We had a great turnout for our first repurposing contest this spring. We had two categories: under 15 years old and over.

And the store gift certificate winners are...

Wyatt Moseley 1st place
Renea Weatherell Sutton 2nd place
Kimberly Sainsbury 2nd place
Nichole Baxter 3rd place
Tanya Murphy 3rd place

Under 15:

Arianna Baxter 1st place

Check out our Facebook page for rules and information about the Fall repurposing contest. Good luck everyone!



Above:
Our repurpose contest winner, Wyatt Moseley and Below: His winning creation. Wyatt is a blacksmith and using his forge and welding supplies he made ladles from pipe and copper wire that he bought in the store, and parts from an old milking machine.



COVERBooks is growing

Thanks to Liz Ambros, volunteer book coordinator, both online and in store sales have dramatically increased. Thanks Liz! If you want to help, donate near new cookbooks, self help books, spiritual books and children's books. Did you know COVER has a free children's book program?

We have filled the part time store position with a very familiar COVER face, that of Diane Reinhardt! Great to have her smile, humor and 'get the job done' attitude back in the store.

As always I'd like to thank donors, customers, volunteers and staff for making COVER so successful and moving forward. THANK YOU!

—Mitch Ross, COVER Store Manager

They were excellent! Even working in dark to finish. Nice to come home and see a work of art.

—A COVER Homeowner

Small Businesses Advance the COVER Mission

COVER relies on the community to help us fulfill our mission. We usually invite help by suggesting that people volunteer, shop in the store, donate items to the store, or contribute money.

Upper Valley businesses also help COVER. Big players like Hypertherm and Timken donate money and employee time. Big agencies like The Haven and Listen help us with case management for vouchers. The smaller players, though, are easily overlooked.

In recent months a small family business grew to be important to the COVER Store as well as our donors and shoppers: Van Wiggins, sometimes with his wife and daughter, delivers customer purchases, scraps what the store can't accept, and even on occasion delivers donations to the store. Van describes himself as a handy man doing odd jobs in and around or to and from the home (C 603 229-2476).

The COVER Store uses a box truck to collect donations. For a time, we also used the truck to deliver store purchases, but we quickly realized that delivery was

not a good use of resources. Now, with Van Wiggins and the rest of the free market filling the gap, business is better.

Van Wiggins recently collaborated with another sole proprietor, Kelley Perron, who helps with personal assistance including moves and home right-sizing, which often involves the donation of furniture to regional charities (dashtravelattendant.com (603) 359-0063). Kelley queued up a large furniture donation and Van delivered it to the store.

Van also helps people with home repairs and safety upgrades like grab bars that COVER's home repair team can't undertake for one reason or another. Once again, Van and the free market fill the gap.

If you know of other small business people like

Van and Kelley, please refer them to the COVER Store. We'd be happy to put more business cards on our bulletin board, or perhaps add to our list of movers.

--Paul Johnson, COVER Store Staff Member



Volunteer Appreciation Event

The volunteer appreciation evening at the Engine Room was a very fun event, thanks to Steve and Maureen Bingel who threw the party. We honored some of our amazing volunteers with the following awards that honored certain unique characteristics. "The Irish brothers from Another Mother" (highly spirited) award went to Daniel and Martin McCarthy. The "Swiss Army Knife" (general helpfulness) award went to Kate Foster and John Dresser. The "Sparky" award (electrical prowess) went to Dave Sherman and Rich Acker. The "Resident Cartoonist of the Year" award went to Keren Katz. The "Caliper Guys" award (for their engineering prowess) went to Todd Lloyd and Dave Sherman. Again huge thanks to all our volunteers who make our work possible.

Accessible Upper Valley

The Hartford Historical Society is a true gem. Located in a turn of the century house in Hartford Village known as the Garipay House, the HHS is filled with tremendous treasures related to the town of Hartford. They get many visitors and are open mainly by appointment. One day last year, they received a call from a local elementary school class to set up a field trip.

When the children arrived at the HHS, it soon became clear that there was a child who could not enter the building due to the lack of accessibility. This is when the story began in terms of the soon-to-be relationship between COVER and the Hartford Historical Society.

The COVER home repair program is well rehearsed in accessibility and modifications to accommodate individuals with mobility and other physical issues



and has gained a well-deserved reputation statewide. COVER partners with a couple of non-profits per year constructing accessibility ramps so that programs, events and services are open and welcoming to all residents.

Judy Barwood, HHS President, reached out to John Heath, and the rest is history. With the help of volunteers, the accessibility ramp was built in May, a new entry door added, and the Hartford Historical Society is now open to everyone. The ramp and door are beautiful, not only in design, but most importantly, in the inclusiveness they allow.

—Mary Alice Leonard Heath, COVER Staff



It means my husband continues to have his independence and I worry less while I am at work.

—A COVER Homeowner

Executive Director Fall Update

New Help is on the Way

We welcome two new members to our staff. Lisa Ricci and Sophie Connor. Lisa joins us as our new Volunteer Coordinator supporting both the Home Repair and the Store teams. Lisa has a diverse background including work in solar installation, volunteer coordination, and event planning. She has both the people skills and technical skills to be a strong addition to our team. Originally from Florida, Lisa recently moved to the Upper Valley. Contact Lisa at volunteer@coverhomerepair.org, if you want to help on either team.

Sophie Connor joins us as Assistant Work Crew Leader through the AmeriCorps program supporting the home repair teams. She returned to the Upper Valley from Wisconsin. She is a recent graduate of Dartmouth College during which time she volunteered for COVER. No stranger to hard work or challenge, she completed a 4,000-mile bicycle trip through the Bike and Build Foundation. Each week the riders volunteer a repair or build day with organizations like COVER or Habitat and then ride on to the next location.

Have You Seen the Improvements in the COVER building?

The Home Repair team is finishing the final touches of Phase 1 renovations, including some new signage and door trim thanks to funding from the Byrne Foundation. In addition, we installed a new smoke and fire detection system in the building thanks to the Timken Foundation.

The rear warehouse end of the COVER building will get a major roof repair courtesy of the Timken Foundation.



COVER paid off its mortgage on the building with help from Enfield resident and former COVER Board Chair, Phil Vermeer. Thanks to Norm & Sun (Norm Levy) COVER now receives solar credits from a solar array Norm funded for the Starlake Village affordable housing complex in Norwich. This will help reduce our electrical bills by about 20%. Coupled with the heat pumps installed last year, this further reduces COVER's carbon footprint.

—Bill Neukomm, Executive Director

COVER and Vital Communities to Collaborate on Major Weatherization Effort

Thanks to Sarah Brock, COVER Board Member and Vital Communities Energy Program Manager, both organizations are rolling out a concentrated effort to weatherize a greater number of dwelling units in mobile home parks. Energy Committees from various towns will help market the COVER weatherization service, and COVER's volunteer teams with professional support and blower doors, will do the work. COVER will also experiment with some new materials to increase home energy efficiency. The goal is to reduce heating bills, make homes warmer, and reduce carbon emissions.

Want to help? Contact volunteer@coverhomerepair.org.

Need weatherization services? Write to gailg@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.

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

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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

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



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COVER Home Repair & The COVER Store



AmeriCorps members past and present . Making the great work we do possible.

Haiku by Jay Mead:

**Woman Looks Hopeful
Ramp connecting home to Earth
Confident Walker**



Two Worker Bees Help Build a Ramp in Claremont!

*Charlene Lovett (Mayor of Claremont)
and Evan Smith (CEO of Hypertherm)*