



Teachable Moments For Host and Guest

Carol's home sits in "the forest," a beautifully wooded area of St. George that she, her husband, Ed, and their four children moved to in the 1980s. "We bought the first home in the forest and lived there for about 20 years before we subdivided and moved into this home," Carol said. "The neighborhood has kind of grown around us. As the kids grew up, they had a great place to play with streams, hiking trails and mountain bike trails right here."

Ed passed away in 2004 and the "kids" are now spread across four time zones, each represented by a school clock with their name and the appropriate time affixed to Carol's kitchen wall.

After retiring from teaching, Carol wanted to be able to travel, but there was one small issue. She'd need someone to look after her cat, Poppy, while she was away. Previously, she had asked her neighbors to look in on the cat. But by homesharing, she would have the freedom to visit her children and provide a room to someone in this tight rental market.

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"I think you need to think a little outside of the box these days."
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Last summer, Katie was planning to move to Vermont to teach medical anthropology courses at UVM. "When I got hired, the department sent a list of housing options and one was for HomeShare Vermont," Katie said. Around the same time, she and Carol both applied to HomeShare looking for a compatible match.

"Carol's been my unofficial tour guide of Vermont," Katie explained about a homesharing benefit she hadn't counted on. "There's been so much kitschy Vermont stuff that she's taught me about. We go on ice cream runs regularly.



Carol and Katie

Photo by Karen Pike

We've been to Yates Orchard, the Snowflake Bentley museum in Jericho. And Carol knows everyone. We went to a Tibetan Festival and she was like a celebrity there."

Katie was also impressed by Carol's Thanksgiving meal, especially her mashed potatoes. "They were incredible. I could have eaten a bucket of those!"

The two share book suggestions – fiction titles from Katie, non-fiction from Carol. And they talk teaching.

Katie bounces things off Carol when she needs her host's valuable insight. Carol says that Katie is "empathetic to her students. She looks at things from multiple points of view and spends a lot of time helping her students."

And Carol's assessment on deciding to homeshare? "I think you need to think a little outside of the box these days. Now, I have a lifelong friend, kind of a new daughter. I don't regret it a bit."



HomeShare Happenings
February 2023

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A Big Transition

After 23 years as Executive Director, Kirby notified the Board this winter of her intent to retire in June. While everyone involved with HomeShare will be sad to see Kirby go, due to her many years of expertise and dedication, HomeShare Vermont is in a great position for our next leader to take the reins. Knowing the strength of the finances and the knowledge of the staff and board members, Kirby can enjoy the retirement she deserves while HSVT is poised to continue as a leader in homesharing. The board has developed a strong and thorough recruitment and hiring process to help us find just the right candidate. In the coming months we will share plans with you on how we will celebrate this important transition both for Kirby and for HomeShare.



Photo by Karen Pike

Margaret Cicchetti, Board President

I have been honored to lead HomeShare Vermont over the last two-plus decades and I'm leaving knowing that HomeShare Vermont is in a great place, with strong finances and a wise strategic plan outlining our goals over the next several years. It really has been a team effort to get us to where we are today, and I want to thank everyone who helped make that possible. I believe HomeShare is so successful because our wonderful mission attracts the most amazing people as volunteers, board members, donors and staff. I have no doubt that the Board will find a new Executive Director who will help further strengthen and grow the organization.

Kirby Dunn, Executive Director

Welcome Carmel

HomeShare Vermont is pleased to have Carmel Ewing as our newest board member. Carmel has been with Cathedral Square for 21 years and is currently its Human Resource Manager. She enjoys the ever-changing nature of the job, making things better for employees, interacting with people and solving problems.

Carmel joined the HomeShare board last October because she's "excited to be part of a program that has been so successful over the



Photo by Karen Pike

past 40 years. I love hearing the stories of the connections people have made and how the program enriches people's lives when the right match is made. The friendships that are made touch my heart."

Carmel has a long association with HomeShare while working with Cathedral Square, first helping us with our financials when we were Project Home and a program of Cathedral Square Corporation. She has continued to provide us with invaluable guidance since we became an independent organization.

An Enriching *Homeshare Match*

Pat is in her 80s and has lived in her Montpelier home for 56 years, the very home her late husband grew up in. She loves the neighborhood around her quiet street. “It’s sort of country because the houses aren’t really close together,” she said. “But you live close to everything in town and that’s handy.”

