



Starting New Chapters Together

For many people, homesharing is a way to get help around the house or to have an extra presence in the house for added safety or companionship. But for others who simply need financial help, having a housemate means not giving up their home or finding a home they can afford.

Following a divorce, Theresa turned to HomeShare Vermont on a colleague's suggestion. Without a second income, she wouldn't be able to remain in her Burlington home. Theresa did not want to leave the neighborhood she had grown to love. Amy was in a similar financial situation while going through the divorce process. She was looking for housing she could afford, close to her teenage daughter's school and where her ex lives as they share custody. Theresa's home was a little farther away than Amy was considering, but HomeShare staff encouraged her to meet Theresa because they had a good feeling the two educators in their 40's would have a lot in common. And as soon as the two met, they knew they wanted to give it a shot.

Not only did Theresa find a reliable housemate to provide some rent to help with her mortgage, but she discovered that homesharing adds value to her life in ways she



Photo by Karen Pike

Theresa and Amy

didn't expect. Amy provides peace of mind whenever Theresa goes out of town, and Theresa's dog, George, now has a second walking partner. Theresa also happily found someone who enjoys shoveling snow. Growing up in Texas, snow is still a novelty for Amy.

"It has been wonderful especially now with the isolation of the pandemic. Even when she's not here, there's a presence always in the house. We can do things together, but we also have our own lives and do our own things. It's just been really easy. I don't have to worry about things. I know my house is getting taken care of," Theresa explained.

Amy realizes her life would look much different if she were paying for an apartment on her own and living alone when her daughter was at her dad's. She also appreciates Theresa's consistent model of living a healthy lifestyle, which has motivated Amy to get out more and walk – something George benefits from as well. "Theresa has made a really warm home and she has a nice energy. She's really on top of things and gets things done, but she also has this calm energy that just makes me feel nice. Just being home is a lovely feeling. I expected to find a place to live that I liked, but this is a place that I love. How much my daughter loves it is also an unexpected bonus," Amy said.

Welcome Frank!

Frank Driscoll was elected to the HomeShare Vermont Board of Directors in June from Grand Isle County.

Over the past 5 years he has been a member of the committee to develop a senior housing facility, worked on a team to provide wheelchair ramps for folks needing mobility assistance, and delivered Meals on Wheels. Frank notes, "as the aging population continues to expand there will be a desire and a need for older citizens to remain in their own homes – safely and healthfully. My goal would be to ensure that all Island residents are aware of this program and provided the opportunity to take advantage of it."



Photo by Karen Pike



HomeShare Happenings
July 2020

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Have You Considered Homesharing?

Below are just a few of the homes we currently have available to share. If you know someone looking for a place to live and interested in helping someone else, please send them our way. Our application is on our website and it is free to apply. Background checks, references and in-depth interview required. Most homes are no new pets, no smoking with no security deposits.

Alburgh: Share a home w/hosts who enjoy nature, photography & lake views from their home. Seeking female housemate to help w/household tasks 6-7 hrs/wk. \$300/mo. Private BA; shared kitchen.

Barre: Musician in her 60s who enjoys piano, VPR & growing veggies, seeking cat-friendly female housemate. Shared BA. \$400/mo.

Burlington: Share apartment w/music & sports fan in his 50s. No rent in exchange for errands, occasional transportation & flexible evening help w/meals, etc. Shared BA.



Colchester: Share a home w/ lake views with a bright woman in her 90s, seeking female housemate for nighttime "just in case" presence & evening meal prep. Private BA, shared kitchen. \$200/mo.

East Montpelier: Artist in her 50s who enjoys gardening, nature & music, seeking a pet-friendly housemate for help with dog-walking. \$500/mo. Shared BA.

Fletcher: Delightful, travelled senior gentleman sharing his rural home in exchange for help w/meals, laundry, errands, & property maintenance. Private BA. \$200/mo.

Hyde Park: Share a home w/sharp-witted woman in her 80's looking for companionship, help w/lifting, errands & overnight presence. Loves yard sales, dining out and laughing. Shared BA. \$400/mo.



Jericho: Share a home with a woman in her 80s who enjoys birds & her gardens. Provide meal prep 2-3x/wk, companionship & light cleaning in exchange for no rent/just share of utils.

Montpelier: Dynamic couple seeking to share their home with someone who follows all precautions related to Covid, including limited exposure outside of the home. Furnished BR, private BA. Must love cats. \$550/mo.

