

A Welcoming Place

Mary Ann had been a real estate broker in New Jersey and then North Carolina. In 2007, she decided it was time to retire and move closer to her children in Vermont. “I think Vermont is a welcoming place for strong people who are opinionated,” she explained. “It’s also very accepting. After all, we let the person on the right go first at the four-way stop and let the person behind us with only a few groceries check out in front of us!”

Mary Ann decided to apply as a host because “I realized that at some point I was going to need help around the house. David (her homeshare guest) can shovel the snow, take out the garbage and do some of the things I’m grateful to have help with. And David is an extraordinary cook!”

.....
“There’s a kind of quietness and safeness I feel here.”

For David, Vermont became a safe refuge after leaving the political upheaval in his native Democratic Republic of the Congo. He first moved to New York City but then learned about Vermont from a friend, who told David he might enjoy the relative tranquility here. He was right. “Vermont has impressed me a lot,” David said. “It is such a humanistic place to live. People are very understanding and it is a very quiet place.”

David’s no stranger to homesharing. After his first homeshare ended when the host needed greater care, David has found living with Mary Ann ideal. “There’s a kind of quietness and safeness I feel here and that is more helpful than anything. After my first homeshare match ended, I went back to HomeShare Vermont and they found me my angel.” To be perfectly clear, that angel is Mary Ann!

Her black Labrador, Opal, and David also have become fast friends. “Opal has learned that when she hears David call, it’s time to go for a walk. And that’s wonderful because I don’t really like walking outside



Mary Ann and David and Opal (below)

Photo by Karen Pike

at night,” Mary Ann said.

David stresses how important communicating is between host and guest. “You need to understand your host’s needs from the beginning. Whenever Mary Ann asks how things are, it’s important to express my thoughts. Things go very easily after that.”

He is also appreciative of the work HomeShare’s case managers do. “Putting people together is not a very easy exercise. But they are doing the best according to all the information they get.”



HomeShare VERMONT

HomeShare Happenings
February 2026

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Troi Bachmann
- Frank Driscoll
- Ellen Flight
- Alison Friedkin
- Priyanka Gogia
- Mary Harwood
- Lis Mickenberg
- Erica Perkins
- Meg Pond
- Hobart Popick
- Michael Schell
- Kelly Stoddard Poor

STAFF VOLUNTEERS

- Cathy Bergeron
- Sally Cook
- Ellen Flight
- Connie Kenna
- Anne McMenamin
- Radetta Nemcosky
- David Ryan
- Abigail Sessions

STAFF

- Ric Cengeri
- Anne Farley
- Sarah Hudak
- Amy Jelen
- Aisha Mueller
- Wendy Rowe
- Connor Timmons
- Joyce Touchette



Our HomeShare Vermont Village



There is an old adage, “It takes a village to raise a child.” I’ve always been fond of that phrase and believe it to be true. Over the past few years of working with the tremendous team at HomeShare Vermont, I’ve found myself asking, what about everyone else?

This fall, we expanded our service area to include Windham County and the Northeast Kingdom. Recently, we held our first public event in the NEK with an introductory presentation in St. Johnsbury. While attending, I came to understand that the NEK is a tightly knit community, perhaps even more so than the rest of Vermont. Which is saying a lot. As such, it’s clear folks see the

value in what we do, and that feels great.

It’s the same feeling we had during our Annual Open House in October. We had chosen the baseball theme of “Safe at Home” to coincide with the World Series. Guests were treated to popcorn, peanuts and Cracker Jacks (and pie, of course!) and some won prizes based on their knowledge of baseball trivia. People had fun posing for their very own baseball cards. Amongst the array of baseball paraphernalia (dutifully orchestrated by Outreach Specialist Ric Cengeri), HomeShare hosts, guests and prospective applicants shared stories of what brought them to our program – to our village, if you will.

I’m continually impressed by the variety of people with myriad motivations who share their homes. Regardless of what brings Vermonters to us, it’s clear that HomeShare’s village is growing. In this issue you’ll meet a few new faces that we’ve added to our roster this year. We are so grateful for their energy, skills and experience, and we’re excited to see the impact they will make.

While it’s certainly true that it takes a village to raise a child, it’s clear to me that it takes a team to live well. We’re so honored to be on yours.

Connor Timmons, *Executive Director*



HomeShare All-Stars



HOMESHARE VERMONT 2026

Experience Vermont RAFFLE!

We have an incredible list of Vermont Experiences available in this year's raffle courtesy of wonderfully supportive Vermont businesses. All Inn stays are for two nights.



Topnotch Hotel (Stowe)



Woodstock Inn and a Vermont Country Store gift certificate



Blind Tiger (Burlington) and tickets to the Vermont Comedy Club



Wildflower Inn (Lyndonville) and a Fairbanks Museum year-long family membership



Lodge at Millstone Hill (Barre) and two tickets to the Barre Opera House



North Hero House



White Birch Lakeside Retreat (Newport) and a family entry to Jay Peak Pump House Indoor Waterpark



Lake Morey Resort



Middlebury Inn and a \$100 gift certificate for Fire and Ice Restaurant



South Shire, a little Hotel (Bennington)



Latchis Hotel & Theatre (Brattleboro) and two movie passes



Yellow Farmhouse B&B (Georgia Plains) and passes to the Vermont Comedy Club



Burlington Night Out Package

Tickets to a Burlington Discover Jazz Festival performance at the Flynn Theater, a Zero Gravity Brewery gift certificate and a Seaway Car Wash platinum service gift certificate

TICKET ORDER FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Daytime phone _____ Email _____

Experience Vermont Raffle Tickets @\$25 each (or 5 for \$100) = \$ _____

I would like to make a donation to HomeShare Vermont = \$ _____

Total Amount = \$ _____

Enclose check, payable to HomeShare Vermont, or pay by credit card.