Pat decided to give homesharing a try because, “being by yourself all the time, you kind of get sick of your own voice,” she said with a chuckle. Due to her failing eyesight, Pat knew that it would be helpful to have someone around when she needed to run errands.

Pat’s homeshare guest, Rebecca, took a job at U-32 Middle School to be closer to her daughter who lives in Barre. While trying to determine where to live in central Vermont, she heard voices.

“While I was driving up to visit my daughter and her family, a commercial came on The Point radio station for HomeShare Vermont,” Rebecca explained. “It said there is this agency that helps people with homesharing and I’m saying, ‘I’m a really good candidate for that. That could be me!’”

She jotted down the website address while keeping the car safely on the road. When she got home, she reached out

to learn more about homesharing.

Rebecca loves spending time with Pat and takes her on trips to Wal-Mart, to drop off composting, eat at the Wayside Diner and attend events in Montpelier. “And sometimes Rebecca takes the long way around and we stop at Bragg’s for a maple creemee!” Pat related happily.

They also share stories about their families and how their days went. “She tells me a lot about her life, which is way more interesting than mine,” Pat quipped. Thursdays are particularly special days at the house.

That’s when Rebecca’s three-year-old grandson visits. “I pick him up from day care and we come back here and have waffles,” Rebecca said.

Pat loves having him around as he plays with toys left at the house by her own grandchildren and the two have spirited conversations together about how the toys work. Pat and Rebecca also enjoy watching the news and Jeopardy, cooking and drinking “lots of tea” together.

For those considering homesharing, Rebecca said, “They should give it a try. It really does enrich your life to have someone else to share it with. It really makes your life better.”



Photo by Karen Pike

Welcome Sally

Sally Cook has spent decades helping individuals as a public health nurse with the Vermont Department of Health, as a home health nurse and now working part-time in the nursing department of the Community Health Center. She also is volunteering some of her time at HomeShare Vermont. Sally is the person who calls our clients’ references and takes meticulous notes to help our case managers



Photo by Karen Pike

find compatible matches.

Sally has always enjoyed working with a diverse group of people and has volunteered in the past as a Spectrum Youth mentor and conducting cancer screening with Grounds for Health. She is also currently volunteering with Vermont’s Medical Reserve Corps.

“I enjoy hearing interesting and amazing stories about people when I call for references,” Sally said. “I also like working with a great group of colleagues at HomeShare.”

HOMESHARE VERMONT Staycation/Vacation RAFFLE!



This year's raffle includes many wonderful opportunities for our winners to vacation here in Vermont! The great prizes include overnight stays at lovely inns, cottages and hotels, gift certificates, a night on the town in Burlington and a \$500 gift certificate for Amtrak travel.

**All in all, we have 9 prizes,
so we will have 9
different winners!**

**Our goal is to raise \$15,000
for our Homesharing Program.**

**Raffle Tickets are \$25 each
or 5/\$100**

Thanks to the Media Factory, the drawing of the winning raffle tickets will be live on Zoom on Thursday, April 20

**Special thanks to the following businesses
for their generous donations:**

- ★ An overnight at **Hotel Vermont** in downtown Burlington
- ★ An overnight at the **Lake Morey Resort** in Fairlee
- ★ An overnight at **The Pitcher Inn** in Warren and a \$200 gift certificate to the **Warren Store**
- ★ Three nights at **Lake Champlain Cottages** on Missisquoi Bay, Swanton
- ★ Two nights at the **Middlebury Inn**
- ★ Two nights at the **Snow Farm Inn** in South Hero
- ★ A Vermont Shopping Spree with gift certificates totaling \$500 to the **Warren Store + Gardener's Supply Co. + Phoenix Books + Homeport**
- ★ A Night on the Town: Two tickets to the **Flynn** to see Samantha Bee, Friday, May 19; + a \$100 gift certificate to **A Single Pebble**
- ★ A \$500 **Amtrak** gift certificate

TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE ON OUR WEBSITE: HomeShareVermont.org

TICKET ORDER FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Daytime phone _____ Email _____

Staycation/Vacation Raffle Tickets @\$25 each (or 5 for \$100) = \$ _____

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

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: Restrictions including blackout dates apply to overnight stays. The IRS does not consider raffle ticket purchases to be tax deductible.

