

JUST ONE THING

Title: Community Build Helps Our Neighbors and Our Planet

Company/Organization: Sustainable Hanover

Type of Organization: Not for profit

Number of Employees: <100

Category: Nonprofit

Challenge or Opportunity: The challenge: improve leaky drafty windows to help our neighbors lower energy costs and reduce carbon emissions. So much of our housing stock in NH is old with windows that waste energy. Our poorer neighbors are especially burdened by heating bills. We wanted a high quality solution that works for owners and renters alike. We needed a solution that leverages our community volunteers to produce insulating window inserts that are custom-fitted, reusable, that look good and really work!

Approach or Solution: We chose to partner with neighbor town Norwich to use the Window Dressers system (WD) from a non-profit that has helped community teams build over 10,000 window inserts. WD provided training, supplies and assembly "jigs" that include quality control steps to ensure successful construction by unskilled volunteers. The model is easily replicated by pairing experienced teams with newcomers. In our first year, we were mentored by a seasoned team from Thetford. Now we are mentors to others.

Impact: Since 2021 we have built 470 inserts at "barn-raising" events held at local churches. The inserts save up to 15% of household heating costs, a significant reduction as fuel prices shoot up. A great side benefit is the community spirit enjoyed by the dozens of volunteers who come together to do good and have fun. They experience first-hand what a community can do when we all pitch in, young and old. We are pleased that inserts are free for low-income households and priced affordably for others.