RIVERFLOW



FALL 2026

[01]



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[01]	Alec is looking forward to joining Holly House
[02]	Thank you to everyone who made the yurt happen!
[03]	The founding moms enjoy our first Family Day
[04]	Ella is looking forward to moving into Holly House

[03]



[04]



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

HANNAH SCHWARTZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Family of Riverflow,

There is something reassuring about the turning of the seasonal wheel—the way each season arrives with its own gifts, asking us to notice what is changing around us and within our community.

I have spent many late-summer evenings looking up at the stars, watching for meteors as they streak across the night sky. Each one offers a moment to make a wish, and mine has been for a kinder and more peaceful world, a world in which we continue to recognize our need for one another and the gifts each person brings.

What a full and abundant summer we have had at Riverflow. The gardens poured forth vegetables, flowers, herbs, and berries. Our days carried us far and wide with hikes, swimming, lakeside adventures, water parks, picnics, and the simple pleasure of being outdoors together. There has been work and laughter, celebration and growth, and so many moments that remind us why community matters. We also have a yurt. Thank you to everyone who made this possible! Now that the yurt is built, we are cleaning and furnishing the space, creating a warm and welcoming environment that will soon be filled with community activity.

And now, almost without our noticing, Fall is arriving.

The leaves are beginning to turn red and gold, and our mornings are hidden beneath mist rising from fields and riverbeds. School buses are back on the roads, warmer layers are coming out of closets, and we are once again adjusting to change. At Riverflow, this season of transition is especially present as we say goodbye to old friends and welcome new people into our circle.

There is a tenderness in both the coming and the going. Each person who spends time at Riverflow leaves something of themselves behind, and each new person brings possibilities we cannot yet imagine. Community is never static. Like the seasons, it grows, changes, sheds what has passed, and begins again.

This Fall finds Riverflow growing in ways that, not so long ago, existed only in our hopes, conversations, and drawings. Perhaps the most visible sign of that growth is that our second home, Holly House, is now fully designed and under contract with Huntington Homes. This tremendous step forward has been made possible by the extraordinary generosity of our donors and two significant grants from the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB) and Vermont Low Income Trust for Electricity (VLITE). We are deeply grateful to everyone who has believed in this next chapter and helped us reach this point.

A special thank you goes to Patrick Kane, whose dedicated time, creativity, and genuine interest in Riverflow has helped us arrive at a beautiful design for our second home. His collaboration with Huntington Homes has been both fun and remarkably smooth, and it has been wonderful to watch so many people bring their different skills together around a shared vision.

And now the drawings are becoming something we

can actually see and touch. For the past few weeks, the excavating team has been hard at work, beginning the new road and putting the infrastructure in place that will support not only our second home, but Riverflow's continued growth. There is something profound about watching the excavator arrive that brings everything into reality. Dreams of a second Riverflow home are no longer just dreams—they are happening!

By next summer, Holly House will be filled with the rhythms of daily life: meals around a shared table, mornings getting ready for the day, garden crews and studio life, celebrations, friendships, quiet evenings, and all the ordinary moments that make a house a home. Eight people will have the opportunity to call Riverflow home and to build their lives within a community where they are known, needed, and valued.

Our programs are also expanding, new coworkers are joining us, and the vision for the next chapter of Riverflow continues to take shape. With every step, I am reminded that none of this happens through the work of one person. Riverflow exists because families, friends, coworkers, board members, neighbors, donors, volunteers, and so many others continue to believe in the possibility of creating a life together rooted in dignity and belonging.
As we celebrate how far we have come, we are also asking for your help with the final pieces that will transform Holly House from a building into home.

We are seeking **$100,000 to build the porches** that will extend the usable living space of Holly House and allow the people who live there to spend more of their days outdoors. In Vermont, our porches become an important bridge between home and landscape—a place for morning coffee, shared meals, conversation, watching the weather roll in, and enjoying as much of our beautiful but short outdoor season as possible.

We are also seeking **$60,000 toward a car and an accessible van for Holly House.** Transportation is essential to life at Riverflow. It is what makes possible appointments, shopping, swimming, hiking, community events, cultural activities, and all the ordinary comings and goings that allow people to participate fully in the world beyond our property.

