



Upper Valley Haven

WINTER
2026

Donor Impact Report

THANKFUL EVERY DAY: *BEN'S STORY*



"Every day I am grateful that I'm here," says Ben of the Upper Valley Haven. Although, at age 74, starting over in a shelter was the last thing Ben expected from life.

Hailing from Pennsylvania, Ben had built a great life with his family, working and raising his son. But after a difficult divorce and a long struggle with depression, his

support system slowly disappeared. After his parents passed away and the family home was sold, he no longer had a place to live.

Two years of living in motels and in his truck felt like "survival in slow motion," he recalls. A New England relative urged him to come north, where he would be able to access resources he couldn't in Pennsylvania.

Ben's Story continues inside →

Gratitude from our new Executive Director

Hello friends of the Upper Valley Haven!

As many of you know, Michael Redmond retired as the Executive Director of the Haven in November. His are big shoes to fill, so I want to thank you for welcoming me into this incredible community of generosity and caring.

Right away, I realized how, despite new and unprecedented challenges, our community steps up each and every time. This winter in the Upper Valley has not

been for the faint of heart, with each storm and sub-freezing night emphasizing the importance of what we do together to provide shelter, food, and other crucial services for our neighbors in need.

As the former chief operating officer of Spectrum Youth and Family Services in Burlington, VT, I am no stranger to the effects of the housing crisis on our neighbors.

That's why I want to emphasize how grateful we are to have you



as partners here at the Haven. Without you, we would not be able to provide our lifesaving resources. Your gifts, your time, your dedication have an immense impact on this community. I hope you can feel how many lives

you have touched with your generosity as you read this report.

Gratefully yours,

Will Towne
Executive Director

Continued from front

Ben arrived at the Upper Valley Haven and was placed on the waiting list for Hixon House Adult Shelter. After a month of sleeping in his truck and visiting the Haven for showers and support, a room opened up and things finally began looking up.

“My Service Coordinators, Alex and Emily, helped me with everything,” Ben says. Together, they untangled years of paperwork, helping Ben transfer his benefits to Vermont, enroll in Medicaid, secure a Vermont driver’s license and registration, drive to and from doctor’s appointments, and manage his medications safely. When Ben struggled with his depression, Emily was there.

“Knowing someone was in my corner mattered as much as the medical care itself,” Ben reflects.

Ben is currently enjoying his quiet, safe life at Hixon House. He has a morning cup of coffee. He knows meals will be available. He picks up his medication from staff who help keep them organized. He reads, uses his computer, and goes to his appointments.

Thanks to generous friends like you, the Hixon Adult Shelter is the bridge that keeps Ben—and so many others—afloat through another Vermont winter. Your gifts give people like Ben a chance to stabilize, recover and move toward a safer future.

As for Ben’s future, he hopes to move into an apartment of his own soon where he can spend the years ahead in peace. He also wants to visit his son in Las Vegas. He knows a stable future is possible because of support he is receiving from you and the Haven.

“I would absolutely tell people to support the Haven,” Ben says. “And for those that already do, I’m eternally grateful!”

13TH ANNUAL HAVEN GIVING DAYS

Thank you to every person, business, and organization who made the *Haven Giving Days* another smashing success! With a refreshed name and the spirit of tradition, your efforts unlocked the extraordinary \$200,000 match from The Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation—all to help the most vulnerable members in our community during the holiday season.

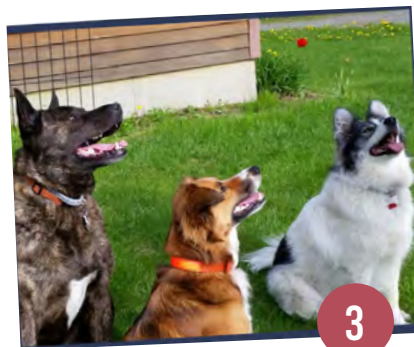
Enjoy a few snapshots of our favorite highlights!



1. The 17th annual Norwich Turkey Trot more than doubled the previous fundraising records, bringing in \$30,000 for the Thanksgiving event



2. Since 1979, the Norwich Lions Club has been decorating the Memory Tree on the green to promote the holiday spirit and honor the memory of a loved one.



3. The annual Pet Contest never fails to bring smiles and joy—they’re all winners to us!

4. The Nugget Theater continues their tradition of holiday movies and treats

5. A first-time effort, the Truckload of Good food event at Dan and Whit’s brought in big-time donations for the Haven’s food programs.

