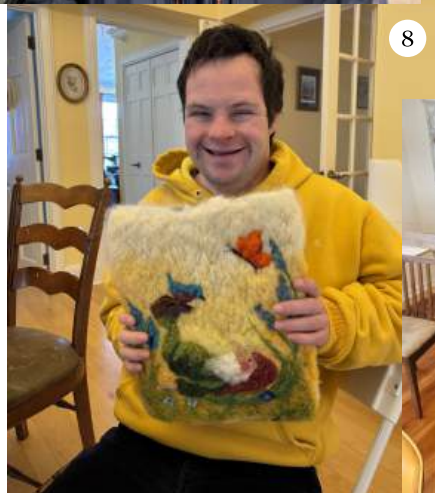
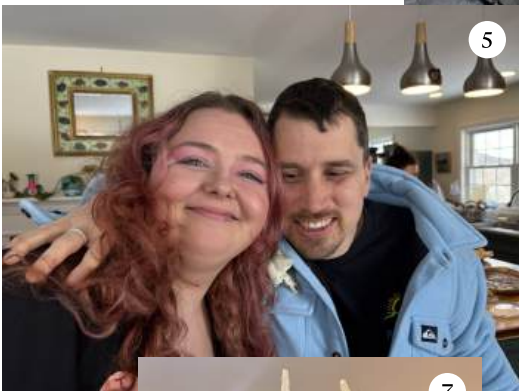
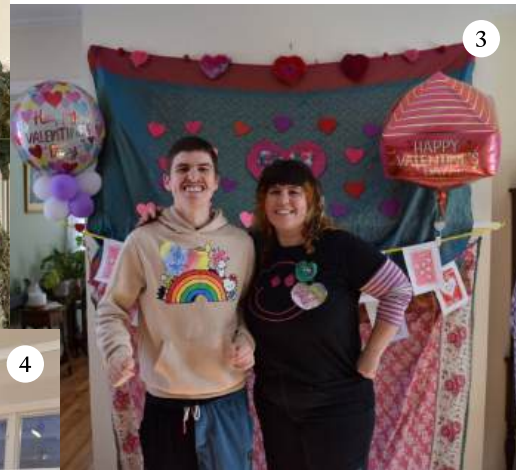


# RIVERFLOW

Spring Newsletter 2025



<sup>1</sup> Duncan enjoys the first warmth   <sup>2</sup> Valentine's block printing   <sup>3</sup> Seneca & Kai at the V-day Dance

<sup>4</sup> Connor & Charlie ready for the Winter Light Show at Shelburne Museum

<sup>5</sup> Valor joins Riverflow as a Coworker   <sup>6</sup> Duncan and William are making amazing food!

<sup>7</sup> Game night brings laughter and joy   <sup>8</sup> Jesse celebrates his finished felting   <sup>9</sup> Charlie baking bread

Dear Family and Friends of Riverflow,

This has been a true Vermont winter, with record breaking cold days that have kept us inside for safety. These last months have been a time of keeping warm, building our friendships, felting, setting up the woodshop, and creating beautiful decorations for our seasonal festival celebrations. Snow-covered fields gave us ample opportunity to snowshoe, build snow people, and for our new coworker to make her first snow angel. There was also the learning of snow removal and caring for all our entrances to keep them all accessible.

Our opening months have given us time and much opportunity for celebration. The Fall flew by as we prepared our garden beds for the winter, built a compost bin, cleared the underbrush, and discovered the beautiful perennial beds hidden below the overgrowth. We celebrated birthdays, halloween, hosted a festive winter holiday party, went to the Heartbeet Shepard's Play, enjoyed music and good food out in the community, and, yes, our gym visits have kept us fit! Jesse won medals for his skilled skiing and Connor had an eventful snowboarding season, including his special weekends at Zeno Mountain Farm with long-time dear friends.



We are in awe as Spring arrives, greening up the landscape, pushing growth up and into snowdrops, crocuses, and daffodils, bringing reason to celebrate in these first warm, sunny days. The trees are covered with swelling growth and we are back outside, working hard to design and dig a healing plant garden, preparing to

welcome our first flock of chickens, and doing the site preparation for our new greenhouse and garden shed!

All Winter, parallel with settling into our new life, the Riverflow Team busied itself with planning for the future and keeping up with our strategic development. Calls and visits from prospective families filled our hearts with motivation; we quickly realized the need for a full site plan. Dreaming big, we laid out a comprehensive community design, putting our imaginations onto paper. We worked closely with our architect, Patrick Kane, and a wonderful local engineering firm, Barnard and Gervais, to envision and design a fully realized community: four new lifesharing homes, a barn, a community center, and a modest office building all found their spots on the map. This initial visioning process culminated in a meeting with the Monkton Development Review Board on March 10th. The permitting process will take some time, but we are filled with hope for the future.