Finally, we are seeking **$50,000 to furnish Holly House**—beds, tables, chairs, couches, kitchen and household necessities, and the many details that turn empty rooms into warm, welcoming spaces where people can settle in and feel that they are truly home.

Together, these needs represent **$210,000 in remaining support** that will make an enormous difference in the daily lives of the people who will call Holly House home. Gifts of every size bring us closer to this goal. Whether you help us build a porch, put a chair around the kitchen table, furnish a bedroom, or get a vehicle on the road, you become part of creating this next home at Riverflow.

As you read through this Fall newsletter, I hope you will feel some of the abundance of the past season and the excitement of what lies ahead. Most of all, I hope you will feel our gratitude. Thank you for walking alongside Riverflow!

With deep gratitude,

Hannah G. Schwartz
Executive Director
Riverflow Community



COMINGS

DHIRAJ DHAKAL



All my life, people have heard my name and seen my skin, and bombarded me with questions about where I'm from. People expect me to answer a certain way or to affirm their guesses but I've never truly felt sure about who I am and where I'm from. Too American to claim or be claimed by my Nepali heritage and too brown for my American upbringing. And I've always thought I'd be fated to exist in these third spaces, destined to float endlessly. Belonging has always been a binary concept to me. If you are born in a certain place with people that look and sound like you, you find community.

But that all changed when I visited Willow House.

I've heard all the slogans and classic lines about inclusion and love and community but no one has quite delivered. Except Riverflow.

I came from a different world. Money. Investing. Business. My brain is wired to spot problems and build solutions. I stumbled into social work almost by accident, not because I was looking for it, but because the problems were too obvious to ignore and the solutions too important to leave to others. Whether that makes me corrupted or just wired differently, I'm still figuring out. But here's what I wasn't prepared for: this isn't like any other field I've worked in. In business, the end product is a shipment. A sale. A number on a spreadsheet. In this work, the end product is a person. A laugh. A moment where someone feels seen for the first time in a long time. You can't optimize that. You can't put it on a deck. And I'm still learning to be okay with that, still learning to sit in a place where wealth is measured in hugs and the bottom line is someone's quality of life. I'm still learning to be comfortable here, in a place where money is a means to an end and not the end itself, where the goal isn't growth for growth's sake but genuine human flourishing. I've been trained to be skeptical of places that claim that. And then I walked into Riverflow and found myself slowly believing. I'm Dhiraj. I'm the new Office Manager. And I'm still figuring out what it means to work somewhere where people see each other in the deepest sense.

KESHAB BISTA



Hello everyone! My name is Keshab. I was born in Jhapa, Nepal, and my family and I moved to the United States when I was eight years old. We lived in Vermont for eight years before moving to Columbus, Ohio, in 2017. I spent the last several years in Ohio working as a sales consultant.

I love spending time outdoors—whether hiking, biking, playing sports, or simply going for a walk. I recently moved back to Vermont because I wanted to learn more about the world of disability and explore how I might contribute in a meaningful way. I was introduced to Riverflow through a friend, and after speaking with Hannah and River and learning more about the Camphill philosophy and values, I felt incredibly proud and excited to become part of this community.

What has stood out to me most at Riverflow is seeing people working together in a way where everyone has a place, a voice, and something meaningful to contribute. It is refreshing to be part of a community where no one is left out or unheard. In just a few days, I already feel that I have learned so much.

I am excited to immerse myself in life at Riverflow, build relationships, and continue to learn and grow alongside everyone here.

LENA HEUBERGER



I am Lena (pronounced like Alena without the A).

One of many questions I have asked myself often in life is: who am I? I truly want to understand life and remain curious until the day I die.

I was introduced to social work when volunteering with people with special needs back in Germany. Due to my inquisitive nature, I dove deeper into this new aspect of life I had been exposed to. The way I learn about myself is by understanding others. And no one embodies understanding, curiosity, and love for others more than Hannah. Everyone at Riverflow makes space for others to exist, without judgment and with complete authenticity. I want to build that same capacity to hold whatever the people around me bring. I get to practice and expand my capacity to love and care everyday with the most genuine and authentic people I've met, the Friends.

