



2026 ANNUAL REPORT OF DUMMERSTON CARES

July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026

The mission of Dummerston Cares is to strengthen the Dummerston community through support of all residents with health and other wellness needs through services, programs and resources of its own and those of related, local, regional and state organizations and agencies.

The Cares board is a hard-working team of volunteers, each one of us committed to helping our neighbors thrive and to enhancing the quality of community life that we all share. During 2025–2026, we were able to provide Dummerston residents of all ages with the remarkable array of free programs described in this report.

Much of what Cares is able to accomplish is only possible because of the local partners who collaborate with us throughout the year. We're grateful for the support and expertise of Dummerston Fire Department, Putney Foodshelf, Dummerston School, Green Mountain RSVP, The Views of Dummerston, Dummerston Congregational Church, Dummerston Community Center and Library, Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA), and Senior Solutions.

Highlights of the past year:

- Cares' volunteers organized two Community Food Drives on behalf of the Putney Foodshelf, and in partnership with Dummerston School students, their families, and many generous town residents, collected more than 3,000 pounds of food for local families.
- We successfully advocated for Dummerston to join neighboring towns in supporting the Putney Foodshelf with town funding. Thank you all for the overwhelming support our resolution received at Town Meeting to approve and increase the amount we requested.
- New Bone Builders classes for residents 55+ that started up last October with trained instructors continue to meet twice weekly.
- Cares sponsored several continuing education opportunities to keep residents informed and safe. In March, AARP Fraud Team's expert Elliott Greenblott presented his "Fraud 101 Class," and Priscilla Svec, RPT, held a Falls Prevention Workshop in June.

Looking ahead, we are excited to offer two new health and wellness programs:

- **Books on Wheels** is a free outreach service for residents who are unable to visit the library in person but would like access to books and other resources. The Library Director will receive and manage requests, and Cares' volunteers will deliver the materials to homes and, if desired, socialize with residents and read together.
- **Sign Up for Safety** is a partnership between Cares and the Dummerston Fire Department to help keep local families safe. To improve response times of first responders in an emergency when seconds count, we will provide high-quality, two-sided reflective address signs so that driveways and homes can be located quickly.

We welcome your ideas about how to better serve our community and also encourage residents to join us in volunteering. There's something for everyone! Please call the Message Line.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

MESSAGE LINE. Residents may contact Cares through our telephone line (802) 257-5800 or by email at info@dummerstoncares.org to request information or help that is not an emergency, and also to register for a program or event. These sites are monitored daily, and messages are forwarded to volunteers in a timely way. A total of 215 phone and 33 email messages were logged during the year. Everyone requiring a response received a return call or email.

Coordinators: Shawn Bracebridge (Phone Messages), Cindy Levine (Email Messages)

CARDS OF CARING: Residents who can benefit from some extra sunshine in their lives, as well as those recovering from illness or surgery, or grieving the death of a loved one receive cards from Cares as a reminder that they are not alone. We also send birthday greetings to Dummerston's most senior community members. Cards were sent to 45 residents last year.

Coordinator: Pam McFadden

CHORES CORPS. Volunteers help with simple home repairs, household chores, occasional yard work, grocery shopping, snow shoveling, and also make referrals to licensed tradespeople. This program is designed especially for residents who require help with immediate needs that can be provided by a friendly volunteer. This year 50 requests were received and met.

We're especially grateful to Dennis Mewes who used his master woodworking skills to build custom shelving for the Putney Foodshelf that he installed with the help of Terry Holabird.

Coordinator: Steve Mindel

Volunteers: Susan Daigler, Dave Evans, Shane Gangloff, Dennis Mewes, Dave Shaw, Keith Short, Frances Herbert, Leon Dunbar, Zachary Dunbar

EMERGENCY HOME-HEATING-FUEL ASSISTANCE. Cares manages a Fuel Fund that helps qualified residents pay for home heating fuel, including oil, kerosene, and propane. Cares also coordinates with Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) to respond to this basic need. Four families received fuel assistance this past year.

Coordinator: Bill Schmidt

EXERCISE CLASSES - BONE BUILDERS. Cares offers a free Bone Builders class that meets twice weekly at the Dummerston Congregational Church and is facilitated by trained volunteers. This is a strength-training and balance class for adults over 55 who want to improve bone density and help prevent falls. Fifteen residents participate regularly in this class.

Instructors: Phyllis Emery, Faith Evans, Joann Tyler

FRIENDLY VISITS AND CALLS. Cares connects volunteers with homebound seniors and other residents through social visits, phone calls, and other types of assistance. During the year, Cares' volunteers made 77 home visits and 96 calls to residents, many on a regular basis.

