

A Love of Reading and Conversation *Make a Home*

Amber is a bright, self-reliant woman in her 70s, who wants to remain at home despite the challenges of Parkinson's disease. She's lived in her Burlington home for 47 years, raised her children there and has renovated the downstairs to create a peaceful art filled space. She loves sitting in her living room surrounded by books with her painting easel and can't imagine ever leaving.

Amber worked at the Fletcher Free Library in Burlington for nearly as long as she has been in her home. She started at the circulation desk, worked in most of the library's departments over the years and ultimately became the Co-Director.

She now enjoys her retirement days which are filled with reading, painting, cooking and visiting with family and friends.



Amber

Photo by Karen Pike

Amber looked to find a housemate who could share meaningful conversation and everyday life in her Burlington home. She was also looking for someone to help with tasks she can no longer manage such as mowing the lawn, shoveling snow and driving to appointments. However, she was clear that she wanted a housemate who would give her time to herself. "Privacy was a major concern of mine. It's important to have somebody who understands that you need your own space," Amber said.

HomeShare Vermont had just the right person in mind to introduce to

Amber. She met Chris, a highly educated and personable 53-year-old college professor and writer. Because he teaches online Chris has the flexibility to take Amber to appointments so her children no longer have to take time off from work to help her. Amber's family has welcomed Chris and he even drives Amber to her grandchild's hockey games, one of her favorite winter activities.

Amber and Chris share a meal a few nights a week, watch C-SPAN together and enjoy conversations over coffee. "For me, this is what I was looking for. This is more of a home than a room rental," Chris explained. Chris recently started a literature discussion group focused on social justice and Amber offered to host a kick-off party for the group at her home. She enjoys attending the discussions and is impressed with the depth of conversation.

A pleasant surprise for both has been how much the two have become good friends. "I thought homesharing would be a more distant relationship. I feel like he's a cousin or something," Amber said. Chris agreed saying it felt more like family, "which makes me want to help her out even more and look out for her to see that she's fine," Chris added.

Dear Friends,

Homesharing is about people helping each other. It is a common-sense approach to meeting the needs of two people at once.

We know that the need for homesharing is growing and we have an amazing team of staff and volunteers ready to assist even more people in this upcoming year!

Please give the gift of safety, happiness and affordable housing to our neighbors by supporting HomeShare Vermont. Help us to grow and expand our services to help even more Vermonters in 2019.

Thank you for your ongoing support and best wishes in the New Year,

Kirby Dunn, Executive Director



HomeShare Happenings
November 2018

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Is an **ADU** for You?

In September, over 75 Burlington residents attended an informational workshop on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) hosted by HomeShare Vermont, AARP-VT and the Heineberg Senior Community Center.

ADU's are commonly defined as smaller independent apartments created within single-family homes or on their lots through a special set of rules. For a homeowner ADU's can provide additional income and/or more flexible living arrangements to meet the needs of multi-generational families

including older adults interested in aging at home. We know that for many people sharing their home in a traditional homesharing arrangement is not an option as they want more privacy and may not be open to sharing their kitchen or bathroom. ADU's can be an alternative for people wanting to age in place who are willing and able to undergo a home renovation to make a separate living space.



An ADU under construction in Burlington

At the workshop we heard about a program in Brattleboro that has helped over 50 homeowners add an apartment to their home giving them a helpful neighbor, some rental income and sharing of expenses. We also heard

from a couple in Burlington who built a beautiful, environmentally sustainable home in their daughter's backyard. In addition, the Burlington Planning Department presented the zoning rules for ADU's. Homeowners told of how difficult the permitting and building process can be.

We learned that there is strong interest in ADU's and that there can be many benefits to individuals and the community in expanding ADU's as part of our housing stock. We plan to work with the City and other groups to promote ADU's and will explore what role homesharing can play in this important housing option. We anticipate a report from the City's CEDO office on ADU's by the end of the year.

Consider a Gift from Your Retirement Account

For our friends over 70½, you might want to think about a gift sent directly to HomeShare Vermont from your retirement account such as an IRA or 401k. When you do so, HomeShare gets the full value of the gift tax free, and you are exempt from paying the customary income tax on that amount. For those who must take a Required Minimum Distribution, this saves on taxes and fulfills your charitable intentions at the same time. As increased personal exemptions phase in, this gift can be even more of a mutual benefit for you and HomeShare!

