



Upper Valley Haven *Donor Impact Report*

WINTER
2022



*"I contacted the Haven
and within two days
they helped me."*

— Aaron (pictured above with his son)

WITH YOUR HELP, AARON IS OUT OF THE COLD!

A lot can change in two years—just ask Aaron.

In November of 2019, he and his young son, Aaron Jr., were displaced from the trailer they were renting after their landlord had failed to pay a massive water bill and the town shut off their water.

Thanks to you, Aaron and his son were not left out in the cold.

"I contacted the Haven and within two days they helped me," Aaron recalls. And so began nearly a year of life at

the Byrne Family Shelter while Aaron searched for housing.

When COVID hit, finding affordable housing became nearly impossible and Haven service coordinator, Ellen, was there to guide and support Aaron. He applied for a CARES subsidy for rental assistance and housing support. He secured a small, one-bedroom apartment in Bethel, VT, but the location wasn't ideal. Aaron struggled with employment due to a disability that prevents him from driving, and Aaron Jr.

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Our work together *matters*

a letter from Michael

I am so grateful for you. You give the Haven the confidence to move forward. You fuel our fire and our spirit. And your generosity encourages others in our community to support the people we serve with open arms.

The work we do together ***matters***.

Winter and the ongoing pandemic amplify harsh realities in our community. When someone is

homeless, the only thing they think about is "where am I staying tonight?" When someone is struggling with food insecurity, they endlessly ask "what am I feeding my family tonight?" The Haven receives calls every night from someone without a place to stay and people arrive at our doors every day because they don't have enough food for their families.

With your gift, you alleviate the

stresses of these basic human needs. Our Upper Valley neighbors can then focus on other essential goals, like the steps needed to find permanent housing, a job, and a steady income so they have enough to eat.

In fact, with your help, we were able to help 98 families secure permanent housing last year.

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***“When you see the work that happens here,
you know you’re making a good investment!”***

Dr. Robert Drake, or Bob as his friends know him, has seen the Haven from many sides.

Today, Bob and his wife Debbie Becker support the Haven as philanthropists—specifically as members of the Feeney Legacy Circle. But how did they decide adding the Haven to their will was right for them?

When Bob’s long-time friend John Caswell became homeless in 2016, John stayed at the Hixon House Shelter where Bob would visit him weekly. After John worked with the Haven to secure permanent housing, Bob continued to bring his friend groceries from the Food Shelf as John got settled.

“I got to know many Haven staff members and really admired their work,” Bob says.

dinners at the Hixon House.

“I wanted to do more,” he recalls, “so after exploring the Haven’s different programs and services, I thought I could help the Service Coordinators most.”

His relationship with the coordinators was symbiotic: with his training in psychiatry and mental health, Bob could contribute, but he also learned much from them about homelessness, housing, and programs in Vermont and New Hampshire.

Fast forward to today, Bob notes that it feels natural for him to give back to programs doing mental health and housing works.

“Debbie and I feel strongly that you should give to organizations that you know very well. We know the Haven will use the support we provide appropriately and effectively—because we’ve seen it firsthand.”

Inspired, Bob began making and serving



LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY!



*Dr. Robert Drake and
his wife Debbie Becker*

Bob and Debbie encourage anyone who gives to the Haven or who is interested in leaving a planned gift to visit and volunteer here.

“If you see the work that is happening at the Haven, you will know you are making a good investment in the Haven’s legacy,” Bob says confidently.

For more information on joining the Feeney Legacy Circle and making your planned gift, please email laura@uppervalleyhaven.org or visit uppervalleyhaven.org/donate/feeney-legacy-circle

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But that doesn’t mean we do all the work. Family Supportive Housing Service Coordinator Amy Beston says it perfectly about the families she supports: *“I just walk behind them, gently encouraging. It’s my privilege.”*

This is why your support of the

Haven is so essential. You help us recognize the good in everyone. Simply because someone is facing challenges does not mean they lack the ability to rise above. You enable us to provide guidance and fulfill basic needs as our neighbors find long-term solutions to their challenges.

Thank you endlessly for your

partnership with the Haven, and with all those in our community who feel the warmth of your support when they need it most.



Gratefully yours,

Michael

Michael Redmond
Executive Director

EXCITING UPDATE! *Dan Fraser shares your impact on the 19 Days!*

Thanks to you, we've met our match! That's right, through the *19 Days of the Valley* and your generosity, **together we raised over \$200,000 and unlocked The Byrne Foundation's matching gift**—totaling nearly a half a million dollars for the Upper Valley Haven!

And we had some serious fun doing it. In this ninth year of the *19 Days*, more than 50 businesses in the Upper Valley participated by donating portions of their sales. COVID couldn't stop us from a few of our usual, quirky traditions to help raise even more.

Norwich resident and former Haven Director Suzanne Stofflet completed her inaugural Hammock Challenge—in which the 74-year-old sat outside in her hammock for all to see 15 minutes every day for 50 days, completing the challenge on her 75th birthday. Suzanne alone raised more than \$14,000 for the Haven!

The incredibly popular *Bonding of the Beauticians* resumed this year. Local salon owners and staff from **Diane's Casual Cuts** and **Andrea's** decorated their shops and dressed up in holiday-themed costumes. Customers plan their appointments for this special day and donate generously. The playful competition raised over \$20,000 this year.

Then, of course, there was you. You stepped up in a huge way for the *19 Days*—whether shopping locally, visiting Suzanne in her hammock, supporting the salons, or donating directly to the Haven.

You demonstrated exactly what makes our community so special. We come together and show up for our neighbors in need. **You recognize that a more caring community is a stronger community.**

Thank you for making this *19 Days* our best ever! We couldn't have done it without you!

- Dan Fraser, Dan & Whit's



1. Dan the Elf and his angels!
2. Local salon owners dressed in holiday-themed costumes for Bonding of the Beauticians
3. Lebanon High School freshman Jun sold his origami creations for the Haven.
4. Suzanne raised more than \$14,000 by sitting in her hammock for 50 days straight!
5. A family shelter resident with her gingerbread house!



IN 2021 YOU HELPED THE HAVEN:

FEED



13,998 daily Food Shelves were served

3,714 households visited the Food Shelf

1,405 new households were served

18,815 prepared meals distributed through the cafe

SHELTER

38 total (and **24 new**) households



WORK

provided by **480** individual volunteers for a total of **18,796** hours



Thank you!

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had to change schools and leave his friends behind.

Ellen continued to work with Aaron because they both believed more could be done. Recently, Aaron applied for and received a Housing Choice Voucher and is now living in a two-bedroom apartment in White River Junction.

"I work at the Hotel Coolidge, right on the bus line. My coworker picks me up for work and then I take the bus home. It's so convenient—I can work 20-25 hours a week while Aaron Jr. is back in his old school with his friends and then I'm here for him when he comes home."

Thanks to your compassionate support of the Haven, Aaron was able to "build connections that I wouldn't have without the Haven." He appreciates how he had the resources he needed to do the work himself—and a safe place to stay while he did it.

After living in the shelter for a year, the best moment in their new home was seeing Aaron Jr.'s face at Christmas.

"We finally got an actual Christmas tree—with presents under it!"

While Aaron may have had a stressful year, he is so grateful to have a place to call home and stability for his family—and the support he needed to get there! THANK YOU!