

A Letter from HOME

Homesharing Program Continues to Grow

The last two years, HomeShare Vermont has seen a record number of people coming to our programs and the growth has been enormous for such a small organization. In looking at the first half of our current fiscal year, we see this trend continuing. In our Homesharing Program we have seen a 35% increase in applications in the six-month period ending Dec. 31st compared to the same time the previous year. Thanks to our incredible volunteers and dedicated staff we are able to continue to meet this increased demand.

Consider Sharing Your Home

Most people don't know this, but HomeShare Vermont's services are open to anyone of any age, ability, or income. Our mission is to help seniors and adults with disabilities stay at home but also to help others find an affordable place to live. We can help people find a compatible person to move in if they are simply looking for a housemate to help pay the bills or get some help around the home. HomeShare Vermont has nearly 30 years of experience screening and matching people to live together successfully.

Some people can find homesharers without our help. That is great. However, we often hear from people who have done this on their own and who run into problems which could have been prevented by our thorough screening and matching process.

Why HomeShare with HomeShare Vermont?

Currently, we have a qualified pool of candidates looking for housing, each of whom has passed six different background checks, three references checks and a positive landlord reference.

They have all had a thorough interview. If someone works with us, and finds a housemate, there is a two-week trial period where they get to try living with someone before they commit. We also assist with creating a written agreement outlining the expectations of both parties. We offer on-going support for as long as the parties are living together.

We have many great people looking for an affordable place to live. Won't you consider homesharing? 🏠

HOMESHARING

Intergenerational Friends

Joyce, now 93, has been part of HomeShare Vermont for over ten years, and homesharing has become an important part of her life. A retired social worker, homesharing has allowed her the opportunity to meet and make friends with people of other generations, not easily done in our age segregated society.

Celine was used to the rural dairy farm life; she was up early, worked long hours, and helped take care of up to 300 animals. Moving from a rural town to a city-like community was a bit of a shock; but after a divorce, Celine was determined to have a fresh start in Chittenden County. After seeing a HomeShare ad in the paper, Celine applied to our program at just the right time. It was one of those rare periods when Joyce was between homesharers; a five-year match had ended mid-summer, and she was ready to find someone new.



Joyce and Celine

Photo by Karen Pike

It has been over four months since Joyce and Celine started living together, and they are getting along great. They have added a kitten to the household, Buddy, and both Joyce and Celine find him to be a ferocious but entertaining addition. "He sits on Joyce's walker and rides around with her," said Celine. Celine has taken pride in cooking and sharing meals with Joyce and decorating Joyce's home with holiday decorations. Celine is even showing Joyce how to navigate a computer, "We googled her! She liked that," said Celine.

Joyce has had such a long track record with homesharing because of the wonderful connections and relationships she has formed with her homesharers. She is often sad to see her homesharers go. That sentiment certainly hasn't changed since Celine came into her home. And Celine appears to be just as committed to homesharing and living with Joyce, when she says, "I'll be here as long as I can." 🏠





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We wish to acknowledge Steve Alexander and Phyllis Bartling of Futura Design in Shelburne for donating their time for the design/production of this Newsletter.

Inns Raffle Biggest Success Ever!

Thanks to the hard work of dozens of volunteers, and the generous ticket purchases from hundreds of people, our 18th Annual Country Inns Raffle exceeded our goal and raised over \$10,600 for our Home-sharing and Caregiving programs. On January 27, board member Dan Stanyon and his wife, Dawn, hosted a lovely party and board members and volunteers did the honors of drawing the winning tickets. Special thanks to board members Julie Burger Pierson and Kate Baldwin for selling the most raffle tickets! Please think of these Inns for your Vermont vacations or when you have friends visiting.

Arlington Inn, Arlington, **Stewart Arnold**
Blueberry Hill Inn, Goshen, **Fred Peet**
Catamount B & B, Williston, **Jim Moffitt**
The Brandon Inn, Brandon, **Fred Smith**
The Charleston House, Woodstock, **Kim Sbabo**
The Charleston House, Woodstock, **Adele Seubert**
Couture's Maple Shop and B&B, Westfield,
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The Craftsbury Inn, Craftsbury, **Audrey Magram**
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Echo Lake Inn, Ludlow, **Walter Gates**
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The Essex, Essex Junction, **David McGarry**
Firefly B&B, Lincoln, **Johanne Larson**
The Inn On the Green, Middlebury, **Dick Boyd**
Lang House B & B, Burlington, **Agnes Williams**
The Pitcher Inn, Warren, **Amanda Rose**
Sleepy Hollow B&B, Huntington, **Ginny Roberts**
Thomas Mott B&B, Alburgh, **Dick Kieslich**
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Three Stallion Inn, Randolph, **Jack Levine**
Timberholm Inn, Stowe, **Kathy Peden**
The Wildflower Inn, Lyndonville, **Jenna Harar**
Willard Street Inn, Burlington, **Sydney Mahnke**



