

*“Thank you, thank you, thank you. With my dad in the hospital for eight weeks and family coming in from New York, Michigan, Maine, and Florida, we NEVER would have handled this so well without you all. Friendly, helpful, and warm. It was great to come ‘home’ to. Again much thanks to everyone at the hostel.”* —CAROL J. & FAMILY



# MAYNARD HOUSE

A magical home away from home

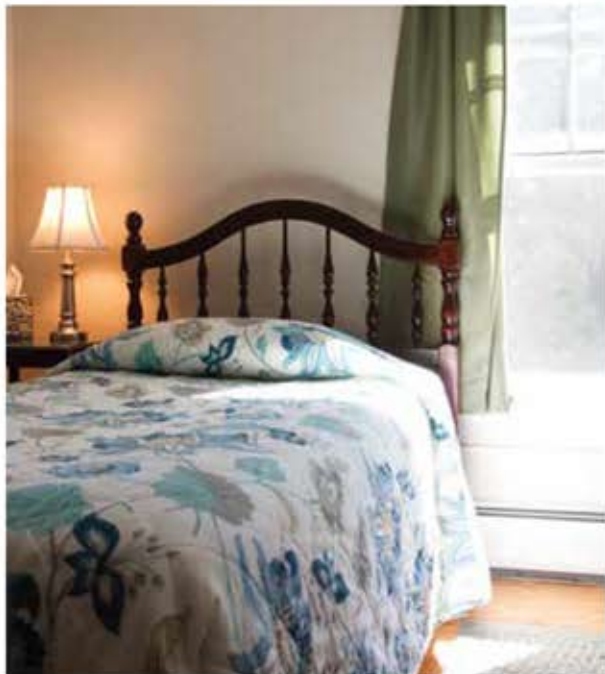


Tucked in a corner between the Howe Library and Hanover High sits Maynard House. From the outside, it looks like any older Hanover home, with the addition of a handicap ramp. What you can't tell from the exterior is that this is a place where magic happens.

Known until the spring of 2016 as the Upper Valley Hostel, Maynard House is an affordable home away from home for those who travel long distances—not only from Vermont and New Hampshire but also from 44 other states and many countries—to receive medical treatment or support family members receiving treatment in the Upper Valley.

“The ‘magic of the kitchen table’ is real!” says Executive Director Elizabeth Clarke. An energetic woman with bubbling warmth, Elizabeth has been at the head of Maynard House for three years. “Before I started here, I thought that was just a saying, but it happens here all the time.” >>

*“On behalf of our brother, we want to say thank you. This house has become our home away from home on many nights the last several years as we traveled from Boston to be with him for treatment. We’ve enjoyed the warm welcome, community support, and fresh-baked cookies. Blessings to all who walk through this door.”* —BONNIE C. & JERRY R.



**Clockwise from top left:** Volunteer Doris Yates registers a guest in the reception room. Executive Director Elizabeth Clarke presents a bouquet to Doris, who is retiring from the board but will continue to volunteer. The guest kitchen. A sunny guest room.

## CONNECTIONS AND CARING

The magic is connection and caring. "Guests don't have to interact, but they often do and even become friends beyond their stays," says Elizabeth. "Sometimes I see people come through the door wearing a hard day," she continues, "and soon after, I hear laughter in the kitchen coming from them. Guests just make connections, with each other and with us."


Longtime volunteer and Hanover resident Julia Wybourne concurs. One of her favorite stories from her decade serving as a volunteer host and greeter at the facility is about a guest who was there alone and made a simple request. "She asked if I would come watch TV with her, and of course I said yes." Slowly the woman started talking to Julia, and when the evening was done, she said to Julia, "Thank you. I haven't thought of my illness all evening."

Traveling to receive medical treatment can be a tremendous burden. "People say, 'I don't know what I would have done; I can't even afford the gas money,'" Julia says. Elizabeth adds, "They're in a strange location; some have never been apart from their spouses, maybe don't drive. They are strangers in a strange land, and people are so thankful for any kindness. I was overwhelmed by the gratitude of the guests at first, and I still am."


## A GREAT PLACE TO VOLUNTEER

The need for such a service in the Upper Valley was recognized in the mid 1970s, and the original group of volunteers served as a network of extra bedrooms reminiscent of Appalachian Trail Angels, thus the name Upper Valley Hostel. The group, realizing they needed a dedicated building, incorporated in 1978 and rented a house in Hanover. They purchased the current property in 1980.

"Although the name has changed, the comfort, care, and affordability are the same," says Elizabeth. A guest survey found that the word "hostel" was not attractive to patients (who thought it meant staying in a bunk room),




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## GOOD NEIGHBORS



Hanover resident and Maynard House volunteer Louise Kunkel drops by.

and it gave the wrong impression all around. "We would get Appalachian Trail through-hikers knocking on the door on cold, rainy days," Elizabeth reports.

The house has been well used and hosts 3,000 to 4,000 nightly guests annually, and in recent years, it had begun to look it. To improve the safety and comfort of guests, the group solicited donations and received grants from the Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation and Hypertherm's HOPE Foundation for renovations, including updating and making the kitchen and ground floor more accessible and installing a sprinkler system throughout the building. The renovations were completed in March, and the name change became official in June.

The building sports eight bedrooms, and guests share three and a half baths. There are two paid staff members and two resident managers who live on-site to cover overnights and weekends, and volunteers from throughout the community, including students from Dartmouth College and, recently, Richmond Middle School (RMS) in Hanover.

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Julia Wybourne works at RMS and is responsible for the school's participation. "I tell the kids, we take having health care on our doorstep for granted. Imagine—you're on minimum wage, you get sick, and you have to travel 200 miles to get treatment—how hard that must be."

Although Maynard House serves patients of Dartmouth-Hitchcock, it is not affiliated in any formal way, and they accept guests who are using other health care facilities in the Upper Valley, such as the VA Hospital in White River Junction and Alice Peck Day in Lebanon. The stay is not free, but the cost is a modest \$25 per person per night, and Elizabeth works with people who cannot afford the fee.

The Hanover location is convenient for getting away from the hospital environment, with shops, restaurants, the Hopkins Center, Hood Museum, Nugget Theaters, and Howe Library all within easy walking distance. The latter two provide free access to guests of Maynard House, and the Montshire Museum in Norwich also provides passes for guests.

Julia says, "It's been really good for me to volunteer here. It's made me think outside the box and has been a real learning experience. I feel that I've grown as a person since I've been volunteering here." I was so impressed by Elizabeth's and Julia's stories of respite and community that I immediately wanted to volunteer myself. The magic of Maynard House is contagious. ←

#### Maynard House

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