



...The Rest of the Story

Storytelling is key to any organization. Many corporations spend millions of marketing dollars finding out what their story should be. Often we get asked how we measure our success and I'd like to take a moment to share my current answer with you.



We live in a society obsessed with numbers and measuring output. There is a strong case to be made for tracking productivity. This is especially true when we are stewards of the philanthropic generosity of our community. However, it is too easy to count *output* rather than *outcomes*, which really drive the mission. At COVER, we strive to measure the RIGHT things not just the EASY things. Here are some **numbers** that we've tracked over the past year:

- We completed 80 weatherization projects this winter with low income homeowners.
- We installed 50% more window kits and door kits — resulting in substantially higher quality air sealing.
- Our post-weatherization testing showed preliminary results of between 15% and 27% improvement in the weather tightness of the homes. (We're still collecting data for our sample.)
- We completed 64 home repair projects in 2012 — roofs, ramps, structural repairs etc.

- Eight of these were Irene-related rebuilds.
- We supported an additional 10 homeowners with grants and technical assistance in their Irene rebuilding.
- COVER received \$263,314 in support to respond to Tropical Storm Irene. Of this, we used \$50,000 for Irene-related staff salaries, (\$37,000 for field staff salaries and \$13,000 for support staff salaries.) The entire balance (\$213,314) was spent as direct grants and materials for homeowners affected by Irene.
- We have a pool of 420 volunteers who did over 4500 hours of work last year. This only counts some of the Irene-related work facilitated by COVER.
- COVER's Homeowner Education Program, now in its third year, has offered over 75 classes in topics such as Basic and Intermediate Carpentry, Cabinet Making, Furniture Refinishing, Basic Plumbing and Tiling, Roofing, Framing, Bicycle Repair, and Car Maintenance.
- Over 250 people have taken classes as part of our Education Program.
- We've just received a grant to continue our Education Program for another year.
- The ReCover Store sold \$163,000 in recycled and reusable goods in 2012 — a 15% increase over 2011!

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"I am very thankful for you. I would not have had the floor repaired due to lack of money. Now I feel that we can walk in the hallway safely."

—COVER Home Owner

What's Up With Weatherization?

Here at COVER we are winding down our very successful 2012-2013 Weatherization season. Home owners, volunteers and staff installed close to 500 window kits, air sealed over 55 doors, and replaced 7 old doors with new ones.

We started off the season by returning to homes that we weatherized last year and helping home owners rehang their window plastic. Some of the homes we returned to had lost the window trim adhesive for the tracks that hold the plastic in place. To address this problem and to increase the overall longevity of the kits we have started stapling down the tracks. At COVER we are always looking to improve the quality of our work.

With the hard work of home owners and volunteers we have been able expand our program to include the air sealing of **all** the windows and doors in homes. We have installed as many as 35 window kits and air sealed 5 doors in a single home.

We started a new small step this year of installing one way valves on dryer vents.

Often the flapper over the 4 inch hole to the outside doesn't close well, allowing a 4 inch hole of cold air to pour into a home. Brrrrr. By installing a one way valve, the hole closes when the dryer is off and opens when the dryer is running.

This is our first year of performing blower door tests. Snow Dog Construction of Norwich generously lent us their Blower Door. Thank you Michael Goetinck! A blower door test quantifies how drafty a home is. If we test a home before and after the weatherization work, the difference between those measurements tells us how effective our efforts have been. At one home we saw a 27.5% reduction in the draftiness. That means the homeowner, Irene, will need to buy less heating fuel. Yipeee!

Next season we are looking into adding a light bulb exchange, low flow shower heads, and smoke/ carbon monoxide detectors. Stay tuned. Thank you for all the work!

Diane Reinhardt
Weatherization Director



A completed weatherization/insulation project.

Learn Something New!

Have you ever had a broken pipe, a leaking faucet, a clogged sink, or a broken toilet, and weren't quite sure how to fix the problem? Have you ever wished you could build something – a cabinet, a chair, a wall – but just don't have the skills? Do you feel a little bit intimidated using power tools and wish you could practice using them in a safe, supportive, and fun environment? Do you long to have the skill sets and the confidence to tackle those do-it-yourself projects you've been putting off? If you answered yes to any of the above questions, we'd love to see you in one of our classes!



COVER classes are offered in a variety of home repair, building, carpentry, and other topics. All are welcome – whether an experienced Do-It-Yourselfer, or a beginner who has never swung a hammer. There are classes on Saturday mornings and on weekday evenings. Some are held at the COVER shop while



others are held in a participant's home in order to work on a "real-life" project. Classes are hands-on, informative, and most of all, fun! Mistakes are expected as part of learning, questions are answered in a helpful manner, and in many classes participants walk away with an item they've built with their own hands. All classes are offered on a sliding scale and financial aid is available. We welcome new ideas for class topics and we are constantly seeking new teachers willing and able to share their skills with community members. If you would like to take, teach, or suggest a class, please contact Nancy Theriault, Education Program Director at 802.296.7241 x103 or nancycyt@coverhomerepair.org.

