



40 years

## A Warm Welcome in Westford

A former business owner who has lived in his Westford home since 1985, Scott, age 60, wants to remain in his home for as long as he can. He has put a lot of sweat equity into his home and truly loves the place. Plus, his father and cousin both live down the road, and Scott has been involved with the family maple-sugaring and raspberry farm. Years of motocross and enduro racing took a toll on him physically, so it's a challenge finding work that won't be too taxing on his body. Extra rental income from homesharing is important since he's currently not working, so he rents out two rooms in his home.

While financial reasons are a priority for sharing his home, Scott does enjoy having other people around and liked the idea of sharing a meal or watching a show together sometimes. It was important to him to find housemates who shared his desire for a neat, clean, and peaceful home. With two rooms available, that adds another layer of complexity since the two homeshare guests need to be compatible as well.

Until very recently, one of those housemates was Neil, a long-time homesharer himself. Neil, 52, a refugee from

the Democratic Republic of Congo who works for a caregiving agency, has been with HomeShare Vermont since 2011. Neil lived in various homeshare matches over the past decade, providing him affordable housing options while he was enrolled in college courses. "Homesharing has a lot of benefits. It was a good experience to meet new people and I learned a lot from living with them," Neil explained. He recently reached his goal of getting his own apartment.

Scott also has Shams, 52, as a homesharer. A native of India, he left his career in the airline industry during the pandemic and found a job as a postal worker in Vermont. Since he was from out-of-state, Shams needed HomeShare Vermont's help finding affordable housing in the area. Having travelled to 65 countries while working for the airlines, Shams is adaptable and was ready to give homesharing a try. Scott has provided a welcoming place as he gets to know Vermont.

Now Scott is eager to see if his fifth housemate with HomeShare Vermont, who just moved in earlier this month, will be as good as the others. "This program works for me. The staff has been awesome, and all the housemates are very good. It's just a great program," Scott said.



Neil, Scott & Shams

Photo by Gillian Randall



HomeShare Happenings  
March 2022

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# Home & Away Raffle

We have **two** great prizes for **two** lucky winners of our Home & Away Raffle.

One raffle prize is a **\$500 gift certificate** to Gardener's Supply! They have wonderful stores in Vermont, and an amazing catalog of all sorts of home and garden items. So, whether you live in Vermont or far away, you can enjoy this gift. ([gardeners.com](http://gardeners.com))

The second raffle prize is a **2-night stay** for up to 4 people in a cottage on Lake Champlain's Missisquoi Bay, located in Swanton, Vermont. Relax and decompress, watch the beautiful sunset, enjoy swimming, kayaking, or fishing the best bass and northern pike territory on the Lake. Located 1 hour from Burlington or Montreal, immediately adjacent to great hiking in the Missisquoi Wildlife Refuge.

(Value \$800)

[www.lakechamplaincottages.com](http://www.lakechamplaincottages.com)

Raffle tickets are \$20 each or 6/\$100.

We will only be selling 250 raffle tickets!

The last day to purchase raffle tickets will be Tuesday, April 12 and we will announce the winners at our storytelling event on April 14th.



## In Remembrance

Vermont recently lost an amazing woman and volunteer. Ruth Barenbaum was the driving force of bringing homesharing services to the residents of Addison County. She saw a need, contacted HomeShare Vermont, and wouldn't take no for an answer. She worked tirelessly on outreach and recruitment



Photo by Karen Pike

and training of other volunteers. Due in large part to Ruth's efforts, HomeShare Vermont has now served Addison County since 2006.

Ruth also worked with the program as a Staff Volunteer, interviewing participants, often in their homes, attending case conference meetings with volunteers and staff, and creating and sustaining successful homesharing matches for 13 years.

"Each of us has something to give to our community. It's our responsibility as citizens.

I find it thrilling to see how people learn and work things out. HomeShare hosts and guests come to us with various issues they are looking to solve, staying at home or finding a home they can afford. It's very rewarding," Ruth said back in 2008.

Ruth also volunteered with Meals on Wheels and became a Tai Chi instructor at age 80! She was a collage artist and avid gardener. For 25 years, she was an instructor and literacy tutor, helping adults learn to read and write. She was featured in a *New York Times* article in 1989 for an innovative program she helped establish to encourage her students to become authors as a way for them to learn to read and write.

We will miss Ruth but know the world is a better place for all of her good work.

# “Cheers to 40 Years”

## An Evening of Storytelling / Online or In Person

Serving Vermont for  
**40** years

Thursday, April 14, 2022  
Doors open at 6 pm • 7 pm Stories begin  
The Double E Performance Center at the Essex Cinemas



### Storytellers

Moth award-winning storytellers Sue Schmidt and Kevin Gallagher will headline the event

### Music

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

### Food & Drink

Goody Bags • Dessert • Cash bar

### Tickets \$40

### Filming by The Media Factory



Artwork by Bonnie Acker

#### TICKET ORDER FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I/We plan to attend:

In Person

Online

Storytelling Event tickets @\$40 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

Home & Away raffle tickets @\$20 each or 6 for \$100 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Enclose check, payable to HomeShare Vermont, or pay by credit card.

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.*

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



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

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



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

## **40** years and Going Strong

This year we are celebrating our 40th Anniversary. It all started with Sally Conrad and the RSVP Program looking for ways to help older neighbors continue to stay at home with a bit of help and Project HOME was born! With the assistance of amazing volunteers like Polly Rowe and Dorothy Black, and UVM researchers Fred Fengler and Nick Danigelis, they developed this program from scratch. Today we are one of the strongest and largest homesharing programs in the country and provide technical assistance to others who want to get a program started in their communities.

Over this next year we will be celebrating our successes and acknowledging the many people who were so instrumental in growing this tiny but mighty program. We hope you will join us either in person or on-line for our Storytelling event on Thursday, April 14th.

## *Thank You Judy!*



Photo by Karen Pike

In 2006, a devoted group of volunteers worked to get HomeShare Vermont services up and running in Addison County. Shortly thereafter, Judy Sperry Gibbs got involved as a Staff Volunteer with the program. She proved to have the perfect skillset for interviewing HomeShare Hosts and Guests and making great matches. Judy says, "I think my combination of being a registered nurse and a realtor was helpful. I knew my way around the county and I loved meeting the people and trying to help them." Judy's thoughtful and direct personality—combined with her dedication to fitting volunteering into her busy schedule—have made her truly invaluable to HomeShare Vermont. Judy is now retiring from this role, but you'll still see her volunteering at Neat Repeats. Thank you, Judy, for the time and energy you have shared for so many years!