At home with the people I know and love, I bring an openness and interest in everyone being most freely themselves. I'm bringing this quality with me as I step into Riverflow and I can already tell I will learn even more about acceptance and love while I'm here. I want everyone to feel free to be exactly who they are, and know that I love them just as they are. I think I want to extend that same love and kindness to myself.

AJ TABORSAK



MSW INTERN

Hi, everybody! My name is AJ. I am 21 years old and just starting my MSW education at the University of Vermont this Fall. I'm super excited to be a part of the Riverflow family this year.

When I visited this summer, Riverflow immediately impressed me as a safe space where Friends, caregivers, and interns alike could live in community and be seen as their authentic selves. This was excellent news for me— I think most people who know me personally would describe me as something of a peculiar character. I left the suburban monotony of southwest Connecticut for Burlington quite purposefully, as my favorite places have always been full of unique individuals. As I've bounced around between the eccentricities of mock trial courtrooms, jazz band rehearsals, cross-country and ultimate frisbee team locker rooms, queer student news-magazine meetings, underground electronic music venues and foreign hostels, fate has introduced me to countless kind, talented, hilarious people. Seeing as Riverflow is my next destination on this lovely ride called life, it comes as little surprise to me that I find myself in another space full of one-in-a-million stories. I can't wait to get to know them all between now and May, and I have no doubt that I will learn a great deal alongside my new Friends while we work to bring out the best in each other!

CHRISTINE FRYE



My name is Christine (or Stine as my friends call me) and I am really excited to join the Riverflow community. I currently live in Middlebury and am ending a year long Fellowship at Yellow House Community learning, supporting and having lots of fun with a group of adults with cognitive-developmental differences. I am originally from Memphis, TN and found my way to Vermont for undergrad at Bennington College where I studied dance and Japanese. Since then I wanted to return to Vermont for more green mountains and wonderful small communities I had encountered.

In my free time I love to Latin partner dance: Salsa, Bachata, and Merengue. I also really enjoy Contact Improvisation. In general, I enjoy moving, dancing, wiggling and being goofy. I have a variety of hobbies that I often flit back and forth between; knitting, crotchet, yoga, pilates, taekwondo, hiking, watching tv/movies.

I am really looking forward to living in an intentional community with such a powerful commitment to inclusivity. I had never done support work nor had I had experience with anyone with disabilities before the Fellowship at Yellow House. What a wonderful opportunity and experience it has been, I am so grateful. The work has brought so much joy into my life, I was sure I wanted to continue to be involved with these kinds of communities. When someone mentioned Riverflow to me they thought it was right up my alley. I had done some farm work exchanges through WWOOF and was missing having my hands in the dirt as well as craving deeper connections and community. After speaking with Hannah and the team at Riverflow, I felt instantly drawn to the community, feeling it would indeed be a great fit for me. I am looking forward to growing with Riverflow as the community expands and being a part of such a lovely ecosystem.

ROBIN HOWSON



My name is Robin Howson and I am very excited to be joining Riverflow as Co-Director of the Bridge Program.

For the past 15 years I have been fortunate to spend a lot of my time working and volunteering with diverse and inclusive communities including Zeno Mountain Farm's camps and retreats in California and Vermont, Riverside Industries in Easthampton, Massachusetts, and most recently the Howard Center in Burlington, Vermont. I look forward to helping Riverflow develop the new day program and getting to know a dynamic and growing group of friends and community members.

I value creativity and joyful connection as well as intentional skill building for personal and communal growth. I enjoy spending time at my home in Monkton and with family and friends, learning about and practicing many different art mediums, gardening, listening to music and going to concerts, reading, poetry, and traveling. I am very happy to be joining the Riverflow team.


MAINTENANCE



GOINGS

LEVI WICKE



From the moment I stepped through the doors of Riverflow, it felt like home. Everybody was so kind and welcoming, it was very easy for me to open up and be myself. The whole team is focused on creating a safe and loving environment for everyone coming to Riverflow.
Once I picked up the flow of the house, I found my rhythm and was able to build great friendships and become a helpful part of the team.