Now, we need your help! As you may know, Riverflow is located in a quiet, natural setting, perfect for the kind of peaceful, supportive environment our Friends thrive in. However, much of this beautiful serenity is currently inaccessible to us without a proper road. Our next big step is to finish the permitting process efficiently so that we can engineer and build a road that will access the four future house sites and the back acres for the farm. Help pave the way to our future!

With your support, you are doing more than building a road. You are opening the pathway to community, connecting our future homes, and making it possible for Riverflow to build a small therapeutic farm. In this phase of development, we need to raise \$350,000 for permitting, engineering, and necessary road infrastructure that will prepare us for construction of Riverflow's next home. Then we can fundraise, design, and build House #2, which will welcome four new Friends and additional community members. Join us in laying the path for Riverflow's next chapter.

Let's build it together.

In sincere gratitude,  
*Hannah Schwartz, Executive Director*

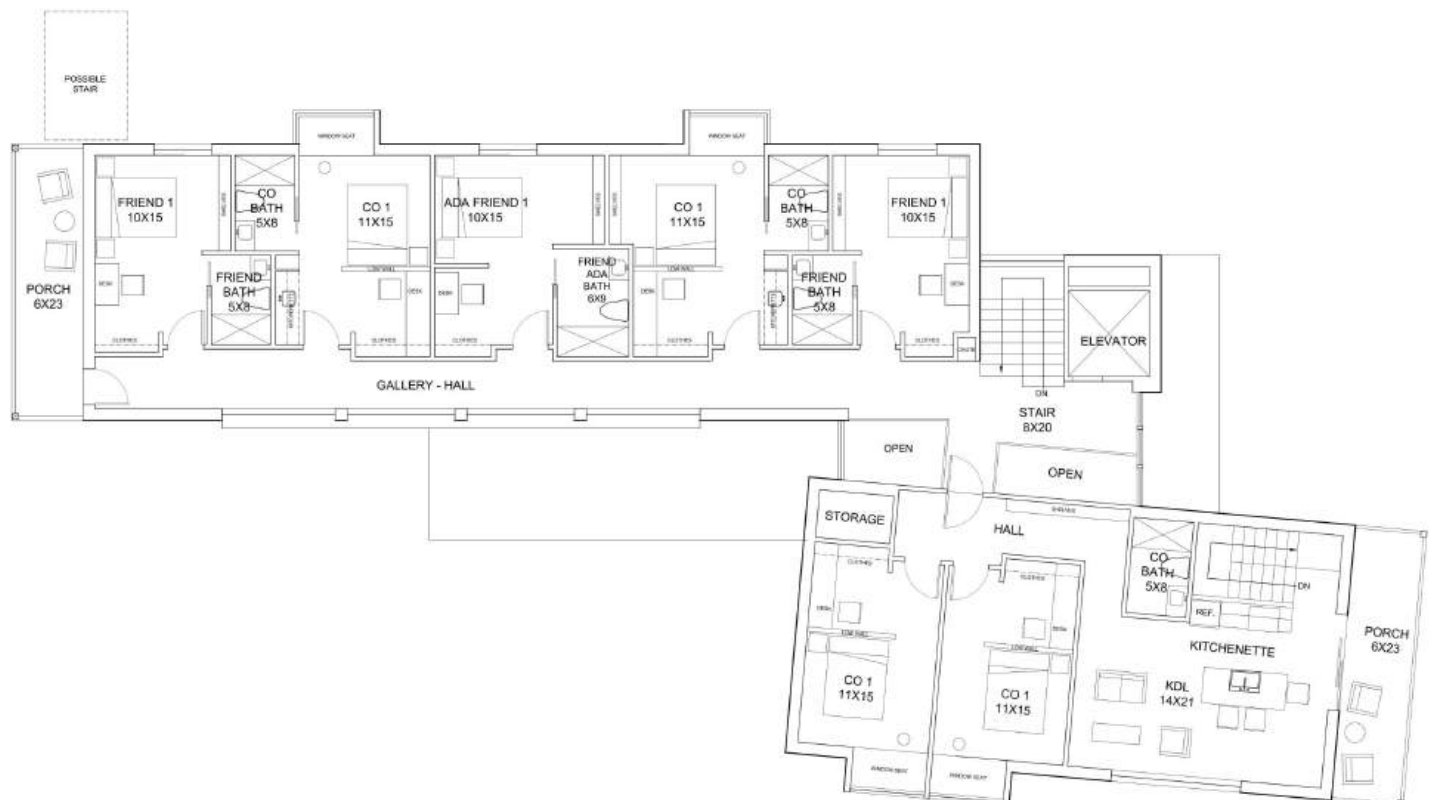
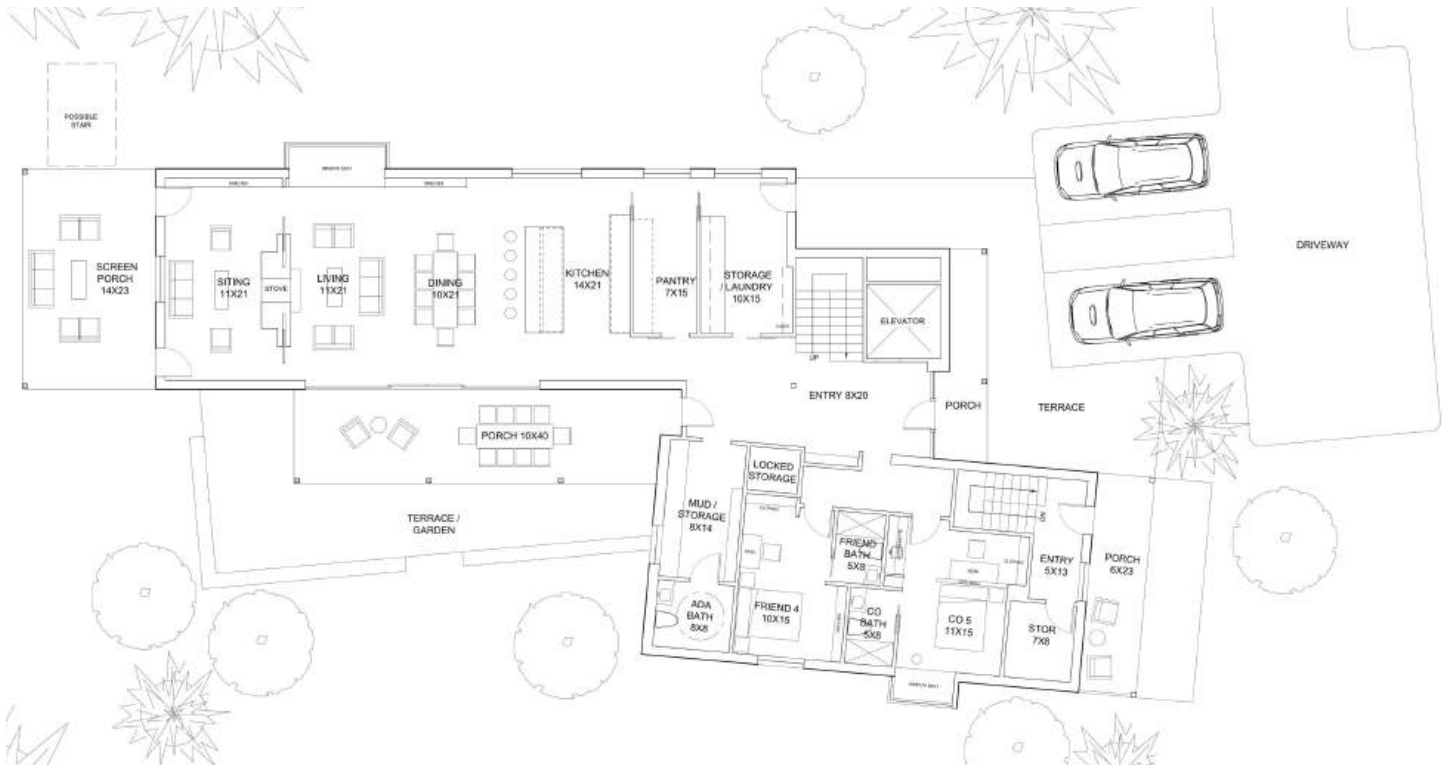
# From Vision To Village