Spring is here! What better time to learn some new skills, make some new friends, and be ready (and able) to tackle projects around your home? Check out our website for the spring schedule!

Nancy Theriault
Education Program Director

SPRING CLASSES

BASIC ROOFING

Saturday, May 11; 9-12

Location: COVER Home Repair, 158 South Main St.

BICYCLE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

Tuesday, May 14; 6-9p.m.

Location: The Bicycle Hub, Rt. 5, Norwich, VT

BASIC ELECTRICITY FOR THE HOMEOWNER

Saturday, May 18, 9-Noon

Location: COVER Home Repair, 158 South Main St.

BASIC CAR MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

Saturday, June 1, 9-Noon

Location: COVER Home Repair, 158 South Main St.

INTRODUCTION TO SOLAR FOR THE HOME

Wednesdays, June 5 & 12, 6-8 pm

Location: COVER Home Repair, 158 South Main St.

LASAGNA GARDENING

Saturday, June 15, 9-Noon

Location: TBA

SMALL ENGINE REPAIR

Wednesday, June 22, 6-9 pm

Location: COVER Home Repair, 158 South Main St.

Cost for all classes: \$20-\$40 Sliding scale.
Financial aid available.

Check out our website for more spring schedule details!

Volunteering for the Long Haul

Volunteer engagement is vital to COVER and we sustain our volunteer program by building relationships. The volunteer pool at COVER is a diverse blend of people who come to us through different avenues and for different reasons.

Rebecca Lovejoy, a clinical psychologist from Lyme, is a wonderful example. She is a current COVER board member and has been a very active volunteer for the past six years, advocating for our organization in her broader community. I met Rebecca in 2007 when she contacted COVER about volunteer opportunities. We quickly realized that COVER and Rebecca would be a good match. She ended up volunteering regularly in the ReCover Store for the next three years where her smiling face and caring spirit was always uplifting. In 2010 she volunteered to work on a handicap ramp construction project, reaching out and engaging other residents through her hometown listserv and church community. Happily for us, Rebecca found her way to COVER, discovered a rewarding volunteer experience, and has made it a regular part of her life.

Like Rebecca, a percentage of volunteers come to COVER on their own - high school, college, graduate and medical school students; people taking breaks from school or in transition between jobs; people new to the area or retired; individuals, couples, or parents with their teenage children. In addition to individual volunteers, COVER is fortunate to work regularly with groups who engage in service through their employers, civic organizations, spiritual associations, or schools. COVER has developed strong partnerships with businesses such as Hypertherm, TomTom, and Kendal - local companies committed to regularly connecting employees with our work through granted Community Service Time. We are proud to participate in making service a part of the work culture.

We recognize that we have an opportunity to empower volunteers to build community through their experiences with COVER. This building of community happens while connecting with others in a new place, teaching and learning new skills, helping a customer in the store, knowing you are part of making someone's home safe, warm, and dry, or just working hard and having fun. We do like to have fun at COVER! Whether an individual or part of a group, people return to volunteer repeatedly because it adds something positive to their lives. Our vision is to build a supportive community where volunteers and homeowners share mutual caring and respect.

The staff at COVER works to build long-term relationships with volunteers, appreciating that volunteering fits into people's lives in different ways. Balancing these diverse relationships is part of what makes our programs sustainable. We'd love to have you volunteer at COVER and bring a friend! Please call me at 802. 296.7241 x104 or email sarahb@coverhomerepair.org.

Sarah Blum
Volunteer Coordinator



Looking Back



The idea for COVER was partially conceived over dinner at Peter Christian's Tavern in Hanover in 1998. Central to our original plan was to

use salvaged building materials whenever possible from construction and demolition sites. Our first workshop was in Enfield, NH on the second floor of a barn across from what is now Mickey's Roadside Café. We stored donated materials everywhere and anywhere, borrowed ladders from Home Partners, and loaded everything on top of Simon Dennis' station wagon for the first year. In our second year we had three staff members, all of whom worked in the office for three days a week and on a job site for two days.

The purchase of the former Catamount Brewery building in WRJ in 2001 allowed us to expand the amount and type of donated materials and items we could accept from local contractors, carpenters and home owners. The vision for the ReCover Store was inspired by the Listen Community Services thrift stores and ReCycle North(now ReSource) in Burlington. Rhona Dallison, with her consulting knowledge, passion for re-use, infectious sense of humor and generosity, nurtured this vision to reality. Rhona introduced Hugh MacArthur, our current Home Repair Director, to COVER when he came in search of window screens for a drying rack. Hugh got his screens and we got Hugh!

