

Questions and Answers From the ReCover Store

Every week, we receive many questions from customers and donors, regarding the store, its operation, and what we do and why. We thought it might be fun to include some of these questions, and answers, in the newsletter, so here we go.

Q: “Do you keep a list of what people are looking for, and call them when the item comes in?”

A: Although some stores, particularly home decorating and antiques stores, have this policy, we do not keep such a list. With the wide variety of merchandise we take in, and the varied demand for different goods, we feel as if it would be a logistical nightmare to keep track of the wants of many individual customers. Additionally, if we miss calling someone, and they see the item they want on the floor (and possibly sold to someone else), we would have a very unhappy customer. We much prefer having people regularly call or email us to see if the item they need is here, or might be arriving soon.

Q: “Why is everything I like marked sold?”

A: Not every item we sell goes out the door immediately. Sometimes people need to return to pick up a large item. Sometimes they are moving in, or out, and need to wait to take the item home. In these cases, we mark the item sold, and leave it on the sales floor. We try to have the buyer pick up their item within two weeks, though that is not always possible.



Q: “Do the appliances work?”

A: When someone donates an appliance, we ask that it be in good, working condition. Some appliances, such as fridges, electric dyers and stoves, we can test at the store. Others, including gas appliances and dishwashers, we cannot. If a customer takes an item home we could not test, and it does not work, we will replace the item, or give the buyer a refund.

Q: “Will you take less for this?”

A: Although many venues that sell used merchandise do negotiate prices, we do not. Prices at the store tend to be very reasonable, and the non-negotiating policy tends to make the transaction process easier for most customers, and for store staff.

Q: “Can I consign something at the store, or can I trade for something in the store?”

A: All items that come through the store are donations. As a result, we cannot consign and sell an item for someone. Trading an item for something you see at the store would be similar to us buying an item, so we do not trade. We encourage people looking to trade to sell their item through venues such as local list serves or advertising newspapers, then come in and purchase the item they desire.

— Frank Orlowski
ReCover Store Manager



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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www.coverhomerepair.org

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 to facilitate the reuse of household goods and building materials. 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 ReCover Store

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The ReCover Store is open
Mondays 10-2; Tuesday – Saturday,
10-5. Check out our website!
www.coverhomerepair.org

COVER home repair is amazing. The staff and volunteers were excellent. Now my family and I will not get wet from the roof leaking. COVER home repair is an outstanding program. Every person that came to my home was very respectful, knowledgeable and I loved how they kept us notified of everything they were doing. This is the best organization in the state of Vermont. Thank you all for everything you did for me and my family! — Homeowner



REPAIRING HOMES AND
BUILDING COMMUNITY

THE COVER PAGE

NEWS ABOUT COVER HOME REPAIR & THE RECOVER STORE

158 South Main Street, White River Junction, Vermont • T: 802.296.7241 • F: 802.296.7380 • www.coverhomerepair.org

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Construction Season

The long cold winter is now over and the best season has already begun – construction season. We are really excited. There is a great deal of good work to be done and we can FINALLY get out there and do it.

But we need YOU! **COVER** really is a “Corps of Volunteers Effecting Reuse and Repair” and that means you as volunteers and homeowners working with COVER – either in the Store or on a Home Repair or Weatherization site.

The most compelling reason to come out and volunteer is the giving AND receiving that happens every day. Read **Dave Knapp’s** and **Kathy Kitowski’s** articles on how they see volunteering. Come out for a day. Work hard. See the results. Be in community with your neighbors. Learn from working next to the homeowner or another volunteer. Work in the **ReCover Store**. Meet the customers.

See your neighbors as gifts. Bring your skill and heart to the day. You’ll love it!!

You’ll also be doing a good thing in the BIG picture. At COVER’s annual Board and Staff retreat, **Phil Vermeer, a Board member**, shared a quote from a great contemporary theologian:

You can watch while the differences between people who have a lot and people who have a little or nothing — that gap grows and grows. You can’t have a viable society if you organize the economy that way. You can take it in terms of healthcare delivery, education, or in terms of housing or any of the social goods. If you do not have a practice of neighborliness, society becomes unlivable....

The real issue is neighborliness. There are many ways to practice neighborliness — it requires the private



sector being involved, the corporations, the government, the church. Everybody has a stake in maintaining a viable neighborliness, and to get caught up in abstract discussion ... takes energy away from what our real concerns ought to be.

