

VerShare

To enhance a spirit of community, foster economic development, and contribute to projects that benefit the residents of Vershire.

President's Message - Aaron Hoopes

Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

As we enter this new year there is a lot of uncertainty about where this is all going. The political turmoil on top of the fears about the virus sometimes feel like it's all too much to deal with. Going forward we could surely benefit from some easing of the judgements we make on others and cultivate some tolerance for people who may not see things exactly as we do. We would also benefit from learning simple ways to boost our immune system and maintain our own personal health.

As we move through this winter season I want to invite our small community to come together in whatever ways possible to navigate the difficulties we are facing. So many people have been volunteering their time or donating their food, clothing and money to the Food Shelf and Clothing Drive, making them a big success. It is so wonderful to see how we have come together even when getting together is impossible. We need more of this.

I want to invite everyone to our Annual Meeting. This year it will be a Zoom Meeting on January 29th (with the option to call in if you do not have access to zoom). We will be unveiling our plans for the year going forward including a virtual Snowshoe-a-thon and many other activities.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the meeting. Until then please stay warm, safe and healthy.

Aaron Hoopes - VerShare President

Vershire Helping Hands - Suzanne Lacey & Tonya Gunn

Last year a group of us gathered to talk about ways to help our fellow neighbors and out of that came "Helping Hands", as a subcommittee of Vershare, that just celebrated its One Year Anniversary. When it became obvious that the pandemic would have far-reaching economic consequences, Helping Hands, decided to put their energies into a Vershire Food Shelf. With donations from the community, grants, and quality weekly produce, milk, cheese, and eggs from Willing Hands, a weekly food shelf was born. What began with a modest 3 - 4 households taking advantage of the offerings each week, has now grown to serving an average of 8 - 11 households each week. Visitors to the Food Shelf are given one bag filled with produce and perishables and one bag filled with staples, such as pasta, tuna fish, and beans. This has been an ongoing offering every Friday at the Vershire Town Center from 10a-12p, and we will continue the food shelf as long as there is a need in the community. A nice addition to the food shelf this fall has been meals from Nando of Moon and Stars Farm, supported by the Everyone Eats Grant, reimbursing local food producers/restaurants for the number of meals they prepare for food distribution centers.

We are so thankful for the monetary donations, food donations, and help from volunteers. We are thankful for the use of the Community Center building where we put pre-filled bags of food directly in the trunks of our weekly visitors in order to stay safe during the pandemic. We are so thankful for this community that supports one another.

Helping Hands is available in other ways to help the community, and we are always looking for donations and new volunteers. We are grateful to the many donors and the grants we received and all who have helped us! Other activities we have helped with include Christmas gifts for children in the community; Money for septic clean out; Helping neighbors pay their bills; Picking up and delivering prescriptions; Cleaning up trash; and Gas cards.

We live in an amazing community, and we feel so grateful to be able to give back and help each other. May we look forward to more community events like this in the near future.

Warmly,

Zanni Lacey, Helping Hands Coordinator & Tonya Gunn, Vershire Food Shelf Coordinator and the Helping Hands Committee: Mary Pat Donaldson, Ethel Pike, Eleanor Zue, Reva Seybolt, and Amanda Helali

Pizza nights fundraiser - Tonya Gunn

In the midst of a pandemic, fundraising is challenging. At the same time, so is maintaining connection with your community. The series of wood fired pizza sales Sundays in September made both possible. Not only did we raise over \$1800, but the volunteers and customers were able to feel a connection to the town and each other. We were blessed with mostly excellent weather, hard working volunteers, and donations that substantially cut down on expenses.



VerShare is thankful for the donations from King Arthur Flour, Swish White River, BJ's, Cabot, Shire Beef, and the Mountain School. We are thankful to the volunteers that showed up (in some cases on all four Sundays!) working several hours collecting money, coordinating the orders, making pizzas, making tomato sauce from scratch, and cleaning up as we went along. Thank you to the youth that helped - specifically Ben Hooke, Alice Craft, and Emily Gunn. Finally, thank you to all of you that bought pizza each week.

We are looking forward to doing this again at the end of this summer and are hopeful that picnicking together will once again be an option!

Winter Clothing Drive - Kathy Hooke

This winter the Vershire Town Center building became home to a children's winter clothing exchange/giveaway. As the weather turned cold, staff at Westshire Elementary discovered that some children were staying home because they did not have winter clothing. While a kid might walk to the bus in sneakers and be OK with staying inside during a 15-minute recess, no boots on "Forest Fridays" meant missing a whole day of learning outdoors. The pandemic that caused the school to renew its commitment to outdoor education had also made it more difficult for parents to get their kids equipped for winter.