I did my first roof project as part of a volunteer group when I was 16. I had no idea that there would be any more, let alone many more. I learned the "routine" of a home repair job soon.

Preparing for a COVER work day involves calculating and gathering needed materials, arranging lunch, recruiting volunteers,

accounting for the weather, making sure everyone has directions, and thinking through the division and explanation of tasks. Work leaders and crew members arrive at the job site with hopes and... expectations. Along with others, I hope to meet a need, to do a good job, perhaps make a new friend, and feel appreciated by the people I am there to help.

I climb out of the van and begin unloading materials, feeling grateful that I have a day to give, skills to offer, access to materials and an able body needed to help. Preparation seems a distant idea when I walk through the front door of the home and there is no open floor space to set down a tool box or access the windows we plan to weatherize. Expectations diminish when it becomes clear that the piles of various items on the floor provide a sense of security to the home owner and cannot be moved without causing distress. I realize that my expectations must change and my role must shift. The tools and materials go back in the van for the following day. I sit down with the home owner and we decide which window we might clear a path to first. Her age restricts her from bending down so she uses her "grabber" to pick up items from the floor for consideration. I begin to appreciate her courage in welcoming us through her front door, and wonder how it might have felt for her to see the COVER van pull into the driveway. I recognize my ability to be patient when it's really needed, and I'm glad for that, but it feels hard to let go of all I had planned for this day; all that I had prepared for, expected and hoped.

This is the wonderful opportunity offered by a COVER work site. As I have done, it has been fun to watch others come to COVER for various reasons and in various ways, and to discover that it's a "home" for them.

Nancy Bloomfield
*Co-Founder of COVER,
Volunteer, Retiring Board Member (6 years)*

Passionate About COVER



In 1999, five years after moving to the Upper Valley, I had taken a new position at DHMC and ended five years of involvement on the Board

of Directors for a new local non-profit. I was looking for another meaningful volunteer involvement and an avenue to meet more people in the Upper Valley. An edition of "The Dartmouth" provided interesting information about a new component of Tri-County Community Action Program called COVER Home Repair. This would enable both my husband and me to volunteer together, meet other volunteers, learn new skills as well as learn more about this place called the Upper Valley.

I volunteered for my first work site 14 years ago along with Simon Dennis and Nancy Bloomfield and have never ended my volunteering with COVER Home Repair. I now also volunteer at the ReCover Store. Needless to say, I am passionate about COVER. Its mission says it all for me. It doesn't end with "repairing homes," but continues on a daily basis in my life with "fostering hope and building community," both in figuring out what this really means and how to live it.

COVER provides me with many and varied opportunities to address issues of social justice, to really practice the commandment to love my neighbor, and to utilize my social work skills and values despite the fact that I am now retired professionally. COVER has been my home away from home. I have made many wonderful long term friendships, had lots

of fun, shed a few tears and always found something to challenge me to stretch even further.

I am passionate about COVER — passionate about the staff, my fellow board members, other volunteers I have worked with and the homeowners with whom we work. I am appreciative of the opportunity they afford me, namely, to be a part of this wonderful organization and to feel at home there.

There are many experiences that have made a vivid and lasting impression on me but the memories of these I identify below still bring tears to my eyes.

- The day that the COVER Home Repair sign Nancy and I worked on for three months was placed on the side of the COVER building in White River Junction.
- The many times I have stood in a circle with other COVER volunteers in the home of a client and listened to Hugh MacArthur tell the COVER story as we introduced ourselves to the home owner and each other before the workday began.
- The late fall afternoon I stood and watched the last piece of a home donated to COVER, cut into five pieces by volunteers, be driven away by crane and flatbed to later be put back together and transported to White River Junction to become a home for a family in need.
- Sitting on a two story home roof top in West Lebanon with Hugh and other volunteers, raising our hammers and saying "We did it!" The roof was almost done. I showed my picture in the COVER Page to everyone.

I am passionate about COVER — passionate about the staff, my fellow board members, other volunteers I have worked with and the homeowners with whom we work.

Rosemary Affeldt
Initial Advisory Board (2 years)
Home Repair & ReCover Store Volunteer (Ongoing)
Retiring Board Member (6 years)

"It was such a fun day. I thought the whole thing was super well organized and there was tons of work so I always felt like my time was well utilized."

— COVER Home Repair Volunteer

In and Out the Door

We are often asked from where our merchandise comes. With such a variety of goods from many sources, I thought it might be a good idea to let everyone know about our merchandise, our donors and how we acquire these items.

First, all the merchandise at the ReCover Store is donated. We do not purchase items, nor do we trade for them. All donations are tax deductible, so we'll provide a receipt for a deduction on the donor's tax bill.