Board members Kate Baldwin and Julie Burger Pierson

AmeriCorps Program in Jeopardy

For the past ten years, HomeShare Vermont has been very fortunate to partner with the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) to get placements for AmeriCorps members here at HomeShare Vermont. Each year we have had one or two AmeriCorps members: Will, Leonora, Kira, Becky, Jane, Stephanie, Ali, and now Alexis have all been fantastic! They have been instrumental in all that we do. Now Congress has proposed eliminating the entire program nationally. We don't know if this will happen but if it does it will require us to either raise more funding for another staff position, or reduce the number of people that we serve and the services we provide. We will keep you posted.

Staffing Updates

Amy Jelen, our Homesharing Coordinator, is back from her maternity leave after having a beautiful baby girl. Amy is again providing her calm and intuitive leadership and we are glad to have her back. Welcome back Amy! Ali Fogel, our former AmeriCorps member, filled in for Amy while she was out on leave. Ali has now taken a permanent job with Transition II. Good Luck Ali, we will miss you!



Amy Jelen and Ali Fogel

CAREGIVING **Sharing a Language**

What could a 95 year old WW II veteran from Belgium and a woman from Togo possibly have in common? A lot more than you might think! Catherine has been a caregiver for Rene for nearly two years, but they seem more like family or close friends by the way they joke and interact with each other. Both Rene and Catherine grew up in French-speaking communities, and since being matched, they love the opportunity to communicate with each other in their first language.

Rene grew up in a French part of Belgium, where he lived until being enlisted in the Belgium army. He spent many years in the army both before and during World War II, fighting in memorable battles such as the Battle of the Bulge. After the war, Rene moved to the US with his young bride, Flora, and has been living in the Burlington area since the 1960s.

Rene lived at home independently into his 90's. He became a part of HomeShare Vermont in 2009 when, after some health issues, he and his family agreed he needed round the clock care. After Rene's interview, our Caregiving Coordinator, MaryLou, immediately thought of a few caregivers who might be a perfect

match. Catherine was one of those caregivers.

As a midwife and ordained minister in Africa, Catherine wanted to continue a career in the healthcare field after coming to the US and so received her LNA certification. Catherine heard about the HomeShare Vermont's Caregiving Program from a friend and in 2003 she came to Vermont. She immediately began working with us and has been ever since! Having had several matches over the years, Catherine has had an array of caregiving experiences. But her match with Rene was unique in that it gave her the opportunity to communicate in French.

Rene and Catherine's relationship goes beyond caregiving. If you were to join them on a Wednesday afternoon, they would most likely be listening to music (opera tunes are their favorite) or watching historical and war documentaries on the computer. Rene recites to Catherine wonderful and rich stories of the past that are both educational and entertaining. Catherine states, "Rene's memory is great. He gives me history lessons in French. Sometimes, he likes to recite French poems, too." 🏠



Catherine and Rene

Photo by Karen Pike

THANK YOU **LEUNIG'S** BISTRO & CAFÉ



Kelly, Bob Conlon, and Estelle

Recently our Fundraising Committee Co-Chairs, Estelle Deane and Kelly Deforge, went to Leunig's for lunch to thank them for raising over \$2,200 for HomeShare Vermont. Not only did their staff sell Inns Raffle tickets for us but they also gave us 10% of their proceeds for HomeShare Day in January. Leunig's has been a long time supporter of HomeShare Vermont.

Strategic Planning Process Begun

The HomeShare Board of Directors recently began a strategic planning process for our Caregiving Program. We actually serve more people with Caregiving than we do with Home-sharing, yet many people are unaware of this distinct program. Last year our caregivers provided nearly 150,000 hours of care to our neighbors allowing them to stay at home.

Over the next six months the Board will evaluate this program and set a path to help meet the growing need for our services.

Save the Date for Fun, Food and Fortune!

To benefit HomeShare Vermont

Friday the 13th of May, 5:30–8:30 PM

New Location: **Sunset Ballroom**, 1712 Shelburne Rd., South Burlington
(behind the Lakeview House Restaurant)



Lots of **Great Food** by local restaurants, a wonderful
Silent Auction and **Cash Bar**

Music by **Toss the Feathers**,
“fiddle and banjo dance music with songs and laughs”
including Bill Drislane, Rick Ceballos and Matt Witten

Tickets: \$35 each and are available at www.HomeShareVermont.org
or by calling **863-5625**



At the Party one ticket will be drawn to win a \$200 gift certificate for **Loretta's Fine Italian Cuisine** in Essex Junction. You do not need to be present to win. Only 300 tickets will be sold.



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