



Helping Each Other

Gail had lived in her Burlington home for over three years, but the long-time environmentalist felt she had too much house for one person. After hearing good things from a couple of neighbors, Gail turned to HomeShare Vermont hoping to find a housemate. “For financial reasons, environmental reasons, and for mental health reasons, it’s the way to go. It’s silly for me to have this condominium unit all by myself. There are a lot of people who need housing, so it makes sense...It’s very rewarding to be able to help somebody else, but at the same time it’s a huge gift to myself. Just knowing I’m sharing a space I can sleep better. I’m using fewer resources and it’s helping us both,” Gail explained.

When HomeShare Vermont staff interviewed Shane they knew he had to meet Gail. The 28-year-old exuded enthusiasm about helping others and inter-generational living. He also showed a penchant for activism much like Gail.

After moving from Pittsburgh to Burlington for a job, Shane spent about two months sleeping on his friend’s floor. Soon after arriving in Vermont, he realized he would likely pay at least twice the rent that he had paid in Pittsburgh. So Shane reached out to HomeShare Vermont, not only for affordable housing, but also as a way to help someone else.

Burlington Releases Homesharing Whitepaper

Homesharing was included in the City of Burlington’s Housing Action Plan as one of 22 strategies for building a more affordable, inclusive and sustainable community. A recently released 20-page Whitepaper, written by staff from the CEDO office, evaluated the HomeShare Vermont program and focused on strategies to expand homesharing in Burlington. The report noted that “The numbers of people age 55+ living alone coupled with an increasing financial need and a desire to remain in Burlington makes home sharing an important tool to provide services to a rapidly growing senior population in the city.” We look forward to working with the City to expand homesharing opportunities.



Photo by Karen Pike

Shane and Gail

Gail is extremely grateful for Shane. “I felt a connection with his interests and values when we first met and find it refreshing having someone to converse with about topics important to me. When he invites friends over, it feels as though my kids are back home. But they aren’t my kids, they’re just friends and that is even better! Even though I live in this Burlington Co-Housing community with good friends next door, I find I’m healthier and happier having somebody else in the house,” Gail said.

Shane noted that HomeShare Hosts should know they are providing an amazing opportunity for people. “Homesharing is such a huge way to help somebody looking for housing. I didn’t have a lot of options with how expensive it is in Vermont. I’m just extremely grateful for Gail and HomeShare for seeing the needs out there and trying to address them,” he said.

Together, they socialize over vegetarian meals and take advantage of the co-housing community’s offerings. Shane is a big fan of the community dinners that are held 2-3 times a week. In exchange for a reduced rent, Shane helps with making meals, sharing companionship and helping with cleaning. The pair might even be seen at the grocery store together. “It has just been a lot of fun!” Gail said.



HomeShare Happenings
March 2018

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A "Gift of the Universe"

Laurie, 69, was no stranger to sharing her home. For years she had been renting out a room in her home to help make ends meet. Like many, Laurie had experienced some good housemates and some "less than optimal" ones. "I've had some challenging experiences. To have someone else do the screening is extremely helpful. It can be difficult doing your own vetting and I'm not good at that," Laurie said. She decided to call HomeShare Vermont and utilize their expertise in screening for housemates. Her decision paid off as HomeShare Vermont staff found Laurie a match who she describes as a "Gift of the Universe."

Laurie, an ardent naturalist, lives in a renovated farmhouse with over an acre of land, complete with gardens and nature paths where she hosts nature day camps for children in the summer. Laurie hoped to become great friends with a homesharer, and her new housemate's joyous personality instantly won her over.

When Laurie met Tomas, she appreciated his positive outlook and easy-going attitude. Tomas has been extremely helpful with physical chores around the house and yard, allowing Laurie to pursue her passion, while Tomas benefits from reduced rent. "Things get away from me in the summer. I love the idea of gardening, but once the dragonflies emerge, I'm out kayaking. That's what I love doing," she

said. While Laurie welcomes the extra rental income and help around the house, Tomas was glad to find affordable housing near his work.