Donors drop off items at the store. Occasionally a drop off is not possible so we send our pick-up vehicle to get the item(s), but due to the cost involved with pick-ups, we encourage folks to drop off the items. Our truck has a lift-gate, enabling us to pick up heavy items such as woodstoves, washing machines, and refrigerators. Sometimes, a large or heavy item may be in a location difficult to access and, as we are not professional movers, we may not be able to remove it.

Most of our merchandise comes from area homeowners. Some are cleaning out a basement or attic, consolidating households, or moving and can't take everything with them. No matter the situation, we are happy to take good, saleable merchandise.

Part of our mission here at the ReCover Store is to keep as much good, useable material as possible out of the landfill. It is not uncommon for someone to pull in our lot with a trailer or truckload of "stuff" and say, "I'm on my way to the dump. If there is anything here you'd like, you're welcome to it." We love when this happens, as there is invariably an item or two (or ten) that we can salvage, use or sell.

We can't keep everything, though. Some items such as old toilets, bathroom sinks, single pane windows, box springs and stained mattresses are not something we can sell or donate. Occasionally, someone may be offended that we turn down an item, but in order to hold down our

disposal costs, we need to be selective in what we accept.

Area businesses and organizations donate a great deal to our store. A business may be moving and call us to pick up their extra office furniture. A paint or hardware store may have inventory they no longer want, and are happy to donate. Area stores selling tile, rugs, and furniture have also made donations. Motels have called with furniture and mattress donations.



Our recent 6th Annual Auction & Raffle. Standing room only!

Who buys the merchandise that comes through the store? It could be a person opening a new business who needs a desk, file cabinet, and office chair. It could be a neighbor looking to remodel his or her kitchen, who finds a set of cabinets that makes a remodel affordable. It could be a college student looking for a sofa for his first apartment or someone long planning to build her dream home who finds the windows, doors, and cabinets here that allow that home to be built within her budget. People from all walks of life find the store an affordable, practical, and fun shopping alternative.

Looking at the great merchandise in the store is a wonderful reminder of how generous our Upper Valley neighbors are. We at COVER and the ReCover Store are grateful that you have chosen us for your donations. In turn, we try to put those items to the best possible use in our efforts to strengthen our community.

Frank Orłowski
ReCover Store Manager



Dartmouth student volunteers at a recent roofing job.



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.

Editor: Ham Gillett
Design: Tiger Bridge Graphics

158 S. Main Street
White River Junction
Vermont, 05001
(802) 296-7241
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
158 S. Main Street
White River Junction, VT 05001



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COVER Home Repair & The ReCover Store

**COVER Annual
Benefit Concert
TOOTS AND
THE MAYTALS**
With Special Guest
Anders Osborne
Sunday, May 26th
Lebanon Opera House
For tickets call
603-448-0400, or visit
www.lebanonoperahouse.org

Volunteer! 802.296.7241 x104
Donate! 802.296.7241 x114
Assistance! 802.296.7241 x105

The ReCover Store is now open Mondays 10-2.
Our totally new website will be up and running soon.
Check it out! www.coverhomerepair.org

THE REST continued from page 1

- The Store Assistance Program provided \$8000 in goods to customers referred to us by qualified agencies like The Haven, WISE, the Visiting Nurses Association and others.
- We installed a new roof at COVER that saved us 10% over last year's heating bill and 34% over the winter two years ago.

These are very important numbers that demonstrate what COVER Home Repair and the ReCover Store do day in and day out, all year long. However, they miss other critically important parts of the COVER experience that aren't really measurable. These parts show up in stories that capture the human interaction:

COVER had been doing outreach in Fairlee and won the cooperation of the Town Clerk, who recommended, for home weatherization, an elderly woman living with her dog in a 1950's home. A long-time volunteer signed up for the day and brought along a new volunteer. Most of our weatherization projects are only half-day, so we don't ask the host to supply

lunch (even if they're able.) In this case, the homeowner absolutely insisted on providing a full lunch with pie for dessert. Lunch was a talkative, joyful affair. The homeowner, the two volunteers, and COVER's Weatherization Director installed: 8 window kits, 3 door kits, sealed the basement bulkhead and installed a dryer vent valve. The pre-project and post-project blower door test revealed a 27% reduction in ACH (air-changes per hour)— a real savings for the homeowner.

This is a wonderful example of the whole of COVER's mission — "Repairing Homes and Building Community." At COVER, we strive to create a place of fellowship where everyone (staff, volunteer, homeowner, store customer, and donor) experiences moments of real human connection; where we know ourselves as powerful enough to help each other out as well as vulnerable enough to really see each other. It just happens as part of a good day's work.

Rob Schultz
Executive Director