



THE COVER PAGE

REPAIRING HOMES AND
BUILDING COMMUNITY

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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In all these cases, COVER staff connects people in the community who have a passion for helping their neighbors, who understand that we are really one whole community when we work together.

One critical ingredient of the COVER experience often goes unspoken. It may be the homeowner who takes the biggest risk of all — perhaps the one requiring the greatest courage — that of asking, for assistance. Without homeowners’ willingness to invite us into their homes, the opportunity for breaking down the isolation, for building up our experience of being “in this together” wouldn’t happen.

“Corps of Volunteers Effecting Reuse and Repair” (COVER) is a pretty big mouthful to explain to someone new to COVER’s mission and work. So I am delighted when I meet someone who intuitively understands our work and reflects it back to me in a new way.

So — yes, COVER is about helping people help people — and the lines between the helper and the helped are wonderfully blended together.

I met two COVER donors at a memorial service this summer. This couple has been very generous in supporting COVER’s work with Irene and our annual fund, but I hadn’t had a chance to get to know them yet. The event wasn’t the place for a long talk, but I said I thought we should get together to discuss COVER sometime. His response was: “Oh, that would be nice but we’re pretty sure we get it — **COVER helps people help other people.**”

We hope you can be part of the circle of People helping People at COVER this fall. Please sign up to volunteer or give generously.

It is amazing how much that statement captures what the Home Repair and ReCover Store are doing every day.

Rob Schultz
Executive Director



- Home Repair Volunteers
- ReCover Store Donors
- Weatherization Volunteers
- ReCover Store Volunteers
- Financial Donors



“...I have done a lot for seniors and I know how good it feels to give, but I couldn’t begin to tell you all how great it feels to be helped when you really need it and have nowhere to turn. I truly thank COVER and each and every one of the staff & volunteers. You were all just great!”

— COVER Host Family Member

COVER With No Volunteers = No COVER

Volunteers donated close to **4500** hours on job sites in the last year. That doesn't even include ReCover Store volunteers or our dedicated Board of Directors.

Here are photos of just a few of our volunteer crews with homeowners and COVER home repair staff:



When COVER shows up with tools, material and a bunch of volunteers, some good things happen quickly. The wheel chair ramp that extends from front door to driveway? Done! The hazardous, drafty front door? Weather proofed and fixed! This work pays such a positive dividend day after day for the homeowner. The fact that volunteers can learn and apply these lessons to their own homes is pretty cool too. — Harrison Drinkwater, Volunteer since 2008



Every time I volunteer on a COVER project I meet interesting people, learn something new about construction, get to help the homeowner and get some much-needed exercise. It's a win for everyone involved. — Dave Sherman, Volunteer since 2009



COVER NEEDS YOU!!! COVER WANTS YOU!! EVERY WEEKEND!

Work for a day. Work for a weekend. You will never regret it.

Give a day in honor or in memory of someone you love. The holidays are coming!

Celebrate your birthday with friends on a job site!

Call Sarah Blum at 802.296.7241 x104.

“This store is REALLY cool!!”

An eight year old boy was overheard saying this on his first visit to the ReCover Store. We always enjoy greeting new customers and we particularly enjoy overhearing comments from first time visitors. Here are a few others:

Oh my god! Martha! They have a Dyson vacuum cleaner!!

Holy cow! Look at all this stuff!

Wow!...WOW!!...Wow, paint, too!!

I find stores like this to be an absolute treasure trove. Look at this set of pans!

This place is cool. It's like sensory overload. It looks like Dad's garage. I'm in love with this place!

We have tentatively scheduled our 7th Annual ReCover Store Auction and Raffle for Saturday, April 5th. Since last April we've been secretly stashing away donated items large and small for this great event. Here is a photo from the 6th Annual to whet your appetite!



Restore and Reuse That Old Furniture

By Mary Ellen Treadway

We are fortunate to have a continual source of wonderful items donated to the ReCover Store. My favorites are the old furniture pieces that have seen better times. A typical piece has a dull, dry, scratched look, with a few white water rings on it, and the finish flaking off. Paint specks from reckless repainting of walls and ceilings have dried on the wood surface. These pieces often smell musty, and may have been in a barn or basement for years.