Tomas, 52, left his home country of Cuba a little over 10 years ago and recently was granted asylum in the U.S. The asylum process took him to Plattsburgh, NY where he received job training and started English classes. His hard work landed him a job in Vermont. "I like Vermont, the mountains; and the people

are very polite. Milton is very quiet. It's a beautiful place," Tomas said. He plans to enroll in a truck-driving course and expects to apply for U.S. citizenship in the near future.

With their busy schedules, Laurie and Tomas don't spend a lot of time together. Tomas

leaves for work as a bus and shuttle driver at 2:15 a.m. He usually sleeps when he gets home after his morning shift before heading back to work in the afternoon. Laurie spends most of her day working on writing and editing projects. They might see each other in passing and share a moment when Laurie practices her Spanish with Tomas. She half-jokingly says she hopes Tomas never leaves, but she would definitely contact HomeShare Vermont again if he were to move out. "I've talked to a lot of people about homesharing. As soon as they mention they're looking for a housemate, I suggest they contact HomeShare," she said.



Tomas

Laurie

Photos by Karen Pike

Fly, Fly, Fly Away!

Thanks to a generous donation from JetBlue, one lucky person will win two round-trip travel certificates which can be redeemed for flights between any two domestic cities with nonstop or connecting JetBlue-operated service as published on jetblue.com. Some restrictions apply. Travel must occur by April 18, 2019.

HomeShare Vermont will be selling only 350 raffle tickets at \$20 each or 6/\$100.

The winning raffle ticket will be drawn at our "Stories from the Heart" evening of storytelling on April 19.

You do not need to be present to win.



"Stories from the Heart"

Our 2nd Annual Evening of Storytelling



Artwork by Bonnie Acker

Thursday, April 19, 2018

Doors open at 6:30 pm • 7:30 pm Stories begin

Sunset Ballroom above the Comfort Suites
1712 Shelburne Road, South Burlington



Storytellers

Moth award-winning storytellers Sue Schmidt and Kevin Gallagher will headline the event and feature new stories on the theme of "Sharing."

Music

Live music by The Brevity Thing. Dave Ball (*guitar, harp*), Jom Hammack (*mandolin*), Steve Goldman (*upright bass*)

Food & Drink

Desserts • Coffee • Cash bar

Tickets

\$35 each

TICKET ORDER FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Daytime phone _____ Email _____

Storytelling Event tickets @\$35 each = \$ _____

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

JetBlue raffle tickets @\$20 each or 6/\$100 = \$ _____

Total Amount = \$ _____

Enclose check, payable to HomeShare Vermont, or

Visa/MasterCard # _____ Exp. Date _____

Total Amount = \$ _____

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

Signature (required only for credit card transactions) _____

The fine print on tax-deductibility: \$20 for event tickets, and \$0 for raffle tickets.

TO ORDER TICKETS MAIL TO:
HomeShare Vermont, 412 Farrell St., Suite 300
South Burlington, VT 05403



TICKETS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR SALE:
On our website: HomeShareVermont.org
Or by calling our office at (802) 863-5625

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

Governor Proclaims March 25-31 Homesharing Week in Vermont

Whereas, homesharing offers older adults and people with disabilities a housing alternative, enabling them to remain in a community; and

Whereas, homesharing provides an economical housing option to people of all ages who need an affordable place to live, many of whom provide some service in exchange for a below market rent; and

Whereas, homesharing can be helpful for people in a life transition such as a recent loss of a spouse, financial hardship or educational pursuits; and

Whereas, homesharing can promote intergenerational understanding and is mutually beneficial, helping two people at once; and

Whereas, two non-profit organizations, Home Share Now and HomeShare Vermont, have matched thousands of seniors and persons with disabilities with people looking for affordable housing over the last 35 years; and

Whereas, Vermonters who wish to homeshare can benefit from the careful screening, matching and support services of Vermont's homesharing programs.

Now, Therefore, I Phillip B. Scott, Governor, do hereby proclaim March 25-31, 2018 as HOMESHARING WEEK in Vermont.