VerShare was able to step up quickly to meet the need. We solicited donations of gently used winter clothing and got permission from the selectboard to set up a covid-safe "shop" in the Town Center. Families came by appointment, and happy children walked out with much-needed winter gear. If a child missed school for lack of winter clothing, the school let us know what they needed and we brought it right away. We kept a wish list and let families know when items came in. Many community members shopped for new items to donate. Cash donations (totaling over \$3,000!) allowed us to purchase even more. By the end of November, we had bought 58 pairs of boots, 27 pairs of snow pants, 44 pairs of mittens, 14 pairs of socks, and 8 jackets! Laura Craft contacted Darn Tough, and they donated an additional 48 pairs of wool socks. In December we brought all remaining items to the school to have on hand when needed.

Many thanks to all who helped with this project. With so many things feeling beyond our control these days, it is nice to remember that we do know how to keep kids warm and that we have a community ready to step up to make it happen!



Lunar New Year - Marissa Mazuzcco

What a strange year. Shortly before the Church Orr House was closed, I transferred leadership of the Made in Vershire shop to Amanda Helali, with my availability for Saturdays having changed in February. Thankfully, one of the last events we were able hold for the public prior to COVID precautions was the Lunar New Year.

Once again the town and beyond turned out to celebrate the New Year. The cooking classes leading up to the celebration made it into the news - the Randolph Herald's Dylan Kelly came and participated and took photos.

For this year's Lunar New Year in Vershire, like my own family's New Year celebration, we will be having a Zoom gathering. I will make a simple dish and will have the yearly horoscopes and links for the printouts of coloring pages and origami animals. My family is making a dish or two per location and virtually sharing the dish. If you have a favorite dish, please feel free to make and virtually share as well.

Klatch - Ethel Pike

The Klatch continues.

We started the year 2019 with a video series that explored the history and culture of China and its influence on Southeast Asia. This was a very long and fascinating series that lasted over a year and into the pandemic.

We made a switch to Zoom in March and have been able to expand the group to 8-10 folks. We now have current and former Vershirites and some associates from Strafford participating! Our format is simple: we chat socially, mostly about current events, for 10-15 minutes and then watch our Great Courses educational video, after which we discuss the film episode. We start at 7:30a and are finished up by 9a or a little earlier.

If you would like to explore the Klatch, send an email to Ethel at fopike@mac.com.

Hostel - Shirley Collins

The Stage Coach Stop Hostel continued to see an uptick in reservations throughout the winter of 2020, about half made through Air Bnb, new to us in February 2019. This past year we hosted guests from all over the world who enjoyed coming to Vermont to partake in winter activities, group events such as scouting and hockey, the Sheep and Wool Festival, and the Vermont Be True Yoga Festival. We hosted a group of Kripalu Yoga instructors, who volunteered to return lead a group at Vershire Summer Camp. We also hosted traveling nurses, technologists, and Dartmouth College and Mountain School students and their families. Some of the important amenities that guests have cited are the high speed internet at the Church Orr House and the quiet setting, charm, and history of the house. Spring 2020 brought many challenges, and the hostel was closed for most of the year. This downtime provided an opportunity for a makeover with fresh paint, new linens, and braided rugs that were restored from the original Church Orr House. As we move forward in 2021, it is my hope that we can slowly open up to host guests one family or one person at one time. Please inquire if you know someone who would like to reserve.

MIV Shop - Amanda Helali

Greetings! Early last year, I took the reigns as Shop Manager from the amazing Marissa Mazzucco, who dedicated many years to growing the shop and creating a welcoming and expansive space for local artisans to offer their goods to the community. After some light cleaning and rearranging, we were able to open the shop for a few short weeks before the pandemic forced us to close. We opened intermittently throughout 2020, including the last few weekends in December, when we sold over \$400 of goods. We also welcomed Justin Will of Inspired Coffee, who set up a pop-up table outside the shop for a few weekends in November, to introduce his delicious coffee to Vershire. We hope to welcome him back soon! In order to keep the shop safe for visitors, we limited the number of volunteers in the space, but a big thank you to Peggy Darrow, whose assistance was invaluable!

I'm so grateful that we are able to offer a space for local Vershirites (and nearby neighbors) to showcase their amazing talents for woodwork, maple syrup production, knitting, home goods, and so much more! We look forward to the time when we can fully open again and would love to see the shop filled with items, old and new! If you're interested in offering your items in the Made in Vershire shop, or would like to be a volunteer shopkeeper, please email me, Amanda Helali, at amanda.renee.helali@gmail.com.