We had so many fun moments together and I am so glad that I got to be a part of this community. One of my favorite things to do is play the guitar, and because the household loves music it became a highlight for me. I was very glad that everybody (but especially Jesse) loves to sing. Jesse's energy and joy in strumming the guitar is just amazing. Singing "Piano Man" with Charlie never gets boring, and I will always think about him when I hear that song. From the holiday songs to sitting around the living room just enjoying everyone, memories of singing together will stay with me.

During my time here I picked up many fun habits that will probably influence me forever. Before coming here, I had never had any contact with American Sign Language, but learning how to sign different animals with Duncan was very fun—his love for animals and signs has kept us all learning.

People have asked me if there were any struggles or difficulties that have come up throughout the last year, but I really can't think of any besides smaller misunderstandings that come naturally when you share a home with somebody. Everybody is very supportive and understanding when it comes to personal needs.
I loved the nature of Vermont and all the hikes that I went on, alone, and with the Friends at Riverflow. My favorite places to walk are Camel's Hump, followed by Raven's Ridge. I highly recommend them to anyone visiting.
Overall, I feel like my year was a smooth operation and deeply meaningful and I am excited to see Riverflow grow into its second home. I am looking forward to coming back to visit soon!

JOHN BURGER



It was the start of Fall when I first arrived in Vermont. My girlfriend, Sage, and I landed in our monthlong AirBnB rental and hit the ground running on our housing and employment search.

In the midst of a mess of housing appointments, applications, interviews, I heard from an old friend I had known in Beaver Farm. Had I heard about the new place Duncan was going to live in up there? It's called Riverflow. When I met with the leadership team, I knew I would be here on day one and was excited to be a part of something new.

The first months were filled with navigating new situations and building trust. It was all so new and it would require some time for things to settle into place. Yet, we were blessed with a wonderful team, and in hindsight, it actually all played out pretty smoothly. The Friends began to consider this new place home and I was fortunate enough to be doing the same alongside them. Together we explored the surrounding parks and waterways, markets and restaurants, farms and museums and became familiar with Vermont's dramatic and beautiful seasons. I began to love Vermont and it was wonderful getting to know it through the scope of Riverflow.

My time here in the community has felt like an exercise of Love. I poured a lot of my heart into my work here and have developed incredible bonds with the friends that we serve. That has made the decision to depart all the more challenging. However, Sage and I are once again on the housing hunt and this time it is with the hope of staying. While we narrow in our search for a house around the Washington County area, I have decided to take a job in the Harwood School District. I do not imagine this is a farewell to Riverflow; my dear friend Connor is already asking to see his guest bedroom in our prospective new home. Rather, I like how Hannah described it: an expansion upon the circles of support that make up Riverflow.




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17
SANCTUARY
DAIRY FARM
ICE CREAM

GARDEN UPDATES & REFLECTIONS

MARISSA PAPPALARDO
GARDEN MANAGER



When I was working full time as an organic farmer, I always met the beginning of September with a deep sigh of relief. It signaled a slower pace and an opportunity to celebrate the bounty of the season with unhurried appreciation. While at Riverflow our gardening has a balanced rhythm all summer long, holding space for learning and inclusion, I find myself welcoming Fall with the same sweet relief, and lots of gratitude for the long hours we all spent together growing food and flowers and learning from each other.



This summer was my first as the garden manager at Riverflow, and it has been a true gift. When I arrived in the Spring, we were in the middle of greenhouse construction and the subsequent reshaping of our garden space to accommodate the new structure. This phase of the growing season required patience, and a deep hope that our preparations would give way to successful harvests. If you've ever had a garden, you know that choosing to grow any plant is a practice in observational awareness, patience, and acceptance. As a community, we practiced embodying these qualities and we did our best to enjoy each step of this journey (even the uncertain ones!). Inevitably, Summer arrived and we settled into our greenhouse by vigorously planting tomatoes, peppers, flowers, eggplant, cucumbers and herbs. We seeded squash, melons, radishes, onions, scallions, snap peas, corn, kale, chard, lettuce, fennel, potatoes, and zucchini in the outdoor fields. While waiting for our crops to fruit and ripen, we patiently scouted for pests, weeded, and pruned. Before we knew it, the patient hope of Spring surfaced and transformed into an exuberant and bountiful garden. Each community member was integral to the sustenance of our garden this year. The Friends spent many hours tending to the land with care and the garden proved to be a therapeutic space where individuals could grow their capacity for both joy and discomfort alongside one another.



