

Winter in Vermont can be a force to be reckoned with.

This year, 2017-2018, reminds me of the winters I remember 50 years ago, when I moved to the Northeast Kingdom. I was drawn to this place because of its basic bare-bones beauty... and then there were the people: dry-witted, hardworking, whose characters reflected the terrain. Without any fuss, neighbors helped each other. The ones I became friends with ran farms, raised large families, and tended to ill or aging parents.

For many reasons, this way of life no longer widely exists in Vermont. Now the few seniors who live in the big old farmhouses do so alone. The families these people raised have disappeared, leaving aging Vermonters to bring in the wood, do repairs, cook and clean.

When a Meals-on-Wheels volunteer delivers a meal to a home, an important connection occurs. The recipient receives a hot, nutritious meal, <sup>and</sup> a face-to-face visit, perhaps the only one that day. While there, the volunteer can informally assess the situation, and if additional assistance is needed, that call can be made. This is an informal but critical daily check on our most vulnerable seniors.

We are a small, neighborly state. We care about each other. Please allow us to continue providing services that matter to all of us.

Thank you for your time.

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