DESIGNING OUR FUTURE



# House Number 2: Building for Belonging

Designs by Kane Architecture



# Designing a Therapeutic Barn: A Volunteer's Story

EMMA-SUNSHINE BURKARD

My name is Emma-Sunshine Burkard, and I am originally from Switzerland. I moved to Vermont in November of last year and was connected with Hannah Schwarz and the Riverflow Community through a friend. After a long conversation with Hannah, talking about ways I could get involved, we settled on me looking into the design of a therapeutic barn. Intrigued by the opportunity, I started my search for material that would support my learning. When I visited Riverflow to meet with Hannah and discuss the project, I was under the impression there would be a whole team working on the design—people with architectural degrees, years of experience, maybe even someone who knew what all the symbols on a blueprint meant. But as the conversation went on, it slowly became clear: that I would be taking the lead, collecting the needs and wishes and working them into a design. I think I even laughed and asked, “Wait—seriously, am I really able to take this on?” I was genuinely stunned that Hannah was willing to hand me such an incredible responsibility. It was a big ask and I knew that I had a lot of learning ahead of me but Hannah believed I could do it, and that belief gave me the courage to believe it too. I started with information gathering so that I could best understand what Riverflow was looking for with the barn, how many animals it would hold and the flow of people in and out; I also knew I needed to keep accessibility in mind throughout the project. I designed the informal floor plans, out of careful conversation and learning. I found an architect to help actualize my ideas and to create formal floorplans. Working together, we turned my sketches into something buildable—real blueprints that could guide construction.

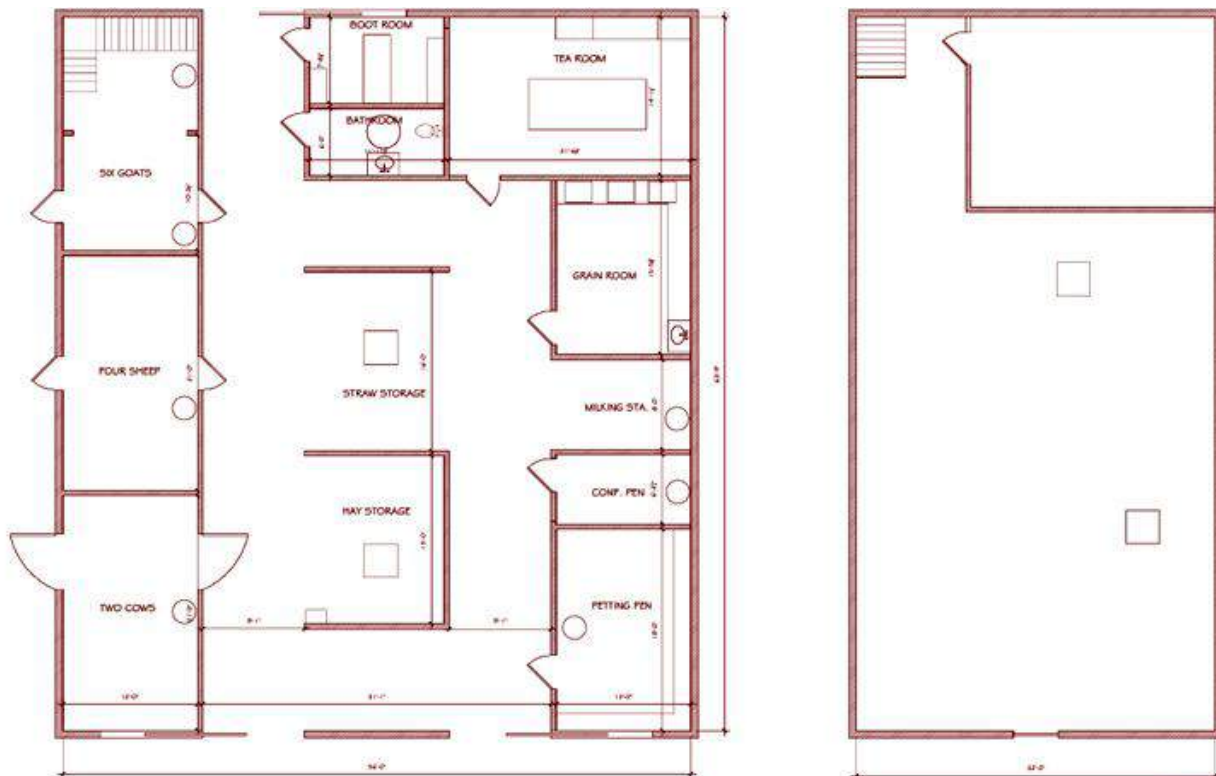
Now that the design phase is complete, I'm filled with anticipation and gratitude. The thought that my ideas will become something real—a place where animals and people can learn from each

other, a barn full of life, learning and joy—is an extraordinary gift. Over the months of designing the barn, I visited Riverflow once a week. I had never spent time in a community of differently-abled individuals before. But the Friends and coworkers at Riverflow welcomed me so openly—Connor greeted me with a hug, and Duncan pressed his face gently to mine—and from that first visit, I felt embraced. Duncan became a key member of the design process. He attended most of our meetings, studying my drawings with focused attention and adding his notes and ideas. Watching his excitement as the vision for the barn came together filled me with joy and a deep sense of purpose. I continue to be amazed by the work and love poured into Riverflow. It is a home unlike any I've known—radiating love, creativity, and joy. Riverflow is truly a place of magic, and I feel so lucky to have played a part in its unfolding story. I hope people will support bringing the barn to reality!