Many folks think that sanding and refinishing are the only ways to restore old pieces when, in fact, stripping and refinishing is a time consuming process and can devalue older furniture. Often, no extreme measures need be taken to nourish wood and restore its beauty.

The first step is to clean the furniture. Begin by removing the water-soluble dirt using Murphy's Oil Soap, or a mild dish detergent and water. Use a soft cloth to rub the grime from the wood with the soapy solution. Use the liquid sparingly - too much water can soak in and damage the wood. Quickly dry the area with a clean rag. If the water-based solution is not getting all of the dirt and grime off, try using a solvent such as mineral spirits.

When the furniture is dry, check for loose joints or wobbly legs. Yellow carpenter's glue applied with a small artist's paintbrush or a Q-tip can be used to tighten up the joints. If you clamp the piece, be sure to place a cloth or piece of cardboard between the clamp and the wood to prevent denting and warring. Let the glue dry overnight for maximum effect.

The last step is to apply orange beeswax oil directly on a piece of 0000 (extra fine) steel wool (or 600 grit sandpaper). Rub the oil in with the steel wool in the direction of the wood grain. A razor blade comes in handy at this point to scrape off the paint specks, dried candle wax etc. Keep adding small amounts of oil and rubbing with the steel wool until the desired look is achieved. Let it set for ten minutes or so, then wipe with a dry soft cloth such as an old tee shirt. The more you buff, the better it will look.

Orange beeswax oil will remove years of dirt, grime, mildew and mold from old furniture. You can find it at many antique and woodworking shops. Wood needs moisture and nourishment and should be oiled approximately every six months.

Good luck! 

Reflections from Diane Reinhardt, Weatherization Director

When I was eight years old my mom and dad took a vacation without me and my three siblings. At the time, I didn't understand why we couldn't come but as a mother of teenage daughters I now wonder why they didn't do it more often. Maybe it was how this trip turned out that kept them from doing it a second time.


On the second day of a week-long trip out in the wilds of the Boundary Waters in northern Minnesota my mom, while carrying an armload of firewood, tripped and fell hard. She shattered her left elbow. The journey to the closest hospital took eight hours traveling by canoe, motor boat, small plane and ambulance all on just two aspirin.

Her recovery was long and slow. All of our neighbors on Cedar Lane worked out who would cook what and when. I took it for granted how much our neighbors helped take care of my family during this hard time because that was just the way it was. When Mrs. Eggman went into labor and her husband was on the road, she called our house and my Dad drove her to the hospital while my mom tucked in her two boys on our couch for the rest of the night. Hard times happened and we got through with



help from our neighbors and family. We couldn't always help the ones who helped us, so we just helped someone else the next time it was needed.

I love COVER because it embodies this belief that we are all one community. We help those who need our help and have faith that when we need help it will be given. When I am working side by side with a home owner I am working side by side with a neighbor. This home owner may be a single mom watching a friend's kid so they can go to work. It may be a middle aged man with a chronic health problem which means he can't work, but he collects walkers, canes and wheelchairs that he donates to the Bugbee Senior Center. We are all neighbors and we are all in this together.

We and our neighbors weatherized 20 homes in October. We're booked through November and are now scheduling December appointments. Please call Gail Guernsey at 802-296-7241 x105 if you're interested in having COVER weatherize your home. **Last heating season our work saved an estimated 5,011.76 gallons of heating fuel (63.44 gal./household), \$17,992.22 in heating costs, and 51.26 metric tons of CO2!** 

Stories From COVER's Board

COVER's Board of Directors is critical to our success and our ability to deliver on our mission. They are wonderful people who know COVER well. In addition to their governance role, every one of them donates both time and money to keeping COVER strong. You'll find them on jobsites, on the floor of the ReCover Store, sharing news of COVER with businesses, civic groups and faith communities, and, of course, in the conference room at COVER.