6. Thanks to so many talented artisans, the Pods for the Pulpit craft fair was, as usual, a highlight of the shopping seasons for many community members. Thanks for keeping it local!



How Doug found *real connection* volunteering at the Haven

On a typical Tuesday or Thursday afternoon, Doug Maynard can be found in the Haven's Community Food Market, greeting guests, stocking shelves, and sharing a laugh. He has been volunteering here for just over a year, but his presence already feels like part of the fabric of the space.

For years, Doug had volunteered elsewhere, but he was looking for a real connection to his work: something more personal, rooted in conversation and community. The Haven's Food Market turned out to be the right fit.

"Until you see it every day, you don't fully understand," Doug says. "You wake up with a roof over your head, turn on the lights, run the water. You realize how much you take for granted."

As a volunteer, Doug helps guests shop, restocks the shelves, and keeps the market running smoothly. **But for him, the heart of the experience is the people.** Some guests are chatty and quick to laugh; others prefer quiet. Doug takes his cues from each person, always leading with respect.



13,575 HOURS

In 2025, Haven volunteers gave 13,575 hours of their valuable time—equal to more than 6 full-time employees—working at the Food Market, the Front Desk, Hixon meal prep, and more!

"There are folks who say thank you for every single item they put in their bag," he says. "At first, I'd tell them they didn't need to do that. But then I realize they really mean it."

Doug sees firsthand how the support of donors like you shapes the Community Food Market. It's not just about food—it's about choice, abundance, and being treated with care. Because of you, guests can choose fresh produce, dairy, protein, and other staples in a space that feels welcoming and dignified.

Doug fondly recalls one moment on the day after Thanksgiving,

when two guests asked if they could give him a hug at the end of their visit. "How sweet is that?" he asks. "It just stays with you."

For Doug, volunteering at and donating to the Haven are part of the same commitment. He gives financially because "everyone who supports this place is making a difference. I'm lucky to be in a position where I can do that."

From Doug and from all of us, thank you. With your generosity, volunteers like him can focus on what matters most: showing up, listening, and helping ensure that no one has to navigate food insecurity alone.

Your generosity expands shelter access

We can't wait to open the doors to **The Patrick and Marcelle Leahy Shelter and Resource Center** later this summer!

Thanks to more than 320 generous friends, public grants, and private donations, fundraising for the Leahy Shelter exceeded \$10.2 million.

The Leahy Shelter and Resource Center will be open year-round,

offering warmth in the frigid winter months and serving as a cooling center on the hottest summer days. It will host 20 beds per night, which will help address the extreme demand for a safe and comfortable place to stay for those who are unhoused in the Upper Valley. The Resource Center will be a central hub for critical services, like housing assistance, employment, and access to public benefits. It will



also allow a space where partner organizations, like the Good Neighbor Health Clinic and WISE, can offer their services to community members.

Stay tuned for more information as the Leahy Shelter progresses!

YOUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

Thank you for another incredible year of connecting your neighbors with lifesaving resources at the Upper Valley Haven. **In 2025, you helped:**



19

children and 3 toddlers who were guests in our Byrne Shelter find enrichment in Children's After-School and Summer Programs



3,429 HOUSEHOLDS

made up of **9,724 people** including **2,726 children** to be served in the Community Food Market

600

households receive **Community Service Coordination**, including resources for housing, employment, transportation, health, and so much more



18 FAMILIES

to be placed in the Byrne Shelter, including **34 children** and **27 adults**

101 NEIGHBORS

move into permanent housing from shelters, hotels, and the community through our Housing Navigation and Support programs

46 INDIVIDUALS

(like Ben!) find a warm, safe place to stay at Hixon House Adult Shelter



We called, and you rose to the challenge

When SNAP benefits were disrupted last fall, our Community Food Market saw a massive increase in households facing food insecurity. Single day visits rose from 80-100 household visits per day to as many as 140. The Haven asked for your help in this time of uncertainty, and you not only met our fundraising ask, but doubled it in just a few days. Neighbors caring for neighbors in times of need—thank you for your generosity!



For further information, to give a gift by phone, or make a gift of stock, contact Laura Gillespie, Director of Development & Communications, at (802) 478-1803 or laura@uppervalleyhaven.org