As we wind down for the season, we'll begin pulling out once vigorous greenhouse plants and cover cropping once productive garden beds. Again, this time will allow us to sync our respective rhythms, prepare for winter, settle into our collective growth, and eventually look towards the (very exciting) expansion of the gardens for next season. What a gift it is to garden with the Riverflow community and thank you to all of our extended supporters, donors of seeds, plants and funds to make this all possible! This season has been filled with learning, grace and new friendships.

RAINBOW REMEDY



AS AUTUMN APPROACHES

Welcome to Rainbow Remedy, Riverflow's Healing Plant Garden and Apothecary

When I walk into Rainbow Remedy, the first thing I notice is the scent; it changes with the seasons. Right now, as summer gives way to autumn the apothecary is full of drying herbs. Lemon balm still carries its bright citrus scent, bundles of plants drying in the herb dryers, and jars slowly filling with the medicine we've spent months growing together. The garden is settling into harvest, but it still feels very alive.

Outside in the garden, there is always something happening. Someone is collecting calendula blossoms after the morning dew disappears. Charlie is hauling another bucket across the garden, stopping every so often to pick up more weeds that have been put in the pathways for his collection. Brielle has the Herbal notebook close by, scribing our meeting notes, observations, and questions so our learning doesn't disappear with the season. Before long, we're gathered around cups of tea, tasting what we've made together and asking, What do you notice? What do you taste? Brielle especially loves these moments, when everyone experiences tea a little differently and we learn through our own body's wisdom.

I love watching what happens from the moment a seed is planted. A tiny seed becomes a plant full of so much potential. That plant becomes tea, oil, tincture, or salve. But somewhere in that process, something else begins to grow. We begin to know the plants. We begin to know one another. The garden creates a space for belonging and wonder that seems to appear as naturally as the plants themselves.

Everyone who comes to Rainbow Remedy Garden has a different relationship with plants. Some of us are meeting medicinal herbs for the first time. Others have known them for years. What I love is that none of that matters once we're in the garden together. The plants meet each of us where we are.

Valor often reminds me how much intention lives in this space. They love every part of the process—from researching the science behind a plant to dreaming about next season's beds, planting and caring for each herb as though it were an old friend. That kind of enthusiasm is contagious. It reminds all of us that tending a garden isn't just about what we're harvesting today, but about the reciprocal relationships we're growing season after season.

