

Advocate Turned Homesharer

While still enjoying an active life in retirement, Julie and Stewart decided to try homesharing before they might actually need the services a homesharer, or as Julie says, “as practice for later.”

Julie’s connection with HomeShare Vermont is deep, going back 17 years. After retiring from a fulfilling career in social work, she learned about HomeShare from a friend on the non-profit’s board. Julie soon joined the Board of Directors and then went on to become a Staff Volunteer.



George, Julie, Stewart with Jasmine

Photo by Karen Pike

George moved in with the Hinesburg couple in August. After his wife passed away three years ago, the retired engineer moved to Rhode Island to live with his son and his family. He soon reconnected with a high school friend who lives in Burlington. George began traveling back and forth to the Champlain Valley to hike, fly fish, and enjoy nature, and this year decided to move to Vermont.

George found out about HomeShare Vermont through an ad in *Seven Days*, and as the screening process began, the

friends he listed as references contacted him to tell him how impressed they were with the thoroughness of the conversations with the HomeShare staff. “I’d be cautious if someone were moving in to my home,” said George. “I really appreciate the depth of the screening process.”

Julie was confident George could be a good match for their first foray into homesharing. “I learned that George makes Thai food and I said, ‘I want to meet him.’” Part of the homesharing arrangement between the trio is that George cooks one meal per week. “It’s a great arrangement,” Stewart says. “George enjoys cooking and we don’t like to cook.”

One thing they have learned from the homesharing experience is everybody wants their own space. “I learned early on that I wanted to be alone in the morning,” said Stewart. George adds, “I’m just starting to figure out the level of space Julie and Stewart need. It’s their home and I don’t want to get in their way. I respect them tremendously.”

“We are finding we have a lot in common,” says Stewart. “We love classical music and we are just starting to talk about sailing.” George enjoys the occasional living room chamber music concerts performed by Stewart and his friends. It’s a win-win. ♦

Dear Friends,

We all want to be home for the holidays. At HomeShare Vermont we focus on “home” all year long.

In the last three months we have made more homesharing matches than ever before! We know that the need for homesharing is growing.

Please give the gift of safety, happiness and affordable housing to our neighbors by supporting HomeShare Vermont and helping us reach more Vermonters in 2017.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Best wishes in the New Year,
Kirby Dunn, Executive Director



HomeShare Happenings
November 2016

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Calling All Storytellers

In 2017, HomeShare Vermont will be celebrating 35 years of offering homesharing services in Northwestern Vermont. As part of our celebrations we will be holding a fundraising event, *There's No Place Like Home*, on April 20th at the Sunset Ballroom in South Burlington. The highlights of the evening will be amazing storytelling, upbeat music and good food. We will have five to six storytellers each telling a short story around the theme of home and living with others.

We are seeking storytellers who want to participate. No experience is necessary. For those who are selected we will provide training and support from two professional storytellers who will be also telling stories at the event. We hope to have storytellers include one or two individuals or families who share a story about a homesharing experience they had.

For those not familiar with the new wave of storytelling like the Moth Radio Hour on National Public Radio, storytelling events focus on true, first-person, short stories about real people and real events, usually around a theme. Sometimes the stories are funny, other times happy or poignant. Storytelling events have a history of being powerful, moving and transformational for tellers & listeners alike. This will be a family friendly event.

We are fortunate to have two award winning storytellers helping to produce the event. Susanne Schmidt is currently a host and the regional producer for The Moth in Vermont.



Susanne Schmidt and Kevin Gallagher

Photo by Karen Pike

Sue was named New England Public Radio's-Valley Voices Story Slam "Best Storyteller" in 2015. Kevin Gallagher was the winner of The Moth's Burlington GrandSLAM event at the Flynn Theater in May 2016.

Interested in telling your story at our celebration? Contact Kirby at HomeShare Vermont (home@sover.net) for a packet of information to submit a story concept. If you are selected you will work with Sue and Kevin to present at the event. Deadline for submission is January 10th, 2017. You will be notified by January 30th if your submission is accepted and will be offered a few dates for the workshop/rehearsal.