We asked them a number of questions to understand their relationship to COVER. Here are their answers to two of those questions:

1. Why did you say "yes" when you were asked to serve on the board?

I wanted to give back to COVER and the community; To quote Eleanor Roosevelt "Every day do something that scares you"; I wanted to be part of the COVER community; I was flattered to be asked to join the Advisory Board. I didn't know much about our function on the board but learned along the way; I wanted to give back; I really wanted to be on the board; I was looking for a way to give back after a life of many blessings; I had gained a lot of experience working on job sites with Hugh and other volunteers. I was excited to see COVER from a broader perspective and influence the organization beyond hammering a nail on a worksite; This is an amazing organization fulfilling a unique and powerful mission in our community. Keeping people healthy, happy, secure, and warm in their homes and within their community is something to which I am thrilled to be able to contribute.

2. What's the best item you ever bought from the store?

Our much-used coffee table from the auction last year. It was meant to be in our living room!; Hot glue gun; A gorgeous desk!; Large plate glass windows for my studio. I couldn't have afforded them anywhere else; A coffee table; A pedestal sink; Kitchen drawers and Formica countertop for a friend's kitchen that is now my kitchen; An antique tool box that serves as a side table. It's worn and wonderful.

Many thanks to COVER's Board for walking the walk and for helping keep volunteers and homeowners working together in the Upper Valley. 

Transitions

Nancy Theriault, COVER Education Director, moved on in July to pursue a Master's degree in counseling. Nancy had served in several capacities at COVER, but her creative institution of practical and whimsical classes for the masses has left an indelible mark on many. We feel certain that Nancy will continue to leave her indelible mark wherever she goes. We thank her and wish her all good things.

We have recently bid farewell to our trusty part time bookkeeper, Ilene Venizelos, who has helped keep COVER in line for the past year and a half through a difficult transition due to the loss of our beloved Business Manager, Nina Seaman. Ilene is relocating out of state and setting off on

new adventures. We send her off with thanks and "warm hugs" – the same way she signed every email.

Andy Petersen is settling in and will be replacing Ilene as our new part time Finance Manager. After retiring from a life of financial management and accounting, Andy has decided he needs more to do. COVER is happy to have him, and we recognize already that his mind and his heart are in the right place.

Hugh MacArthur, masterful and humble Home Repair Director of approximately eight years, will relinquish his title (and some of his work load) on December 31st

Transitions continued on page 6

Hugh MacArthur Changes Roles and Reflects on COVER




When I started with COVER in 2006, one of the first projects I ran was in Newbury, Vermont, repairing skirting on a mobile home. The crew was made up of about eight male students and one staff member from the Oliverian School in Pike, NH. These students had run into trouble in the regular school system and were a pretty tough bunch to direct and keep focused. After a while, I figured out that the dynamic was similar to a pack of wolves where all members take their cues from one Alpha male. Once I determined who this was I engaged with him and got him going on task. The rest followed along and the work proceeded smoothly. At the end of the day we had a pleased homeowner and fulfilled students.

This was one of my first tastes of the very important role paying attention to the community process plays in bringing together the various participants in a COVER project. Over the years since I have seen this played out over and over

again. It can be a small project with one volunteer and a single homeowner, or a big project with a dozen volunteers and a homeowner's family and friends pitching in. It can be a household socially isolated, a home that is environmentally challenging, or a household that is clearly well supported and cared for. This process of creating a mini community for a day is at the center of a successful COVER project.

As I contemplate the large change in my role here at COVER from full-time Home Repair Director to 1/3 time Home Repair Project Leader, I know that this process is a large part of what feeds me. In my new role I want very much to continue to help relationships develop and friendships grow. The main focus of my work — selecting, preparing for, and leading projects — will allow me, in new and deeper ways, to use what I have learned about the wide variety of human experience since starting at COVER.


There is so much to learn here and so many ways to engage in service. The work of community building in the Home Repair Program involves building bridges with homeowners, volunteers, staff members, other service agencies, suppliers, contractors and whoever else we meet. It also means that each person gives and receives, we all get something that we need; we are all equals at the table. As I look to the coming year, my aspiration is to remain committed to this deeply rewarding work. 