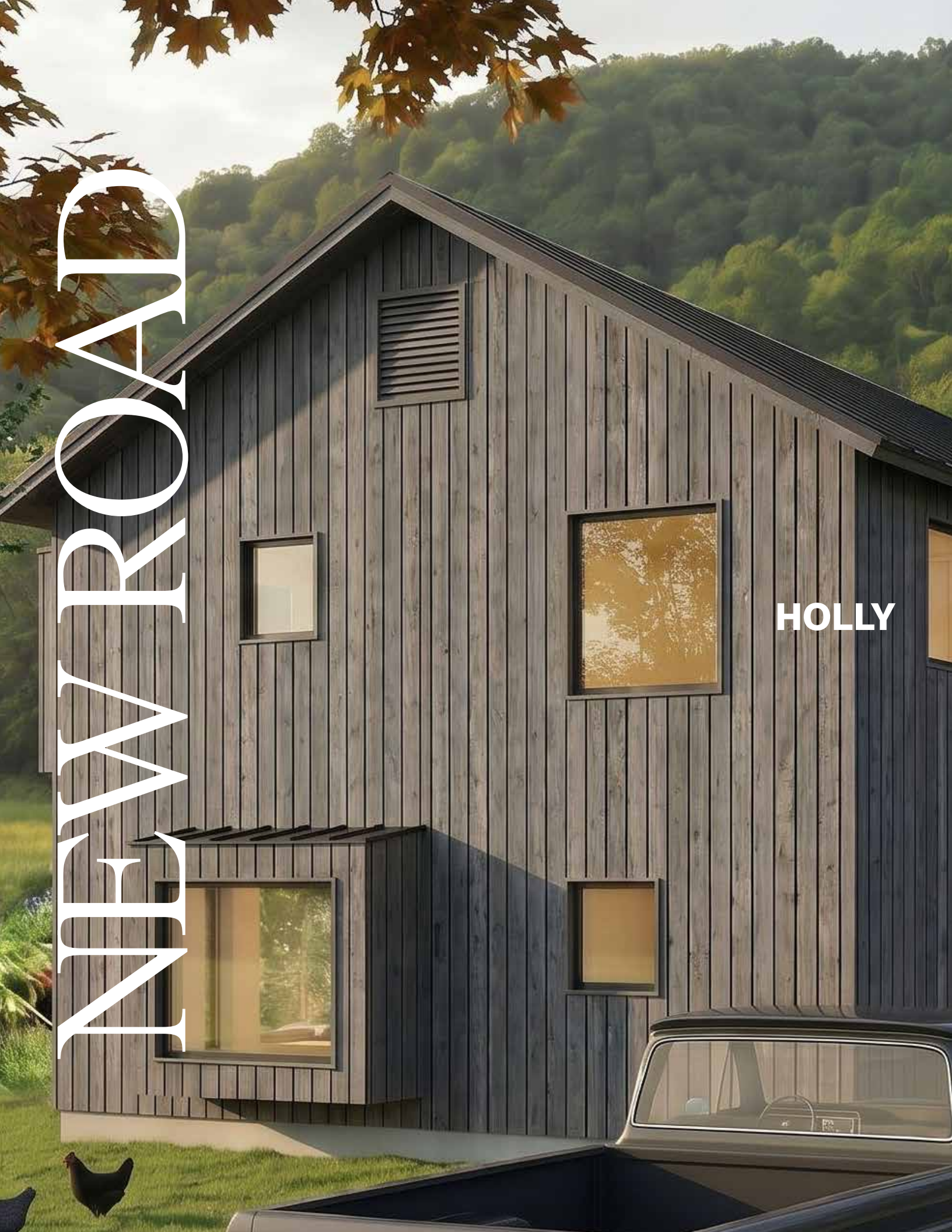
Some of my favorite plants are the ones most people walk right past—the ones often dismissed as weeds. They are the epitome of resilience, pushing through gravel, lining pathways, growing along hedges, and taking root at the edges of places no one expected. They return again and again, carrying remarkable healing potential. Every season, they remind me that resilience is its own kind of medicine.