Visa/MasterCard # _____ Exp. Date _____ CVV _____

Total Amount = \$ _____

Cardholder's name (please print as listed on card) _____

Signature (required only for credit card transactions) _____

The fine print: Restrictions including blackout dates apply to overnight stays.
The IRS does not consider raffle ticket purchases to be tax deductible.

**Raffle Tickets are \$25 each
or 5 for \$100**

Be sure to watch the **live drawing**
streamed on our website on

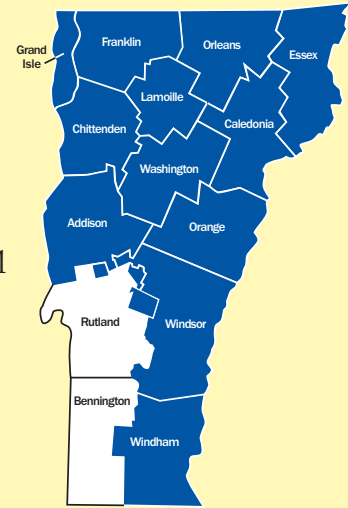
**Thursday, April 16
at 6 pm**

TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT
HomeShareVermont.org
or SCAN BELOW



Welcome to the HomeShare Vermont Team!

HomeShare Vermont has expanded into the Northeast Kingdom and the southeastern part of the state, through innovative partnerships with the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust and the Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging (NEKCOA). This means we're sharing employees with these organizations, allowing us to ramp up case management in these areas – truly a win-win. The expansion has also created the need to add an Intake Coordinator to our South Burlington office. Allow us to introduce these four new talented team members.



Kayla Bernier-Wright is a homeownership specialist for the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust and a HomeShare case manager in these two counties. She is HUD certified to help first-time home buyers as part of the Housing Trust's shared-equity program.

Adding the possibility of creating home-share matches has been something Kayla

has enjoyed. "Being able to offer homesharing gives us a flexible model, adds to our organization and allows people to stay in their homes," Kayla noted. "It's robust, time-proven and tested."

Kayla and her husband live in Bellows Falls with their two young sons and three dogs. She has plenty of family close by and loves all the joys of small-town living.



Maria Dunlavey is a case manager at the Council on Aging and helps the elderly live on their own with the proper supports or with a specified caregiver.

"What I love most about homesharing is getting to know people and to see the quality of the matches that are made," Maria shared. "I think it's really important

to learn everyone's specific needs and see how they can fit together."

Maria is the mother of four children, ages 9 to 19. If that doesn't keep her busy enough, she loves cooking, baking, kayaking, getting out to and dancing at live music events and watching scary movies with friends. She also runs an after-school Lego robotics program for elementary and middle school students.



Tara Young is a case manager with the Council, making sure that older Vermonters are aware of the insurance, Social Security, Meals and Wheels and heating assistance benefits they have available.

"It's really exciting meeting people and learning about their backgrounds and how we can help them," Tara said. "The Northeast Kingdom can be a big, lonely

place, so this is a great way of connecting people."

Tara just moved to Coventry and is the mother of "two amazing girls," one a recent graduate of Cornell University and the other a UVM student. She loves the wilderness, going on hikes, traveling and mountain biking, having biked throughout Alaska, Scotland and New Zealand.



Aisha Mueller is the person you'll speak to when calling our office. As the Intake Coordinator, she processes new applications and fields questions about the homeshare process.

Born and raised in Singapore, Aisha moved to Vermont with her family in 2007. She earned her bachelor's degree in science from Johnson State College. After spending five years at Easterseals Vermont as office assistant, she became a stay-at-home parent to her two sons.

"Being able to help people find a place to live and to help older Vermonters stay in their homes is so rewarding," Aisha explained. She loves staying informed on social issues and hearing people's stories.



HomeShare Vermont: Improving lives and communities
by bringing Vermonters together to share homes.



412 Farrell Street, Suite 300, South Burlington, VT 05403

HOMESHARE VERMONT 2026 Experience Vermont RAFFLE !

This year, we have **13 Great Prizes**,
including **12 Vermont Inn Stays**,
Entertainment, Dining and **More!**

You can see the full list of prizes
inside the newsletter or at
HomeShareVermont.org or
by scanning the QR Code



Many thanks to our generous Sponsors
for making this raffle possible!

PLATINUM

The **M&T**
Charitable Foundation

GOLD

Langrock
SPERRY & WOOL

SILVER

Efficiency
Vermont

Northfield
SAVINGS BANK

PEET LAW
GROUP

element
REAL ESTATE VT

THE
University of Vermont
MEDICAL CENTER