**Special thanks
to our sponsors:**



A 40th Anniversary Interview with **Helen Head**

Helen Head was Executive Director of Project Home (the founding name of HomeShare Vermont) from 1986 until 1998. She served as a state representative for South Burlington for eight two-year terms beginning in 2003. As part of our 40th Anniversary, we asked Helen about her time here.



Photo by Mary Claire Carroll

Q. What did you know about homesharing before you became the executive director?

A. I grew up in a blended family and shared housing throughout my 20s and early 30s while doing legal aid work. Organizing screening, introductions and matches, particularly for vulnerable people, seemed like a magnificent idea. I saw the program addressing several needs: the need for mutual support, a sense of security at home for people who are aging and a home for people who need one. Belief in the mission fueled my desire to interview for the job. After meeting the assistant director, retired volunteers and the board, I felt a strong connection to the people committed to this work.

Q. What were some of the most important things you accomplished as executive director?

A. Working with the staff and the board, we significantly increased private and public funding. Community awareness of our work grew and we developed strong event-based fundraising and personal giving opportunities. Getting a state appropriation was especially rewarding. Additional funding made it possible to add staff that focused on more detailed interview and screening processes, along with refining agreements for those entering homesharing and caregiving relationships.

Q. Why do you think HomeShare Vermont is still thriving 40 years after it started?

A. The idea of people staying in their own homes as they age, avoiding or at least delaying institutional care, while saving personal funds and public resources remains compelling. Providing a home to someone who needs one is so fundamentally beautiful.

There's never been a better time to do this work. Despite big efforts and significant progress, our great housing gap remains. And the COVID pandemic has intensified loneliness.

HomeShare addresses these needs, offering a beautiful alternative to solitary living and our impossibly tight housing market. I believe more people will turn to homesharing in the years to come.

HOME SHARE VERMONT

Social Connections Help Us Live Younger Longer

Contributed by Frank Landry, MD, FACP

One of the greatest benefits of HomeShare is the social connections it can allow, as loneliness and isolation are not good for our health. Several years ago, we were fortunate to partner with HomeShare to find the right fit for my 90-year-old mother-in-law. She wanted to live independently in rural Cabot after her husband's death. The partnership worked for over two years, allowing her to remain in her home and to form a great friendship.

We know that healthy relationships such as these have many benefits. These can include:

Lowering our stress—Studies have linked stress to negative biological changes in our DNA that can affect our mental health. But positive relationships seem to dampen this effect and help us moderate inflammation, which can increase our risk for heart disease.

Boosting the release of feel-good, healing hormones—Good relationships can increase the production of chemicals like oxytocin, reducing blood pressure and cortisol levels while promoting growth and healing.



Photo by Karen Pike

Reducing pain—Scientists think relationships help endorphins bind to opioid receptors in the brain, reducing our pain and that social network size correlates with pain relief.

Helping us cope with trauma—Studies show that social circles help mitigate effects of bad experiences such as the death of spouses or other loved ones and other life traumas.

Our relationships need to be replenished and expanded even as we get older. This can be accomplished by volunteering, taking a class and exercising with a group. These are great ways for meeting new people, doing things you enjoy, learning with others and improving function and mood.

Homesharing is a great option for many who have the willingness to share their home and reap the benefits of increased social interaction leading to perhaps healthier, happier lives. So, keep nurturing those positive relationships. They really are one of the keys to a healthy life span.

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



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

New Burlington Grant Program

If you have been considering sharing your home, this might be a good time to try it. To encourage more Burlington homeowners to consider sharing their homes, we have developed a new “thank you” gift program. If you are a homeowner and new to our program and share your home with us before July 1st, ***you could be eligible for a \$1,000 thank you grant!*** You would also benefit from rental income, shared expenses and/or some help around the home. There are no age or income restrictions to share your home.

Contact HomeShare Vermont to learn more about our comprehensive screening and matching service and see if homesharing could be a good option for you.

Call (802) 863-5625

or contact Ric@HomeShareVermont.org

or visit our website at www.HomeShareVermont.org

These grants are being made available through the Burlington Housing Trust Fund, funded through your property taxes, so you will be getting some of your money back in your pocket! Some restrictions apply.



Photo by Luke Awtry