



Coming Together In a Time of Need

With the sudden deaths of their spouses, Jeri and Dan both had their housing situations thrown into flux recently. Jeri didn't want to sell the Milton home she has lived in since 1976 and give up the peaceful sanctuary she and her husband created in their backyard. Without his wife's income, Dan could no longer afford their apartment and eventually became homeless, temporarily staying in a room at his church while he searched for more permanent housing.

Amidst heartbreak, they both needed help in order to stabilize their housing situation, so they turned to HomeShare Vermont. When HomeShare staff introduced them in December 2020, it felt meant to be. "I really feel like a higher power brought us together with HomeShare Vermont acting as an intermediary. We both needed somebody but without the added commitment of a relationship," Dan said.

The stress of being homeless during a pandemic caused Dan's blood pressure to rise, leading to a trip to the ER. Now he is able to relax in Jeri's backyard amongst the gardens and fruit trees and calming wind chimes. He returns this blessing by paying an affordable rent that helps Jeri make ends meet, cooking for Jeri on the weekends, helping her in the vast vegetable and flower gardens, and shoveling snow in the winter. Without his help, Jeri knows she'd likely end up in senior housing without her gardens and flowers.

While the extra rental income helps Jeri remain in her home, she also hoped for some companionship. She enjoys her private time while Dan is at work during the day. But when the two are together, they'll occasionally go out for dinner or creemees, and Dan also joins Jeri for garage sale excursions.

You'll never hear a cross word between the two of them except when an UNO game gets playfully competitive. The two claim to be evenly matched and have already gone through two decks of UNO cards since Dan moved in. Dan, a Navy veteran, said they look out for each other, and he likes help-

ing Jeri whenever he can. He even calls Jeri when he's on his way home from work so they can plan dinner. But it's the little notes he leaves Jeri before he leaves for work that she especially appreciates. "It just brings my spirits right up," Jeri said.

Jeri, who wears a necklace with some of her husband's ashes so he's always near her heart, still mourns her husband. Last year, Jeri didn't get out much beyond the occasional trip to the store. But this year, she's decided to live her life and is planning trips to Maine and Florida. Because she knows Dan is there to care for her elderly dog, Juilette, and rescue cat, Precious, she's not worried about going away. "I think of Dan as family. But before you can be family, you have to be friends, and he's like one of my best friends now," Jeri said.



Jeri, Dan and Juilette

Photo by Karen Pike



HomeShare Happenings
July 2021

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Think About Aging in Place Now!

While most people want to stay where they are, most homes were not built to make it easy to live in as we get older. Just getting into the home we face stairs and narrow doorways. Our bedrooms are often on upper floors. Our bathrooms have tubs to step over, and if there is a stand-alone shower it must be stepped into.

AARP, in survey after survey, has consistently found that most people age 50+:

- want to remain in their current home for as long as possible (75%)
- believe they'll stay in their current home and NEVER move (50%)

While none of us know what the future will bring, planning can give us more choice and options in the future. Thinking about home modifications when we are younger and not in crisis will make a home modification much more feasible. Often we see people having to move out of their homes when they don't want to, but can't stay there due to the need for physical changes to the home. Even if you end up not needing these improvements, doing them now may give you more options for friends and family to visit. With the aging of the population, these home improvements can also increase the value and marketability of your home should you decide to sell.



A "ramped" walkway replacing stairs

Photo by Karen Pike



A threshold-free entry

Photo by Karen Pike

Below are just a few ideas to get you thinking.

- Just adding railings or grab bars to stairways and entrances is a good place to start.
- Since slips and falls in the bathroom are a primary concern as we age, replacing a standard bathtub/shower with a low-barrier or no-threshold shower can help you live safely in your home. Well-positioned grab bars may also be a good option to keep you safe.
- Adding a threshold free entrance door with a ramped walkway can make a home easy to get in and out of.
- Having a first-floor bedroom will be much appreciated if you or others in your home simply sprain an ankle or break a leg skiing!

These photos are just a couple of examples from one of our HomeShare Hosts to get you thinking and show that home modifications can be attractive and intentional. If you have photos you would like to share about home modifications, please share them on our FaceBook page.

April Storytelling – *Just What We Needed!*

Our 4th Evening of Storytelling was hosted on April 14th at a new venue, the Double E Performance Center in Essex. The evening's theme, A Shot in the Arm, was exactly what everyone who was able to attend felt, after a year of social distancing and no gatherings. This was the first live, in-person event for the musicians and storytellers since the pandemic started, and they brought their A game! Many thanks to Dave, Jom, Steve, Kevin and Sue! While we could only have a very small live audience, we were able to film the 1-hour event thanks to The Media Factory, our Media Spon-



sor, and show it in real-time. We had people from across the country and as far away as Australia viewing it with us. One of the extra special parts of the evening were the stories by home-share participants. A big thank you to Peggy, Phil, Nancy and Jason for sharing their experiences with us all! If you are interested in viewing the event, you can go to HomeShare Vermont's YouTube page. Thanks to everyone who made this possible. Next year HomeShare Vermont will be celebrating our 40th anniversary and we are already planning to celebrate with more stories and music, so stay tuned!

Folk Rocker Winner!

Congratulations to Madelyn Cataford of Burlington for winning the Vermont Folk Rocker. Thanks to everyone who entered the drawing and donated at least \$100 between March 1 – May 31. We received over \$10,000 from 85 donors.

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.

Thank you to artisan Jim Geier for the wonderful donation. The red oak rocking chair is valued at over \$1,900. This was the 4th chair Jim has generously donated to help raise funds for HomeShare Vermont and this was the most we have ever raised from any donated gift. Thank you Jim!



Photo by Karen Pike

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



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

A Few of Our Current Homes Available

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 able to help 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.

Burlington: Share a home w/independent woman in her 80s who enjoys yard sales, puzzles & reading. Seeking housemate to help 5 hours/week w/daytime phone calls, laundry & housekeeping. Shared BA. \$300/mo. Well-behaved pet considered.

Burlington: Convenient to UVM & medical center. Seeking a caring female housemate to share the home w/woman in her 30s who enjoys playing piano, hiking & skiing. Cook a weekly meal, provide transportation to grocery store & share companionship. \$350/mo. Shared BA.

Charlotte: Senior woman who enjoys literature & classical music, seeking female housemate to cook 2-3 meals/wk, help w/gardening, & share companionship. \$300/mo. Private BA; shared kitchen. Must be cat-friendly!



Montpelier: Share a cozy home walkable to downtown w/active senior woman who loves going to the movies and listening to The Point Radio. Help w/vacuuming, lifting, share some cooking, and be an overnight presence. Furnished BR, shared BA. \$500/mo. all inc. Well-behaved pet considered.

Morrisville: Share a home w/bright, artistic woman in her 80's. Seeking female housemate to cook occasional meals, help w/light yardwork & housekeeping. \$400/mo. Shared BA.

South Hero: Well-travelled, avid reader in her 90s seeking a housemate to provide simple evening meal prep, light housekeeping & errands in exchange for no rent (\$100/mo. utils). Private BA.

Warren: Share condo w/prof woman seeking assistance w/housekeeping and occasional pet care. Enjoy furnished 1BR w/private BA, \$400-600/mo. depending on amount of service provided. Rent includes utilities, internet. On winter shuttle route to Sugarbush.

And many more...