Emma and Duncan working together on the initial barn sketches.



**1 BARN PLAN**  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Digitized Plan by Erika Hasenfus

RIVERFLOW COMMUNITY  
BARN  
2.24.2025  
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT  
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

# Semester Endings at Riverflow

JULIE HOLMES



So just like that – once I am comfortable with everyone and feel a part of the community- my time is coming to a close. Suddenly the time feels short, and although I see the value in closure, I do not like goodbyes. Here is a chance to let the Riverflow community know how grateful I am for welcoming me in and giving me new perspectives about disability and intentional living in such a holistic way.



A big part of Social Work education is seeing strengths in people and bringing that to light. Riverflow embodies this and builds a community where everyone is valued. I got to see this in action in little ways- seeing Nate's clear communication style as he has an involved conversation about all the Star Wars characters, good and evil with Charlie, by how Valor dances, sings, lifts the mood with all the Friends. Duncan's solid and unflappable presence, Charlie's smile and laugh that wants you to be let into his world, William's cooking and outdoor skills along with his kindness – everyone adds their whole selves into the community. John with his love for the outdoors and seeing new potential in the Friends,

Brinkley with his artistic eye for beauty and woodworking along with his patience, Seneca with her straightforward, clear boundaries, deep intuition, and love of plants. Connor with his exuberant and extroverted joy, Jesse with his smile, connection and love for music, Hannah with her ability to make friends with anyone and everyone, and River's solid intellectual and clear-headed, warm way. All these parts somehow make a project that seems so unwieldy work. It seems kind of sappy to say this- but it really is love that leads the way. All the daily interactions have this higher purpose of creating a collective community that works for everyone.

Another big theme in the Social Work world is the micro-mezzo-macro view. On the micro level, the many one-on-one interactions happen at community mealtimes, during one-on-one supervision, during workshops, or in the kitchen during meal-prep or clean-up. Meanwhile, River and Hannah are working on a mezzo level communicating with families and planning for further building on the Riverflow property. The macro part is the bigger system- policies and stakeholders who can help put laws and funding in place to make housing for IDD adults a reality. It is amazing to me to see River and Hannah navigate all these important levels to spread more awareness and care for adults with intellectual disabilities- a realm where previously all the financial, physical, and emotional care has been on individual families. They go from listening to a conversation at the felting table about moms, to writing a grant for funding, to meeting with a group of donors to advocate for more houses. The small interactions are just as important as keeping the long view of the shared purpose of loving and inclusive environments for everyone.

I came into my internship thinking of all the things I would be able to give and do at Riverflow. I am going away in the Camphill way, realizing how much of the learning has been on my end. I want to thank all of Riverflow for bringing me into the community. I know with all my Vermont connections that I will be another advocate for disability rights and housing. I also hope I can still come and play some music, make some art, and sit around the table with all these kind people and new friends. Thank you!!

# A Huge Thank You To Julie!

Riverflow has been blessed to have Julie as our first UVM-MSW intern – her gifts sparkled into our new beginning. She made amazing lunches, led us in watercolor painting and took time one-on-one teaching piano with Duncan, not to mention all the outside work! We feel blessed that Julie came as our first intern with all her gifts.



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# Ways to Give

## GIFTS OF CASH

Gifts of cash are the easiest and most direct way to make a contribution and are fully deductible for individuals who itemize their federal income tax return. If you make a cash, check, or credit card gift, you will be eligible for a deduction for the full value of your gift.

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

Riverflow Community  
Attn: Development  
57 Cedar Ln,  
North Ferrisburgh, VT 05473

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## DONATE NOW ONLINE

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

<https://www.riverflowcommunity.org/donate>

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## 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](mailto:hannah.s@riverflowcommunity.org)

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## 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](mailto:hannah.s@riverflowcommunity.org)

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## BY PHONE

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

802-498-4180

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## 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.

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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.



**Our first maple run!**



**Charlie finds his favorite things at the Monkton library**



**Enjoying a Lake Champlain sunset**

**Thanks for reading!**



**Riverflow  
Community**

**[www.riverflowcommunity.org](http://www.riverflowcommunity.org)**