Coordinator: Pam McFadden

Volunteers: Catie G. Berg, Deb Carpenter, Susan Daigler, Phyllis Emery, Susan Leuchter, Pam McFadden, Steve Mindel, Bill Schmidt

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT LOAN PROGRAM. This program provides medical equipment, such as a walker, shower chair, or wheelchair, to those recovering from an injury or surgery. The equipment is available for as long as needed. Fifteen residents borrowed equipment last year.
Coordinator: Shawn Bracebridge
Volunteer: John Dunham

PUTNEY FOODSHELF. The Putney Foodshelf is Dummerston's community food pantry! We are grateful to the Foodshelf for providing free, fresh produce and household items, especially as the number of residents experiencing food insecurity continues to grow. Last year alone, Dummerston residents visited the Foodshelf 469 times, including 16 households visiting for the first time.

The Foodshelf is a welcoming place located at the Putney Community Center on Christian Square. Shopping hours are Fridays (12:30 to 3:30 P.M.) and Saturdays (9:00 to 10:30 A.M.). To publicize this service, Cares maintains two sandwich boards - in West Dummerston and Dummerston Center.

In the fall of 2025, Cares launched its first Community Food Drive in collaboration with Dummerston School's Student Asset Team. A second Food Drive followed in May 2026. All told, Dummerston residents contributed 3,000+ pounds of shelf-stable food as well as financial contributions for the Foodshelf. Thanks to the many generous folks who made this possible.
Coordinator: Meg Lyons
Volunteers: Catie G. Berg, Kat Berta, Deb and Wayne Carpenter, Susan Daigler, Phyllis and Ken Emery, Jim Johnson, Pam McFadden, Paula Nadeau, Seth O'Connor

RAISE THE ALARM FIRE SAFETY PROGRAM. During 2025-26, Cares continued its partnership with the Dummerston Fire Department to help keep local families safe from house fires. Cares purchased the smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, while trained firefighters installed the devices at no charge for any resident living in an owner-occupied, single-family house. Ten families either had their first devices installed or their current devices upgraded, bringing the total number of families served since the program started to 80.
Coordinators: Susan Daigler, Meg Lyons

RIDES. In a rural community such as ours, our Rides program is a lifeline for many residents and the most requested service. Vetted volunteers provide rides to medical appointments and other necessary destinations, both locally and throughout the region. Last year, six dedicated drivers provided 15 residents with 61 rides, covering a total of 2,272 miles.
Coordinator: Susan Daigler
Volunteers: Norris Evans, David Evans, Gurudharm Khalsa, Susan Read-Smith, Roger Turner

SCHOOL SUPPORT. This varies depending on the needs of students and families, as well as requests from the principal, nurse, social worker, and counselor. Food cards and gas cards were made available for some families.
Coordinator: Meg Lyons

SOCIAL TEAS. Cares continued to host Afternoon Teas at the Congregational Church for residents to socialize with old and new friends while enjoying delicious sweet and savory treats, plus of course, a cup of tea. Total attendance at the six events that were held in August, October, December, February, April, and June grew to 133 this year. Volunteers with Cares' Rides Program provided round-trip transportation to the event upon request.

Coordinators: Deb Carpenter, Phyllis Emery, Pam McFadden

Volunteers: Sara Alexander, Pearl Doubleday, Ken Emery, Connie Evans, Dave Evans, Cassie Freese, Susan Leuchter, Meg Lyons, Sallie May, Lou Nelsen, Bill Schmidt

SPECIAL NEEDS. Local families sometimes require a timely response when facing home emergencies that have an impact on their physical and mental health and safety. Residents often contact Cares directly and we help with rent payments, food cards and gas cards, car repairs, etc. In cases that involve significant resources, such as a roof or ground well that needs replacing, we rely on our partners at Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) to vet applicants and oversee construction projects. During the past year, Cares responded to six special-needs requests with financial support.

Coordinators: Susan Daigler, Meg Lyons, Steve Mindel, Bill Schmidt

VALENTINE BOXES. It is a Cares tradition each Valentine's Day for volunteers to fan across Dummerston delivering beautiful, hand-crafted Valentine boxes filled with delicious treats, flowering plants, etc. This undertaking is possible because of a team of volunteers who gather the day before to bake, create and fill the boxes to the brim. In 2026, 70 residents were delighted to receive a box — 20 for the first time — and to know that they are thought of fondly.

Coordinators: Susan Leuchter, Meg Lyons

Volunteers: Julie Bacon, Catie G. Berg, Sheri Bolster, Deb Carpenter, Susan Daigler, Phyllis and Ken Emery, Dave Evans, Frances Herbert, Jim Johnson, Pam McFadden, Steve Mindel, Paula Nadeau, Linda Rood and Roger Turner

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AND THANKS. For each issue of *The Views of Dummerston*, Cares presents its tribute to the "Volunteer(s) of the Season." Recognized this past year were members of the Conservation Commission, founders of the Wood Pantry, and Rich Cogliano, Dummerston's Emergency Management Director. We are very grateful to Catie Berg who retired last fall as our interviewer and writer after several years on the beat, and also to Connie Evans for stepping into this new role.