Special thanks to the anniversary sponsors listed below who have made an early commitment of support to raise funds for our Home-sharing Program. ♦

35th Anniversary Sponsors

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TWO KINDRED *Spirits*

Susan, who works at St. Michael's College, found it was too quiet living alone in her Winooski townhome and had a spare room to rent. She was hoping to find a person, close to her age, to share cooking and housekeeping duties and watch her cat when she is away on weekends. She connected with HomeShare Vermont because the idea of placing an ad for a housemate, and sorting through the myriad of replies, seemed daunting.

Enter Flora, a friendly, positive, health-oriented woman who has her own housekeeping business using all-natural products. Flora describes herself as a spiritual and quiet woman who loves to cook and eat healthfully and who enjoys being at home and



Susan and Flora

Photo by Karen Pike



With HomeShare Vermont all matches begin with a two week trial period. On average 90% of trial matches go on to decide they both want to homeshare together.



doesn't need to be "always on the go." Originally from Florida, she moved to Vermont with her daughter in 2001 after visiting and vacationing here. Although she had heard about homesharing many years ago, she felt that this might be a good time to homeshare as a way to save money and build a new career in health coaching and healing.

Flora first tried a two-week trial match with another homesharing host which was not exactly what she was looking for and decided to try again. That trial period gave Flora an opportunity

to move in and see if it was a good fit.

In May, Flora started a homesharing match with Susan. "Flora's energy was good from the moment she walked in the door," said Susan. "We have a nice balance of friendship and respect of each other's space." She adds, "This is Flora's home too."

Flora describes their relationship as an "easy ebb and flow with no drama. It feels like room-mating with a friend. Susan has a kindness of heart," says Flora.

In a regular check-in by HomeShare staff, Susan noted that "the continued relationship with HomeShare Vermont gives me great peace of mind. I don't know that I would have shared my home without that." ♦

Thank You *All!*

HomeShare Vermont has always had great community volunteers giving their time and talents to help nurture and grow our organization. This year the board said thank you to outgoing members **Gil Livingston, David Porteous, Kelly DeForge and Manya Dickinson**. While no longer on the board, we know they will continue to be our advocates in the community.

At our Annual meeting in October **Margaret Cicchetti** was elected



Lis, Gail, Alicia, and Brian

*President and Julie Burger Pierson Vice-President. Welcomed to the board this year is a great group including **Lis Mickenberg, Maria Pietrafesa-Kind, Gail Rosenberg, Brian Stark and Alicia Taylor.***

Welcome *Janice!*

HomeShare Vermont is pleased to announce Janice Szabo has joined the staff as Intake and Outreach Coordinator. She serves as the initial contact for potential participants, and creates outreach and marketing campaigns to recruit candidates for specific housing opportunities through community posts, newsletters, advertising, social media, and information sessions.



Janice recently returned to Burlington after 12 years as public relations manager of the Aspen Music Festival and School. Prior to that served as public relations and marketing director at the Shelburne Museum and the Vermont Symphony Orchestra.

Holiday Appeal!

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



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



Rocker Raffle Tickets

Make Great Stocking Stuffers!

This year we are pleased to be selling raffle tickets again for a beautiful Vermont Folk Rocker! The Vermont Folk

Rocker was designed in 1974 by Jim Geier in his Starksboro studio. Shaker inspired, the chair was developed out of a desire for a simple classic aesthetic. The design has been well tested throughout the years, resulting in a handcrafted rocking chair with a rich wood texture of the highest quality, intended to last for generations.

The rocker's seat and back conforms to your body. The all-wood seat and back feel like a quilted cushion because of the lively support of interlocking blocks that are suspended through the frame with nylon rope. As a result, you will relax in exquisite comfort. Your back will love it! The arms are designed with knitting and holding babies in mind and the

placement of the arms makes getting up easy. The chair being raffled is cherry-finished and comes with an adjustable cushioned headrest is valued at over \$1,500.

Tickets are \$20 each or 6/\$100, and only 350 tickets are available. **The drawing will be held at our 35th Anniversary Celebration on April 20, 2017** at the Sunset Ballroom in South Burlington. No need to be present to win.

Tickets can be purchased on our website at **HomeShareVermont.org** or by calling HomeShare Vermont at **(802) 863-5625**, or sending us a check in the mail.

Please note that raffle tickets are not tax deductible and free delivery of the rocking chair is only available in our four county service area.