House Committee - David Hooke

We continue to make progress on our new porch, a huge improvement that will eliminate the need to shovel the front walk in winter and provide wheelchair access to the downstairs. At the end of 2019, Wesley Parker completed the first stage of the project - putting in the new front door and completing the hallway between the MIV Shop and the kitchen/cafe, which will become the new mudroom once the new porch is done. Just before the pandemic shut things down in March, Iron Horse Standing Seam finished re-roofing the front of the main part of the house - the re-roofing started in 2003 is now complete! The next stage of work will be replacing siding and re-insulating the back wall of the house. Neil and David also completed the long-overdue access door to the attic, replacing the route through the bedroom, and adding a needed gable vent.

We wish to give a huge shout-out to our undaunted fundraising team of Reva Seybolt and Rubi Gemmell. They

wrote five applications for funding for the porch! Alas, we were flying into huge Covid headwinds, and facilities grants were not top of mind for potential funders. But we remain undaunted and thank them heartily for their persistence. We are gathering our forces for another round in 2021. From your House Committee - David Hooke, Neil Hochstedler, Ethel Pike, Shirley Collins, Mary Pat Donaldson.



Financial Report - Helen Wilson

Financially 2020 was an unusual year. The restraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic meant that we were able to do very little fund-raising, although the pizza nights in September were very successful, raising \$1,944. The Snowshoe-a-thon, held right before the restrictions went in place, raised \$6,368. Members donated \$10,124 for general operating expenses and work on the Church-Orr House. Fundraising specifically for Covid-19 relief through the Helping Hands committee and the Food Bank brought in \$10,774, plus a \$2,500 grant to help replace fund-raising lost because of COVID. In addition, our Winter Clothing drive brought in \$3,261. The Made-in-Vershire Shop was open intermittently and had sales of \$4,193. The Stagecoach Hostel was also open on a limited basis and generated \$4,343. At the end of the year, accumulated income from the hostel of \$6,802 was transferred to the General Fund to help with ongoing expenses. We also received a grant of \$1,000 to start a seed bank. One other notable change was the Town's designating VerShare as a non-profit for real estate purposes, which greatly reduced our taxes.

Expenses for the year broke down as follows:

COH \$11,428.

Payouts to shop vendors - \$4,923. (Some of which was payment for 2019 sales)

General Operating Expenses (Liability insurance, printing, postage, telephone, accounting software) - \$7,570.

Helping Hands/COVID payouts - \$3,310.

Church-Orr House repairs and upgrades - \$8,335.

We ended the year with a surplus of \$3,449.

At the end of 2020, we had \$36,373. in the bank accounts, with the following breakdown:

Helping Hands/COVID fund \$12,155.

Children's Activity Fund \$6,580.

COH Improvement Fund \$5,443.

Seed Bank fund \$1,000.

General Fund \$11,151.

For more information, contact bookkeeper Helen Wilson at information@vershare.org.

Library Report - Andrea Herrington

Wishing you and yours a safe and Happy New Year! Here's to hope on the horizon.

The Library remains open By Appointment Only, one household at a time with masks and distancing and hand washing required. Please email vershirelibrary@gmail.com or call Andrea at 802-333-3690 to schedule. Although our database (card catalogue) is not yet public, if you know what books you want I am happy to do safe contactless home delivery as well.

We are grateful for all those who want to offer book donations but have no more storage room at this time. Looking forward to spring, and hopefully our Book, Bake, and Plant sale will be possible this year. We will notify everyone when it is possible to receive book donations again.

Family stories are a wonderful way to connect with loved ones during these distanced times. StoryCorps and the Library of Congress have created a new way for families to share and record their family stories or interviews at a safe distance. Visit storycorps.org/participate/storycorps-connect/ to learn more.

Maybe when we all gather again, we can share or write down our stories at our Vershire Community Library too.

Stay Safe. Stay Healthy.

Wear Masks. Wash Hands.

Stay a cow apart!

Snowshoe-a-thon 2020 - Ethel Pike

Snowshoe-a-thon was held on Leap Day 2020. It was a pleasant day, with sunshine, bracing temperatures, and a welcome bonfire at the Mountain School. We had 155 participants, including 77 children, and raised \$5400 for the Children's Activity Fund. Little did we know that this was the last social event for VerShare for the year.

Sadly, our longtime friend and BiB desk helper Don Landzettel died from COVID 4 weeks later. A summer resident, Don was an ardent supporter of many organizations in his life. VerShare was but one, and Don and his wife Gail were also annual contributors to the SnowAngels. Locally, his willingness to help out also included AA sponsorships and his beloved Dartmouth Marching Band. A 1954 graduate of Dartmouth he was happy anytime he could show up with his tenor sax and Green jacket to join in with current bandmembers to give a rouse. We extend condolences to his family. He will be missed.