Transitions *continued from page 5*

when he transitions to part time Home Repair Project Leader. Hugh has become the face of COVER for many people throughout the Upper Valley, interacting with hundreds of homeowners, volunteers, supporters, staff members and suppliers. We don't have to say that we will all miss his carpentry gifts, his warm wisdom and his gentle ways because he's not going anywhere. Lucky us!

John Heath may be a familiar name and presence to some of you. That's because he worked tirelessly for a year at COVER,

following Tropical Storm Irene. John returns on January 1, 2014 to become our new Home Repair Director. We can't think of anyone better to take the reins from Hugh. Even though John taught several woodworking classes during the past year, he has missed the COVER home repair experiences he had previously. We look forward to sharing his deep caring and his many skills with our neighbors.

And so we all move ahead, ready to take on whatever comes our way. 

Finn Burns


Assistant Home Repair Director

VHCB AmeriCorps Member




You know those kids that know what they want to do when they are 4? They want to be doctors or lawyers or teachers...yeah those kids are weird. I am 19, graduated high school this past June and I don't have a clue what I want to study or do for a living. The fall of my senior year (2012) I did what most high school seniors do and applied and got into potential colleges and universities where I would like to study. As the year went on I became less comfortable spending money going to school if I wasn't sure what I wanted to study. So I decided in March to go on a year long adventure with AmeriCorps to experience something new and exciting. I applied to COVER through the AmeriCorps website because it sounded fun, fulfilling, and I would actually be doing something useful with my time and energy.

Once I was accepted to serve a year with COVER and VHCB AmeriCorps (Vermont Housing and Conservation Board), I packed my things and headed east. I grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah. Coming to Vermont was quite a change, which is exactly what I was hoping for in my AmeriCorps adventure! The differences between Salt Lake and the Upper Valley are stark - from a barren desert to a luscious jungle; from a large city to a rural collection of towns.

My first month at COVER has been all that I had hoped for and more. When I applied to COVER I thought I would learn about basic construction and be content with the service I was doing, but it turns out that most homeowners are doing *me* a service. Being welcomed into a stranger's home and conversing with them and volunteers during lunch, opens up a treasure trove of knowledge and information. Everyone has a different background and a life unlike anyone else's, so meeting people and going to homes you probably would never go to gives immense perspective. Everyone has their own unique sphere of influence; every person affects the people around them by the way they talk, the way they do things and by their body language. Being affected by both volunteers and homeowners through their spheres of influence is the real knowledge I gain from field days and that is the main reason I love working for COVER and why I look forward to working in the field. 

Education

Our Education Program is on hiatus this fall as we reformat our classes to best suit the needs of the greatest number of our COVER community. Please let us know if you have any suggestions, and STAY TUNED! 

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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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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The ReCover Store is
now open Mondays 10-2.

Check us out! www.coverhomerepair.org

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158 S. Main Street
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COVER Home Repair & The ReCover Store

COVER Sign Gets New Life

Nancy Bloomfield, Co-Founder of COVER and Rosemary Affeldt, then Advisory Board member, designed and painted the first COVER Home Repair sign for the north side of our building. (Rosemary acknowledges there were others who helped with the painting and regrets that their names have escaped her. Did YOU help? Please let us know!) The sign was modeled closely on the Catamount Brewery sign which now hangs in front of the "balcony" in the ReCover Store. It was laid out and painted in sections in the Conference Room, the sections were connected and the sign was hung by a number people on February 8, 2001. The entire process took three months. We found some interesting photos in the archives. Does anyone remember why the original sign was hung in the dark of night, or why Simon Dennis, Co-Founder of COVER, was wearing a pink boa, or why so many photos were out of focus?



The sign has just been restored, shining like a bright blue and gold beacon on South Main Street. Birdie Emerson headed up the project with the able assistance of Diane Reinhardt, Rob Schultz, Sarah Blum, Nancy Theriault and several others. It looks terrific and will no longer allow folks who know the location of Elixir and Tupelo Music Hall to ask, "Now, where exactly is COVER?" 