— Walter Brueggeman

For too many of our neighbors, getting through the coming winter in their homes is a real concern. We see this concern as belonging to ALL of us. We also see it as an opportunity to live as neighbors — which is not an abstract concept on a COVER worksite, but a tangible experience of every workday.

Working with COVER is a great way to create and experience “neighborliness” in one of its best forms – helping your neighbors get and stay – dry, warm and safe. This summer is the time. Sign up for a work day or two. Create the community in which you want to live.

—Rob Schultz
Executive Director of COVER



With a little help from our friends

During a minor home repair on the bathroom at the home of the Bonnie and Earl, it became apparent that more needed to be done. Earl, a Vietnam Veteran, uses a power wheelchair. Getting to the bathroom presented many challenges for him. In addition, their washer and dryer were located in the basement and this created a fall risk for Bonnie. They needed to be moved upstairs. Clearly, the minor repair had turned into the need for a major renovation to make Earl and Bonnie’s home safe for them at this stage of their lives.

The family had renovation plans, but limited resources were making it difficult. COVER does minor bathroom repairs, but we’ve avoided complete bathroom renovations due to cost and the need for experienced, licensed plumbers and electricians.

We were able to recruit a great crew to help out on the project. **Dan Coffel**, a local plumber and a long-term volunteer on numerous projects agreed to help out with the plumbing. **Roland Shattuck**, an experienced electrician and new homeowner to COVER, wanted to contribute and offered his help. Three long-term volunteers also joined us for the weekend, in addition to Earl and Bonnie’s son and daughter-in-law.



The room was gutted and a new shower, toilet, sink and flooring were installed. The wiring and lighting was upgraded, and grab-bars installed. The work went well as all joined in to help each other with the tasks. The work site was bustling at times while plumbing, wiring, and the floor installation were being installed simultaneously. As with all COVER projects, there was a welcoming break for lunch with time to sit and converse.

There are still some odds and ends to finish, but the bathroom is functional, and accessible. The new washer and dryer hook up on the main floor adds an element of safety for Bonnie. The success of this project was the joint effort of the family and the COVER community.

There is a big need for making bathrooms accessible for people with disabilities and the elderly. The success of this project encourages us to consider home repairs of this scope that come our way. In this case, having skilled tradespeople AND a grant from a local veterans support group made all the difference.

—John Heath,
Home Repair Director



Weatherization

Thank You to all of COVER's community for a very successful weatherization season. Here are the numbers in a nutshell. **88 families** served total, **60 new projects**, **19 returns**, and **9 home owners** were supplied with **127 window kits**. In those 79 projects we **air sealed 91 doors**, installed **649 new window kits**, **rehung 88 window kits**, **fixed 8 doors** so they would latch closed, **installed 5 one-way air flow dryer valves**, **air sealed two chimneys**, **installed doors in 4 bulkheads**, **installed heat tape in 4 homes**, **sealed hot air duct work in 4 mobile homes**, **insulated a 10 x 14 bedroom** and filled a case of expanding



cleaned in at least three years. Those families are able to feel a lot more secure in the knowledge that their furnaces are running safely and reliably.

COVER is able to do what it does because of volunteers. This past fall and winter we had a volunteer extraordinaire. **Kathy Kitowski gave over 100 hours** of her time in a three month window. Kathy you rock!

We hope to be even busier next season. We are partnering with **SEVCA** to air seal before their teams insulate and **VT 211** now lists our weatherization program. Get ready to help save our neighbors even more money and reduce our community's carbon footprint.

— Diane Reinhardt
Weatherization Director



foam worth of holes. This year's blower door tests showed and average **savings of 123 gallons per home per heating season!**

Special Thanks also goes out to the **High Meadows fund** of the **Vermont Community Foundation** and **Patriot Fuels**. COVER's furnace cleaning program is in its second year and Patriot Fuels was able to clean the furnaces of 15 families that had not had their furnace



Volunteering

"Love your neighbor by helping them"

One of the benefits I have as a **Hypertherm Associate** is three days of paid **Community Service Time (CST)** annually. For the past eight years COVER projects have been where I spent my CST. Between COVER's weatherization and building programs I have humbly witnessed the tangible needs homeowners have. The privilege is mine to be welcomed into someone's home to take steps to help them have warmer and drier living space. The COVER staff always outlines the scope of work with both volunteer and homeowner which makes for a clear and objective project to be involved in.