Coordinators: Connie Berg, Connie Evans

DONORS

Cares' volunteers and donors are our most valuable assets. We are deeply grateful to each of these generous individuals for making Cares' programs and services possible.

Gifts

Cliff Adler & Lynn Levine
Sarah Bedichek
Catie G. Berg
Kat & Alan Berta, Bertaventure LLC
Mary Ellen Copeland
Betsy Cox
Charles & Eleanor Fish
Marlyn Grossman
Frances Herbert
Ann Kroc
Carolyn Mayo-Brown
Steve Mindel & Susan Leuchter
Mary Louise Nelsen

Paul & Jody Normandeau
Denise Piazza
Stanley & Debra Powers
Roderick Reay
Kevin & Sara Ryan
William H. Schmidt
Gail Sorenson
Sorg-Vogt Charitable Fund
Robert Tortolani
Town of Dummerston
Trust Company of Vermont
Vicki Wood

In-Kind Goods & Services

Catie G. Berg	Gurudharm Khalsa
Kat & Alan Berta, Berta Venture, LLC	Cindy Levine
Sheri Bolster, Sheri B's Chocolates	Meg Lyons & Jim Johnson
Shawn Bracebridge & John Dunham	Dan Marx
Deb & Wayne Carpenter	Sallie May
Susan Daigler	Pam McFadden
Pearl Doubleday	Dennis Mewes
Leon Dunbar	Steve Mindel & Susan Leuchter
Zachary Dunbar	Paula Nadeau
Phyllis & Ken Emery	Kristina & Kelt Naylor, Sidehill Farm
Connie & Norris Evans	Len Oppenheim
Dave Evans	Larry Pratt, Alan Pike & DFD volunteers
Faith Evans	Susan Read-Smith
Laurie Frechette	Kevin Ryan
Shane Gangloff	Priscilla Svec, RPT
Goodenough Rubbish Company	Roger Turner & Linda Rood
Elliott Greenblott	Joann Tyler
Terry Holabird	Erica Walch & Green Mountain RSVP

2025-26 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meg Lyons, President
Steve Mindel, Vice President
Deb Carpenter, Secretary
Susan Daigler, Treasurer
Phyllis Emery
Dave Evans
Norris Evans
Pam McFadden
Bill Schmidt

HOW TO CONTACT DUMMERSTON CARES

Dummerston Cares, Inc.
P.O. Box 302
West Dummerston, VT 05357

Message Line: (802) 257-5800

Email: info@dummerstoncares.org
Website: www.dummerstoncares.org

Dummerston Cares, Inc.
Annual Financial Report
June 30, 2026

	Fiscal Year Ending <u>June 30, 2026</u>
General Account	
Cash Balance at beginning of period	\$ 6,923.23
Receipts:	
Contributions	8,634.02
Other revenue	612.50
Campership Donations	0.00
Program Fees	0.00
Town Support	900.00
Void uncashed check	0.00
Interest & Dividends	3.83
Total Receipts	<u>10,150.35</u>
Disbursements:	
Program expenses:	
Transfer to other accounts	129.96
Flowers, Baskets & cards	934.44
Social Tea Expenses	187.64
Program space	1500.00
Direct Relief	503.72
Food & Gas Aid	2000.00
Campership Aid	335.00
Contributions	500.00
Fire safety program	2022.03
Messageline telephone	151.61
Chores supplies	861.49
Total Program expenses	<u>9,125.89</u>
Administrative expenses:	
Postage	120.00
Post office box	126.00
Office supplies	113.45
Corporate Registration	195.00
Printing	0.00
Meeting supplies & gifts	140.33
Total Administrative expenses	<u>694.78</u>
Total expenses	<u>9,820.67</u>
Cash Balance at end of period	<u><u>\$ 7,252.91</u></u>

Fiscal
Year Ending
June 30, 2026

Edward Jones Account	
Beginning Balance	\$ 16,906.57
Transferred from general fund	0.00
Contributions	1,236.87
Interest & Dividend income	602.40
Market fluctuation	<u>1,640.31</u>
Ending Balance	<u><u>\$ 20,386.15</u></u>

Fiscal
Year Ending
June 30, 2026

Heat Fund	
Cash Balance at beginning of period	\$ 6,166.86
Receipts:	
Contributions received	200.00
Transferred from general fund	0.00
Interest Earned	<u>2.65</u>
Total Receipts	<u>202.65</u>
Disbursements for fuel	<u>1,859.89</u>
Cash Balance at end of period	<u><u>\$ 4,509.62</u></u>