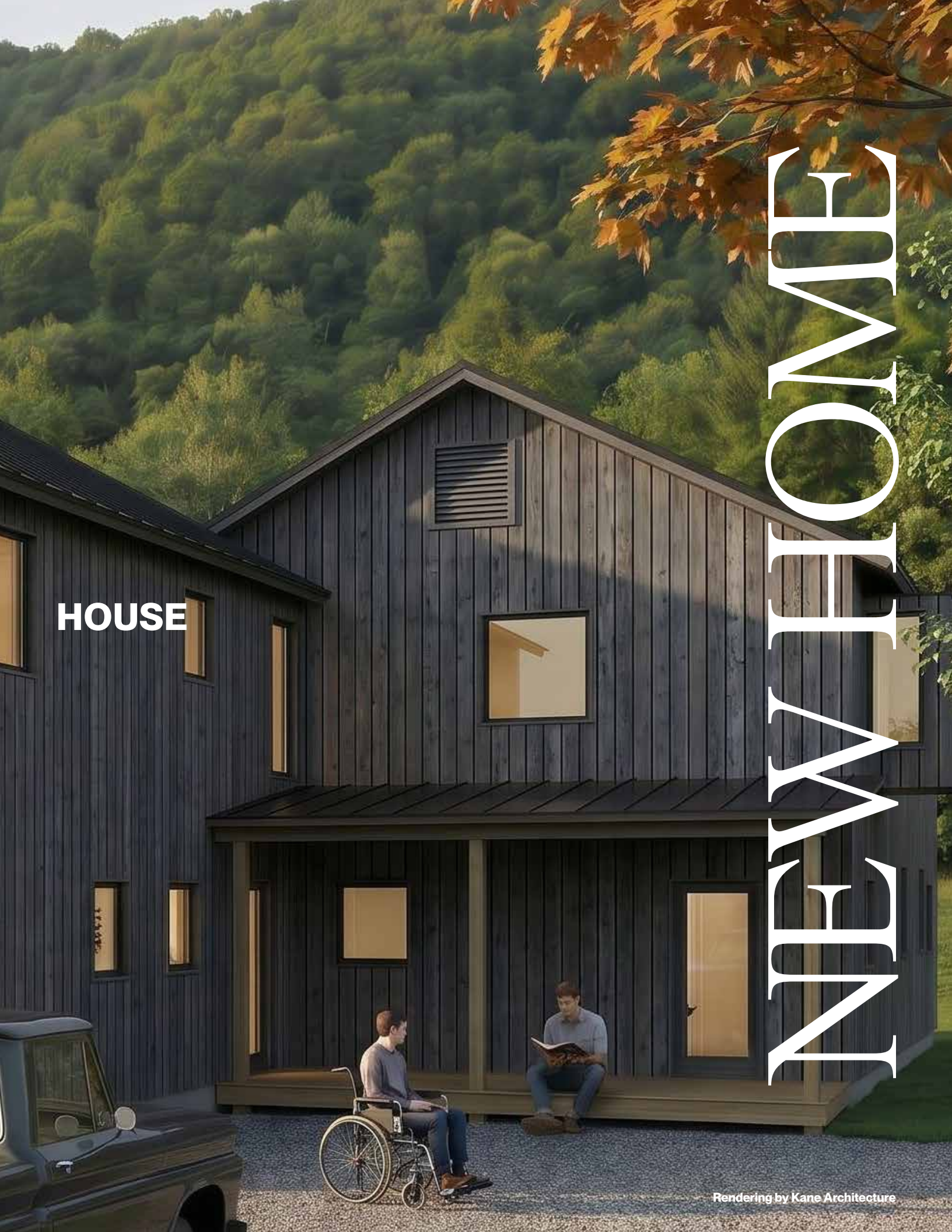
Working in the Rainbow Remedy garden reminds me that healing often begins by slowing down. It's in noticing the first flower open after weeks of waiting. It's in learning the name of a plant you've walked past a hundred times before. It's in laughing together while hauling buckets, harvesting herbs, or sharing a cup of tea made from plants we've tended with our own hands.

Over time, something deeper takes root. As we care for the plants, we build relationships with them—and with one another. The garden becomes more than a place where medicine grows. It becomes a place where we belong.

As autumn settles in, we gather seeds for next year's garden, dry herbs for the colder months ahead, and will eventually tuck the beds in for winter. The harvest fills our shelves with teas, tinctures, and remedies, but that's only part of what we've grown. The real harvest is harder to measure: a deeper connection to how we care for the plants, for the land, and for our community.

See you in the garden!
Seneca


NEW ROAD
HOLLY



Rendering by Kane Architecture

We are delighted to share that our second home has a name: **Holly House.**

In folklore, holly has long been associated with protection and safeguarding. As an evergreen, it remains vibrant through the winter months and has come to symbolize resilience, hope, and enduring love. These qualities feel deeply connected to what we hope Holly House will become—a place of belonging, friendship, security, and home.

It is with bright hearts that we share the first images of Holly House, now fully designed. Thanks to the wonderful work of Kane Architecture and our collaboration with Huntington Homes, we can finally begin to see what we have been imagining for so long. These 3D renderings offer a glimpse of the warm and welcoming home that will soon take shape.

Now the work is becoming wonderfully real. The site infrastructure is underway: the new road, water and wastewater systems, stormwater infrastructure, utilities, and other essential groundwork that will support Holly House and Riverflow's continued growth.

