



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

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COVER Kicks Off Its Ramps & Roofs Campaign

In 2016, we built 20 ramps and finished 14 roofs which cost a large portion of our \$70,000 materials budget. To meet the challenge of covering this season's ramps and roofs, COVER has begun a new campaign to secure sponsors for the building material fund.

One of our first projects this spring was to install an accessibility ramp for a home owned by Flemming and Doris -- a retired couple living in Charlestown, NH. Flemming has medical challenges that made it difficult for him to get safely in and out of his home. "During the winter, COVER installed a temporary ramp to allow access until the good weather allowed building a permanent accessibility ramp," according to John Heath, COVER's Home Repair Director.

Flemming recently began taking classes at the River Valley Community College in Keene, NH. Why? "To inspire young people" he said while watching a team of students from the college, many who he knows personally, working on the ramp. He seems to have accomplished that goal very effectively!

The Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation is matching all new sponsors dollar for dollar up to \$35,000. Early sponsors are the Granite State Center for Independent Living and the John Vance Fund through the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation; Mascoma Savings Bank; Ledyard National Bank; Colby & Tobiasson; West Lebanon Congregational Church; Stone House Farm Fund; Lebanon Riverside Rotary; Norm Levy; and Ben & Jerry's Foundation.

—Bill Neukomm, Executive Director

My home has been much warmer since my windows were covered and the bay window roof repaired. The kindness and generosity of COVER and its' people are testimony to what is good in the world!

—Homeowner



The Art of Serving

I have been a volunteer with COVER for over ten years. I've been incredibly lucky to work for the last six years on the COVER Board of Directors with a passionate and talented group of staff and board members. Together we work to honor the mission of COVER and ensure its vibrant and secure future. I've also been lucky to work with a handful of homeowners over the years on making their homes warmer, safer, or drier.

Years ago, as a team leader at Hypertherm, I started to encourage my whole team to participate in COVER project days. There was no better way to create a shared understanding of each other, our community, and what matters in the world. Teams that serve together, perform together. In fact, Hypertherm has a long-standing commitment to fill a home repair project day once a month.

Most recently, on a snowy day in March, I participated in a home repair project with two other Associates from Hypertherm, Cheryl Johnson and Joe Ciambra.

We served with Jay Mead from the COVER Home Repair Team and the homeowner, Norma. Norma is an incredible woman who has survived years of medical set-backs, has an extensive button collection displayed on gorgeous artistically curated cards of which she is immensely proud, and has a very naughty sense of humor (she attributes it to her long-haul truck driving years)! Norma now has a roof over the entrance to her home that will keep the icicles from forming over and blocking her door and will allow her safer footing in the winter.

I am so grateful for the opportunities I have had to volunteer with COVER on the board, on job sites, and in the ReCOVER store. COVER makes our region stronger by connecting us to each other and to the real role we all play in fostering hope and building community.

—Jenny Levy, COVER Board Member



Community



A community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other's lives. It is the knowledge that people have of each other, their concern for each other, their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves.

— Wendell Berry



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

158 S. Main Street
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www.coverhomerepair.org

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

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158 S. Main Street
White River Junction, VT 05001



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COVER Home Repair & The ReCOVER Store

COVER Home Repair by the Numbers

- 98--home repair projects finished in 2016, largest number ever!
- 14--roofs replaced.
- 20--accessibility ramps built.
- 68--comprehensive weatherization jobs completed – saving many gallons of fuel per job.
- 181-- volunteer service days coordinated.
- 3430--volunteer hours in home repair, weatherization, and in the ReCOVER store.
- 30%--increase in ReCOVER Store sales over last year.

COVERing All of Our Bases

Occasionally, we have the joy of being able to return to a homeowner for several projects. This year, Mel and Jayne, among others, have hosted us for both a weatherization and a home repair.

Mel and Jayne's home was drafty, and COVER took a team in December to weatherize the home. Jay and I led a team of volunteers from a few local businesses to complete a full day of installing weatherization supplies: reusable window kits on each window, a water heater blanket, pipe insulation, a basement vapor barrier, and air-sealing everywhere. Seeing daylight through their stone foundation was a big issue. Our efforts throughout the home meant that we made a 30% improvement in the amount of air leaks. This was one of our most dramatic successes of the season; at the end of the day, Mel and Jayne heard their furnace take a break for the first time in weeks. They reported later that their comfort in their home significantly improved and the cost of their energy bills went down.

Of course, COVER's focus on building

community was present that day; Mel spent the day sharing stories of his life adventures, wonderfully corny jokes, and bad puns. He and I even discovered a shared experience in a small town in Southern Iowa—a burger at the local hangout! Of course, he made us a delicious meal of classic Iowan goulash, appreciated by all and accompanied by more captivating stories.

This spring, we've been able to return to reroof their porch, which had been ice-dammed and water-damaged. Dartmouth student volunteer Eleni wrote about her experience with COVER and Mel and Jayne that day:

"COVER team leader Jay, another volunteer, and I worked together to patch up a leaky roof for a wonderful couple Mel and Jayne who happily shared their own stories over a delicious home-cooked meal. I find myself envious of such a wealth of connection; volunteering for COVER has been the most rewarding and satisfying experience of my college years."

Eleni and her co-ed fraternity Phi Tau have signed up to volunteer again very soon.

Working with Mel and Jayne this year at two projects has been delightful, and is truly representative of COVER's mission to foster hope and build community.

