

Ben and Abbie

Giving Life to a Storied Farmhouse



In and around Woodstock, Vermont, affordable housing isn't just hard to find—it's slipping further out of reach for the very people who keep this place running. Carpenters, teachers, servers, and care workers are too often priced out of the communities they serve. Local Deeds was created to change that, offering down payment support and housing stability for local workers in a market increasingly dominated by out-of-state buyers.

A Young Couple Dreams Big

For Ben and Abbie, a young couple just starting out their lives in the Upper Valley, homeownership seemed completely out of reach. Luckily, Local Deeds created a necessary foundation for them to settle down and jumpstart careers, free from the stress of renting.

Landing Dream Jobs in Quiet Place

Ben and Abbie demonstrate a profound commitment to service through their community roles. The couple met running cross-country at Colby-Sawyer College, where their love of the outdoors and literature drew them together. Abbie is a greenhouse and garden manager from Barre, MA, and Ben is a nurse from Enfield, NH. After graduation, they meandered from rental to rental in the Upper Valley for years. Meanwhile, Ben began his career at Dartmouth-Hitchcock, and Abbie pursued her passion for sustainable agriculture with AmeriCorps at the Vermont Center for Ecological Studies. Upon landing her dream role at Woodstock Union High School, the couple relocated White River Junction. They loved the community, but often fantasized about a quieter place, a house to call their own.

A Market that Discourages Young Buyers

Their dream, however, felt distant in a housing market where both affordability and availability pose challenges. "Like everyone, we looked at Zillow every once in a while, just dreaming about houses," Abbie shares. "Affording a house really felt impossible, and houses were never coming up on the market that were anywhere close to reasonable." Besides, they weren't looking for a new house. "I grew up in an old house. I don't really enjoy many newer ones. So we loved the idea of having an old fixer-upper."

Local Deeds is a Project of **Woodstock Community Trust**

Last summer, when Abbie came across the farmhouse listing, the dream suddenly felt within reach. With its rich history and undeniable charm, it immediately stood out. The timing, however, was less than ideal—Ben was off-grid on a remote canoe trip—but Abbie, knowing how quickly houses tend to sell, messaged the realtor and scheduled her first-ever house tour. When Ben finally had enough service to check his messages, he was greeted by photos and videos of what would soon become their home. From the rich dark wood beams to the abundant natural light and the inviting fireplace, the house captured their hearts. Its location—just 15 minutes from Abbie’s work and not much more for Ben’s hybrid schedule—made it practical as well.

The property’s 2.5 acres, crisscrossed by dirt roads and dotted with trails, sparked their imaginations. Abbie envisions sugaring maple sap and cultivating a lush garden, while Ben dreams of adding a climbing wall in one of the barns. The house’s deep history made it all the more appealing. Built by Obud Whipple, one of Pomfret’s earliest settlers, the farmhouse was originally part of a 100-acre property that introduced Jersey cows to the town. While the land has long since been subdivided, the house remains a tangible link to the past—something Ben and Abbie were eager to preserve.

A Fixer-Upper to Call Home

Having learned about *Local Deeds* through the school, they had the confidence to make an offer. “We didn’t think we were going to get it,” Ben says, still marveling at their good fortune.



By October, with the paperwork signed, the *Local Deeds* funds transferred, and the details ironed out, they were moving in. In typical Vermont fashion, the community welcomed them warmly. A neighbor across the road helped them repair the chimney, and local children, recognizing Abbie from her job at the high school, invited them to skate on Miller’s Pond.

With the support of *Local Deeds*, Ben and Abbie have found more than just a place to live—they found a place to nurture their passions, honor history, and root their future in the Vermont landscape that they love.

As the new year began, beneath the sprawling branches of an ancient wolf tree above their new home, Ben and Abbie got engaged. For these 26-year-olds, it signaled the start of a new chapter. Now, the 1840s farmhouse, nestled along quiet dirt roads, is filled with laughter, new projects, and confident homeowners. Thanks to Ben and Abbie’s vision and the support of *Local Deeds*, this piece of Vermont’s past carries on.

Help More Families Find Their Home

Local Deeds helps people like Ben and Abbie thrive in our community, free from the instability of housing insecurity. When you support Local Deeds, you make more stories like theirs possible.

- [**Donate Here**](#) to support nonprofit housing programs in the Woodstock area, VT
- **Volunteer** to expand local housing options for families
- **Share** to spread the word about the urgent need for affordable housing in the Woodstock area.

Together, we’re not just building homes—we’re building a stronger, more inclusive Vermont where families can stay, work, and thrive.

Local Deeds is an innovative program to protect housing for families and individuals who live and work, or will work, here year-round serving the local community.

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