VerShare 24th annual (virtual) SNOWSHOE-A-THON

February 15 to March 15, 2021



Location: Anywhere you are!!

RAISE MONEY FOR A GOOD CAUSE! Proceeds benefit VerShare's Children's Activity Fund that funds day trips, contributes to our TUITION FREE Summer Camp for area kids, and a variety of other educational activities.

**SNOWSHOE TRAILS AT WESTSHIRE AND VERSHIRE TOWN CENTER
HOW MANY TIMES CAN YOU DO THE LOOPS?**

HOW TO PARTICIPATE VIRTUALLY:

From February 15 – March 15, get active outdoors! Snowshoe, Bike, Walk, Hike, Build a Snowman, or even just take some pictures of your beautiful surroundings!

**TAKE A PICTURE AND SEND IT TO US AT INFORMATION@VERSHARE.ORG.
WE'LL FEATURE YOUR PHOTOS ON FACEBOOK AND OUR WEBPAGE.**

AND PLEASE

CONTRIBUTE \$10 SUGGESTED

BY PAYPAL AT VERSHARE.ORG OR BY CHECK TO VERSHIRE, PO BOX 112, VERSHIRE, VT 05079

Become a Member of the Community

VerShare is a non-profit, tax-exempt community organization incorporated in 1998. Thanks to the hard work and support of many Vershire residents, VerShare has enriched our way of life for over 20 years. Member support, dedicated volunteers, and generous contributions are essential for VerShare to keep doing what it does. No town taxpayer money goes to VerShare. If you are reading this newsletter, you are a member of this community, and we want you involved. We want you to come to our events, gatherings, and programs. Please join us in making Vershire a special place.

Annual Membership* Levels:

Individual \$10 Family \$15 Friend \$25 Associate \$60 Sponsor \$100 Sustainer \$500

*All members receive discounts at the Made-in-Vershire Shop.

Sponsor or Sustainer members receive a \$5/night discount at the Hostel.

Name(s): _____ Address: _____
Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Email: _____ Add to email list? Yes No

Mail Checks payable to VerShare to: P.O.Box 112, Vershire, VT 05079

Donations above individual/family membership are tax-deductible. VerShare FIN: 03-0356227

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



Board of Directors

Aaron Hoopes, President Shirley Collins, Vice President & Hostel Manager Marissa Mazzucco, Treasurer
Eleanor Zue, Recording Secretary Amanda Helali, Communications Secretary & MIV Shop Manager
Kareen Obydol-Alexandre, Facebook Manager Ethel Pike, Snowshoe-a-thon

Committee Leaders: David Hooke, Church Orr House Andrea Herrington, Library & Summer Camp
Gregory Wilson, Sustainable Vershire Debra Kingsbury, Cabaret Helen Wilson, Bookkeeper

Upcoming Virtual Events

Friday, January 29th, 7pm - Annual Meeting via Zoom (link and alternate call-in phone number at www.vershare.org)

Sunday, February 14th, 7pm - Virtual Lunar New Years Cooking Class with Marissa

Sunday, February 28th, 7pm - Virtual Black History Month Presentation and Discussion

Sunday, March 14th, 7pm - Made in Vershire Artisans Presentation

February 14th - March 14th - Virtual Snowshoe-a-thon Month

Ongoing Events

Fridays, 10a-12p - Vershire Food Shelf at the Town Center

Saturdays 10am-1pm - Library open by Appointment

Final Saturday of each month, 10am-1pm - MIV Shop open by Appointment

Wednesdays 7:30am-9am - Klatch Virtual Gathering

Annual Meeting Agenda

Join us Friday, January 29th at 7pm on Zoom or by phone for our Annual Meeting.

Link and phone number available at www.vershare.org

Meeting Agenda:

Welcome from the VerShare President, Aaron Hoopes

What VerShare accomplished in 2020

Klatch & Snowshoe-a-thon · Lunar New Year · Pizza Nights · Food Shelf/Helping Hands · Winter Clothing Drive · COH Report · Library Report · Budget Report

What VerShare is looking forward to in 2021

Virtual Events · Safe opening of Summer Camps

Outdoor Coffee Pop-up at the MIV Shop · Pizza Nights with picnicking outside together

Questions from the Floor

Bylaws Update

Increasing Board Members to 9

Thank You Marissa for Years of Service

Voting on New Board Members

Tonya Gunn · Justin Will · Jamie Blondin

Request for Committee Members

Helpoing Hands Food Shelf

Thank you and Goodnight!