—Heidi Underbakke,
COVER Americorps Member



Mel and volunteers at lunch

Reflections from a New E.D.

Never underestimate the power of goodwill. Every week we see generous and enthusiastic actions by volunteers, homeowners, donors, and ReCOVER store shoppers that help foster hope and build community in the Upper Valley:

- **George Perley** eagerly dug post holes, poured concrete footings, and prepared for five workdays of volunteers from the West Lebanon Congregational Church, Hypertherm, East Wheelock Housing staff, and others to build a new roof over his 91 year old mother Betty's home.
- **Dave Sherman**, COVER's volunteer Small Projects Coordinator, worked on a plumbing project with a homeowner in White River Junction who had a number of underlying plumbing issues. A local contractor offered to free up all the drains at no charge because her husband was a veteran.
- **Betsy Sylvester** supported COVER's mission with annual donations for 16 years until her passing in 2015. Last fall, COVER received a substantial and unexpected donation from her estate.
- **Reggie Tatro** shops in the store every week and has rebuilt his older home



almost entirely from ReCOVER Store purchases. He even adds a small donation on top of each purchase he makes.

- **The COVER Home Repair team and the ReCOVER Store team and COVER Board members** provide tireless effort to make COVER what it is – something very special. They work when the sun shines and sometimes when it rains. They have made a real difference in the lives of many people and have set a high standard of dedication. Thanks to you all.

This is a very short sample from a very long list. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with such a generous community and dedicated staff.

—Bill Neukomm,
Executive Director

I have been trying to get this roof fixed for three years and couldn't get help for one reason or another. Then my neighbors found your organization. You were my last resort. I knew my roof wouldn't last much longer before part of it would fall in. When that happened, I would be out of a home! I can't thank you enough for what you've done for me! Nor could I ever repay you. I'm just glad that God put people like your volunteers on this earth to help people like me! Thank you again for your help!

—Homeowner

Springtime at The ReCOVER Store

What's new in the ReCover Store this spring? We've had a couple of successful spring sales; many new customers have visited; more people have donated more items to the store; and more volunteers have helped in the store than ever before.

This has all helped grow store sales to a new level: March was the highest month ever generating over \$22,000 in sales. All net proceeds go to support the home repair program. Our best selling items are home furnishings including couches, chairs, dressers, and tables; kitchen and bathroom cabinets and vanities; appliances including stoves, refrigerators, washers, driers, and dishwashers; and all kinds of building materials including windows and doors. Follow us on Facebook to see new items pictured every week. Remember, 'things are always changing at the ReCOVER Store!'

Volunteers have made a huge difference in the store. In March, they donated over 135 hours to help with donation pick-ups, repairing furniture, pricing, merchandising, helping with sales, and cleaning. Special thanks to our growing corps of regular volunteers!

—Mitch Ross, ReCOVER Store Assistant Manager

Facelift Planned for the ReCOVER Store

Thanks to the generosity of the Byrne Foundation, COVER has engaged a local architectural firm, Smith and Vansant, to help develop a master plan for the COVER Home Repair building at 158 South Main St. Our first priority is to redesign the exterior of the building to make it more obvious that we have a store here by improving the store signage and front entrance for customers. With more and more new customers coming to the store, we want the store to be easier to find!

In addition, we are planning to add a permanent loading dock on the parking lot side of the building. Temporarily, we have donations and people coming in and out of the same door. This change will improve our efficiency in handling ever increasing amounts of merchandise.

We are also designing these changes so that they can be completed with as much volunteer labor as possible. In addition to support from the Byrne Foundation, a local builder, Colby and Tobiason, has pledged to donate a significant amount of his professional crew to help with the renovations.

—Bill Neukomm, Executive Director

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!



Weatherization Works!

We just wrapped up the winter months weatherizing 68 homes in the Upper Valley. Using a blower door helps locate the drafts and measure how effectively we are sealing homes from cold air drafts. Volunteers donated over 500 hours to help install door and window sweeps, seal attic hatches and bulkheads, foam the box sills, and caulk other leaks. Weatherizing your home not only makes it much warmer but saves heating fuel as well.

Reducing Your Electric Bill:

A quick and easy way to reduce your electric bill is to change your old, incandescent bulbs to the new LED bulbs. A 60 watt incandescent bulb can be replaced with a 9 watt LED bulb that emits just as much light. The cost of LED bulbs has come down dramatically and they last for over 20 years. Efficiency

Time to Give

Our family has supported COVER financially for many years but when I retired I realized I also had time to offer. For the last two years I've volunteered with the COVER Home Repair and Weatherization Program. At first I was concerned that my skill level would not be sufficient; however, I quickly discovered that COVER's experienced crew provides the on-site help and instruction that makes each project work. No matter what your skill level, your time is well appreciated. The other plus is the wide variety of fellow volunteers that you get to work with - you make friends even if for a day. There is a definite spirit which permeates all of the projects I've



Vermont has bulbs for as little as 95 cents through local retailers:
www.encyvermont.com.

New Hampshire's energy conservation program also offers discount deals on LED bulbs: www.nhsaves.com

By volunteering on a COVER weatherization, you can learn a lot about how to weatherize your own home and reduce your electricity consumption.

—Heidi Underbakke,
Americorps Member



participated in. The sense that our work provides a very valuable community service and that Upper Valley residents are well served by what COVER can offer. Each project is a unique and rewarding volunteer experience for me. I encourage others who are curious to sign up. I suspect you will find it as enriching as I have.

—Roger Maynard,
Frequent COVER volunteer