

Hannah Schwartz, I moved to Vermont in 1998. I have a Masters in Special education and Masters in Social work. I have been working the field of Human Services in Vermont for over 25 years mostly as a community consultant and Founder of Heartbeet Lifesharing.

Community is the lens, by which I understand the crises of our world, as well as their solutions. I have lived in, founded and studies intentional communities for most of my life. Community means to me—a place where I belong, where I am known, where I am celebrated for what I have to offer. Lasting and durable relationships and a center for celebrating the trials and tribulations that life holds in store for each of us.

Riverflow Community moved from late night calls, dinners grabbed despite our nutty lives, from the hopes and dreaming of parents who deeply love their family members in need of alternative care, to reality with act 186 and the work of DDHI and everyone, including people in this room, with the awarded grant.

Team Riverflow hit the ground running—In late night think tank spaces we put our heads together, worked hard and fast to create a scope of project which included land parameters, location, visions of homes filled with social flow, love and lasting, meaningful friendships and the lasting and sustainable care of people we love, kept us inspired. It was a search—visiting properties, trying on how they would feel-- we found a property in Monkton that captured our hearts and most of what we were looking for (the house had not been lived in for 10 years and needs a lot of work), we filed our 501.c3 - no small task, put together a board and bylaws and scraped the money together to get the property off the market. We have been working hard to understand the scope of renovations needed to get the 8 bedroom house out of its sleeping state after 10 years of being uninhabited and bring it up to compliance both with the TCR regulations and with accessibility Codes.

We have been meeting with experts and getting quotes and believe that we will need at least a million dollars to secure the setting. Just the compliance measures for the house—sprinkler systems, hard wired alarm systems, generator, replace windows, ADA accessible space and bathroom, improving the insulation and some issues with the chimneys will add up to at least \$450,000 all of which we need and that does not include the renovating of the kitchen to make it fit community life. Much of the house was carpeted

and all those floors need to be changed to accessible surfaces—all to say we have a lot to get done.

The planning grant has given us the courage to get started but we need money for bricks and mortar. All of us connected to Riverflow are deeply grateful for the Vermont legislators who supported ACT 186, and to whom we are now turning once again to support us in our efforts to secure essential funding through the Vermont Housing Improvement Program. We generous gifts and state funds to move Riverflow into reality and open it doors to increase housing options for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities—Choice is an essential aspect to dignified adult life, lets make Riverflow an amazing choice in this state.