Orwell: Share a home w/a musician who enjoys keeping up on world events. \$300/mo. plus lending a hand w/yard-work & snow removal. Must be pet-friendly! Private BA.



South Burlington: Bright, clean condo to share w/avid sports fan in his 30s. \$500/mo. as well as cooking 2 meals/wk, sharing companionship & housekeeping. Private BA.

St. Albans: Sociable, fun-loving senior woman w/mobile home to share. No rent in exchange for help w/cooking, housekeeping, companionship, errands. Small utility share.

W. Topsham: Share a home w/senior woman who enjoys crafting, offering rent-free housing in exchange for companionship, dog-walking, transportation & some cooking. Upstairs bedroom, shared BA.

And many more...

Homesharing in the Time of COVID-19

While we are only six months into this pandemic and we don't know what the future will bring, it seems clear that many people are re-evaluating the importance of home and considering plans to create more social connections with friends and family. Homesharing can help us to do that.

Homesharing is about two people helping each other. A homeowner has a spare bedroom in their home and may want some income, shared expenses, help around the home or companionship, and someone there "just in case." Others may be looking for an affordable and safe place to live. Homesharing helps meet both person's needs.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, we have faced challenges about helping current matches stay safe, as we began working more intensively with them. This has included helping matched participants have difficult conversations, making alternative plans if one person got sick, and distributing food, masks and sanitizer. We have found that we are working much more with participants around issues outside of housing.

Like many other businesses, we had to learn how to do our work differently. With the use of technology, we began conducting interviews and introductions between participants with video programs where possible. Unfortunately, the pandemic had also required us to temporarily stop making new homesharing matches until it was safe again to do so. We are starting again to make matches following strict safety guidelines.

We See Homesharing Demand Increasing

Homesharing reduces social isolation. At no time in human history have so many people lived alone. With the pandemic, months of stay home/stay safe meant additional stress and more difficulty with day-to-day chores like grocery shopping, cooking, and cleaning, for many people but especially seniors. Our daily interactions and routines that we took for granted had stopped or became much more complicated.

For people who have lost their jobs or faced reduced hours, the need for affordable housing is more important than ever. Homesharing is one of the most affordable types of housing available as it uses existing housing stock and does not require subsidies.

Due to the pandemic, now it is more appealing to "age in place" for many people. Similarly, we are seeing more extended families trying to live closer together, whether in the same home, neighborhood or town.



HomeShare Staff: Kirby, Aaron, Kathy, Joyce, and Amy

Homesharing programs across the country have started to promote accessory dwelling units (ADU's) to create a small apartment in the home or in the back yard. This can be a method for family or friends to support each other. It can also offer more privacy than sharing a home, while still offering the benefits of having another person around.

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We are hearing from more homeowners who are considering home improvements. Some people are looking to simply add mini kitchens to the spare bedroom. Others are thinking of adding another bathroom. Making accessible entrances, doorways, bathrooms and adding first floor bedrooms can go a long way to make a home more livable as people age and give homeowners more options to stay at home.

Rethinking home, who we want to live with and where we want to live are questions brought front and center by COVID-19 across this country. What is your plan for the future?

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



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ADU Guidebook Available

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is an efficiency or 1-bedroom apartment located within or on the same property as a single-family, owner-occupied house. It is a self-contained, independent housing unit complete with a kitchen, bathroom, living space, and permanent utility connections (water, sewer, electric).

ADU's can help address a variety of community needs from allowing older homeowners to age in place, creating an important affordable housing resource for younger workers and others, and allowing extended families to live closer together.

For over a year, HomeShare Vermont has been working with the City of Burlington, AARP-VT, the Burlington Business Association, CarShare, Hinge Architecture, the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB), the Vermont State Housing Authority and others to promote accessory dwelling units in the City of Burlington.



Together we have advocated successfully to change city ordinances to make it easier to create ADU's in the city including reducing parking requirements, simplifying the permit process, allowing for an increased size of units as well as increased lot coverage in some circumstances.

Recently we released "A Guide to Creating an Accessory Dwelling in Burlington, Vermont." These guides are free and come in an electronic or paper version. In addition, for Burlington homeowners, we are offering a free site visit to your home to help assess the feasibility of an ADU on your property. Check out the HomeShare Vermont website for these and other resources on ADU's.