I'll continue to gladly use CST as long as Hypertherm offers this benefit!

— Dave Knapp
Wilder, VT



Dave is pictured on the far right

Looking After One Another

When I first started volunteering for COVER, I was a little worried that I wouldn't have the energy or skills to keep up with all of those strapping young people I saw on the volunteering website. Well, nothing was further from the truth.

I was taught what I needed to know (with great patience!) by an energetic, talented and well-organized crew, and I've gained confidence with every job I've been on.

Each job is different; some require more physical activity than others. I (only half jokingly) refer to volunteering with COVER as my 'fitness program'.

The work is fun, and immensely satisfying – at the end of the day the home is warmer, drier, safer. I am grateful to be able to contribute to such a basic human need. It is wonderful to see the progress made in such a short time. It is even more wonderful to see the spark of hope light up a homeowner's eyes when they see that people care enough to help them.

My personal philosophy is that it's part of our job here on earth to look after one

another. If I can give even a little of who I am and make a difference in another person's life, that is what matters.

There is tremendous power when we all pull together.

We have the capacity to change lives all over the Upper Valley. I encourage anyone who is reading this to join COVER for a day of fun and laughter. By improving the life of even one person, we strengthen our society. Volunteer for COVER and you will be repaid in ways you wouldn't have imagined.

— Katherine Kitowski
Enfield, NH



Much Appreciation for the Groups Who Volunteered for COVER in 2014

Bike and Build
Cartoon Studies School
Co-op Food Stores
Dartmouth Class, Terry Osborne's COVER Stories
Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center
Dartmouth Medical School Students
Dartmouth Men's Group
Dartmouth Printing Family Place
Hanover High School March Intensive

Hypertherm
Kendal at Hanover
King Arthur Flour
Leadership Upper Valley
MISys
St Thomas Church
TomTom
TUCK Business School
Upper Valley Humanists
VINS
Youth in Action



Reflections

Serving with COVER, one thing you learn quickly is how important it is to engage with the volunteers and homeowners on our weekly home repair and weatherization projects. The mission of the organization is to foster hope and build community, and we aim to accomplish this by bringing people together from various backgrounds to work together towards a common goal. Through a typical day, we will invite the homeowners to join us in the work and talk with the volunteers, giving them a chance to connect with each other. Oftentimes, the highlight of the day comes at lunch, which is a time of lively conversation and good food prepared by the homeowner. Whether I'm sitting back and enjoying their stories or answering their questions about how different Wisconsin is from Vermont, I get something new out of each encounter. Every week offers a unique atmosphere, and you never know what you'll learn or who you might meet.

The volunteers we work with come from all walks of life, and whether they are talented at construction or have never touched a hammer in their life, everyone leaves at the end of the day with a sense of accomplishment. At the end of a long day, it's really rewarding to look back at that new roof or ramp you just helped install. And when the volunteers have worked and talked with the homeowner all day, they really gain an appreciation for how much their work means on a personal level. These interactions and feelings can have a strong

impact on people, and we'll have many volunteers who come out whenever they can because they just love helping others. Whether it's just a one time thing or as regular contribution, all of our volunteers come out of each project knowing they've put in a hard day's work.

Among our regular group of volunteers, we have a couple of super volunteers who have dedicated themselves to helping us meet our mission. We have our small projects specialist who's been out with us so many times in the past that we know we can send him out on his own now and expect great results. And over our weatherization season, we had a volunteer join us every weekend we were out, putting in over 100 hours of volunteer service in a two month period. Having the opportunity to work alongside volunteers with such a drive to help people has been a great experience and really shows you how much people care. When you combine the great work of these volunteers with our other regulars and all those first-timers, it's not very hard to figure out how we're able to get so much done.

One of the great things about serving with COVER is spending time every weekend with these volunteers and sharing in a learning experience with them. Sometimes you'll have a teaching moment, but just as often you're learning something from working alongside them. These exchanges might be small or profound, but each one contributes to the community building that happens every time we go out.

—Matt Sherman
Assistant to Home Repair/
Weatherization Directors,
COVER AmeriCorps Member