Another option is to add HomeShare Vermont as a beneficiary on your IRA or other retirement account. This is a simple way to leave a gift for HomeShare and doesn't require an attorney or other expense. If your heir inherits an IRA, they will have to pay income taxes on that, at their current tax rate. If this is donated to HomeShare Vermont, 100% of the gift goes to HomeShare tax free.

For more information on this and other tax-smart ways to make the gifts you want to make, please be in touch with Kirby at (802) 865-4151 or talk with your financial advisor. And thank you for your generosity!

"The Happiest I've Ever Been"

Julie came to HomeShare Vermont in 2012 hoping to find a housemate to help with housekeeping, but most of all, because she feels better in general when not living alone. She has had a few homesharers since then and currently shares her apartment with Matt. Matt is a kind and engaging 41-year-old who applied to HomeShare Vermont last winter looking not just for affordable housing, but also the opportunity to help someone.

Julie is friendly with a sense of humor and a warm smile. She reads, enjoys beading and jewelry-making, and adores her feline companions, Magnolia Blossom and new kitten Sunflower. Babysitting her young granddaughter and niece are frequent highlights in her week. Despite lots of plusses in her life, she was looking for more connection.

Matt lived in Florida for years but fell in love with Vermont after trips here to visit friends. He decided to make the leap and thought homesharing would allow him to do so affordably. The homesharing spirit seemed to match his personality. Matt shares, "I believe whole-heartedly that you just need to treat people how you want to be treated."

According to their match agreement, Matt shares utilities costs and helps out with cleaning, but the biggest benefit for Julie is the companionship. For Julie, it helps just knowing there's another person around. Matt has introduced her to tons of new friends. They shop and run errands together, go for walks, go out to dinner and have friends over. They love watching old episodes of Roseanne. "I wouldn't have this quality of life if I didn't have a HomeShare person. I'm the happiest I've ever been," Julie said.



Julie and Matt

Photo by Karen Pike

With the rent savings, Matt plans to pursue his passion for traveling and hopes to buy a car which will help them both to get around more easily. Matt says he's here to stay in Vermont. He recently started working a new job in the psychiatric unit at UVMHC, and says the work fits his personality. "I really enjoy helping people. It's in my blood. It always has been. I want to be a light in people's lives."

It's clear that as the two approach a year into their match they've become more like family than just housemates.

Welcome and Thank You All!



Ingrid and Elizabeth

Photo by Karen Pike

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 Zachary Manchester and Cathie Merrihew. Those were some big shoes to fill but we have some great new additions to the board.

At our Annual Meeting in October, re-elected to the board for a new 3-year term were Peter Cameron and Radetta Nemcosky. New to the board are Elizabeth Meyer and Ingrid Pixley. Elizabeth lives in Jericho and brings to the board many years of experience as a recently retired non-profit executive director. Ingrid helped bring homesharing to Addison County over a decade ago and has worked in the housing field for the last fifteen years.

Also at the meeting, Margaret Cicchetti was elected President, Kate Baldwin as Vice-President, David Porteous as Secretary and Brian Stark as Treasurer.

Come Learn More

We hold short Informational Sessions for Vermonters who are interested in sharing their home but may want more information before they consider applying. Come meet the staff, ask your questions and learn more about our comprehensive screening and matching service.

Please pre-register by calling 863-5625 or email info@HomeShareVermont.org.

Tuesday, Nov. 27th at 1 PM

Thursday, Dec. 20th at Noon

Tuesday, Jan. 8th at 3 PM

Wednesday, Jan. 30th at 4:30 PM



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



National Conference Highlights *Best Practices*

In October, the first national conference for homesharing programs in fifteen years was held in California, hosted by HIP Housing and the National Shared Housing Resource Center. The Conference was attended by program leaders from sixteen states across the country including staff from Vermont's two homesharing programs.

The conference highlights were David Erickson, the Director of Community Development from the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco talking about the research on housing and health. Also, Andy Goodman presented a great workshop on storytelling. Kirby Dunn of HomeShare Vermont was a presenter in three workshops addressing outcomes, screening and matching and fundraising. "So many programs across the country are doing this important work in isolation, it was wonderful for folks to come together and share best practices and show people what can be accomplished" said Kirby. In June 2019 HomeShare Vermont will be hosting a two-day training in Burlington for emerging homesharing programs.