We invite you to imagine with us. Imagine driving down this new road and seeing Holly House standing there behind our vegetable garden, at the forest's edge. Imagine four new community members arriving with their families, carrying boxes through the front door and beginning to make this house their home. Imagine meals around the table, evenings on the porch, celebrations, friendships, challenges, laughter, and all the ordinary moments that make a life together.



Rendering by Kane Architecture

LIFE AT





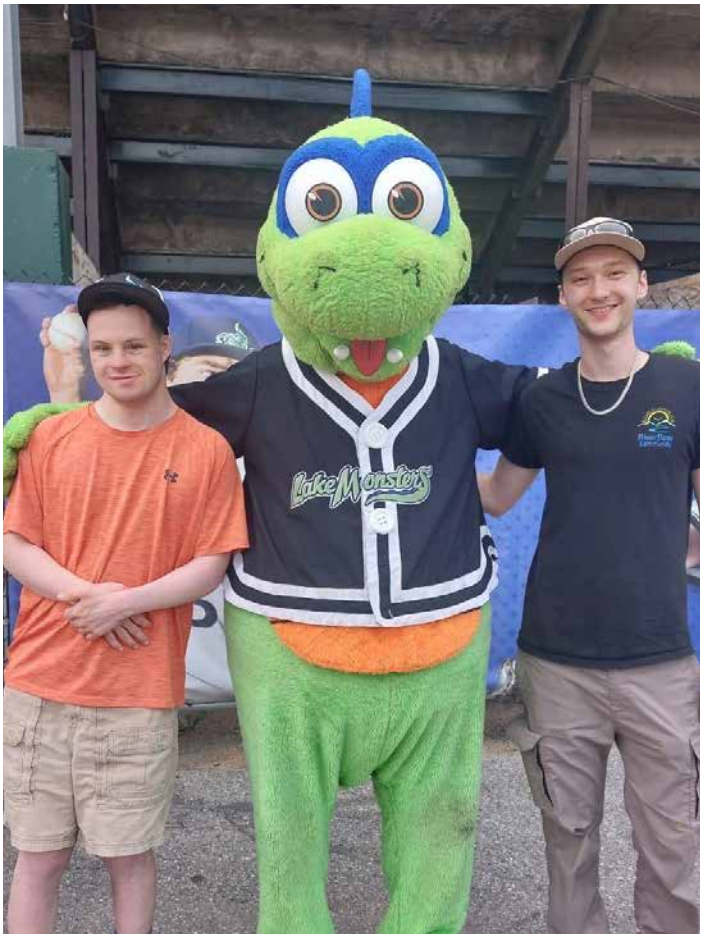


RIVERFLOW








Lake Monsters




THE
BEAGLES

WAYS TO GIVE

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Mail a completed Donation Form with your check made payable to Riverflow Community to:

Riverflow Community
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DONATE NOW ONLINE

Donations can be made through the online portal on our website:

https://www.riverflowcommunity.org/donate

MAKE A PLEDGE

Pledges are a great way to make a gift over time! Reach out to Hannah Schwartz and she will send you a pledge form:

hannah.s@riverflowcommunity.org

GIFTS OF APPRECIATED SECURITIES

If you gift stocks or bonds that you have owned for at least one year, you will be eligible for a deduction for the full mean market value of the security on the date that Riverflow receives it.

Reach out to Hannah Schwartz for more information on giving Appreciated Securities donations:

hannah.s@riverflowcommunity.org

BY PHONE

If you would like to speak with someone at Riverflow personally, call our office at:

802-498-4180

MATCHING GIFTS

Many employers or former employers, if you are a retiree, will match your charitable contribution. This often doubles or even triples your initial gift. Obtain a matching gift form from your human resources department and enclose it with your contribution to Riverflow Community.

Riverflow Community, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. You should always consult your attorney or tax/investment professional before making any kind of charitable contribution.

Newsletter designed by Charlie's brother, Matt



Riverflow aspires to create wholeness in life for everyone who is part of and connected to the community. United by meaningful work, community members with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities form friendships, gain vocational skills, and pursue dignified, self-directed lives.

Find us online at **riverflowcommunity.org**