

# Healthy Homes, Happy People

*The impact of Weatherization on the dimensions of wellness*

by

Will Eberle

Capstone Community Action Director of Weatherization

And

Geoff Wilcox

Weatherization Program Director  
State of Vermont Office of Economic Opportunity

# SAMHSA Dimensions of Wellness

The Substance Abuse and Mental Services Administration (SAMHSA) (the Federal governmental entity responsible for determining what practices are believed to best help people get and stay healthy) uses an 8 Dimensions Of Wellness Model, pictured here:



# *Weatherization and Financial Wellness*

Weatherizing a home provides:

- An average energy savings of 30% per household served.
- \$1,015 per year savings on average oil heated homes fuel bill.
- Significant savings on other utility and energy costs.

# *The Impact of Weatherization on Occupational Wellness*

WX jobs provide:

- Livable wages and good benefits
- Opportunities for ongoing training and education
- An advancement ladder that provides more money, responsibility, and challenge over time, that make this a satisfying life-long career.
- The VT WAP network employs 164 workers at the 6 WX Agencies, 6 at OEO, and 194 private subcontractors (heating contractors, electricians, plumbers, abatement contractors, insulation contractors, heat pump contractors).
- We paid \$5.2 million dollars to WX subcontractors last year.

# *Weatherization and Environmental Wellness*

The amount of CO2 prevented from entering the atmosphere annually from the 952 1-4 unit households weatherized in SFY24 was **4,774,586 pounds**. Additional environmental impacts are listed below:

- #2 oil saved: average of **261** gallons saved annually, **99,201** total gallons saved by **380** households.
- Kerosene saved: average of **242** gallons saved annually, **23,260** total gallons saved by **96** households.
- Propane saved: average of **247** gallons saved annually, **45,075** total gallons saved by **182** households.
- Natural Gas saved: average of **178** therms saved annually, **3,918** total therms saved by **22** households.
- Cords of wood saved: average of **1.6** cords saved annually, **244** total cords saved by **152** households.
- Tons of pellets saved: average of **1.3** tons saved annually, **104** total tons saved by **80** households.
- KWH saved (electric heat): average of **2,238** Kwh saved annually, **181,350** Kwh saved by **81** households.

# *Weatherization and Emotional Wellness*

A holistic approach to...

...running a construction company

- OneTouch/Efficiency Coaches talking with households about their global needs
- Referring out to other resources and braiding support from other programs and organizations
- The impact on the built environment on wellness and mental health

# *WX and Other Dimensions of Wellness*

- Spiritual: The numerous steps in the WX process and multiple caring and hard working people in the home often recharges our clients spirit.
- Social: We prioritize older Vermonters who are often isolated and the many-stepped process engages our clients to talk about their home and we often get home baked cookies and many conversations with clients.
- Physical: We make their home more safe, keeping them from being physically harmed by their home.
- Intellectual: Our efficiency coaches spend 2-4 hours in the home interacting with the client and “educating” them about building science, weatherization and other.

# *What is a “non-energy benefit of Weatherization”?*

There are more non energy benefits of WX than there are energy benefits. By far!

1. Improved indoor air quality
2. Improved combustion appliance safety
3. Improved / reduced moisture levels
4. Improved building durability (less mold, ice, frost in attic, water leaks, etc.)
5. Improved health of occupants and reduced medical costs
6. Residents can stay in their home and age in place.
7. Improved comfort in the summer and winter



# *Powerful Stories of Impact*

- Sleeping in the kitchen with the oven running, open, to stay warm.
- 84 years on the farm, and more to come
- Cleaning ladies and mental health.
- “Mom, why’s it warm here now?”

# *Testimonials*

## EAGLE TIMES

SEVCA Weatherization team is the best

To the Editor:

For those of you who have lived in an old drafty New England home, you will understand my newfound happiness. I found out about the Windham County Weatherization Program from SEVCA only a year ago and applied. My home is a 200-year-old, large and uninsulated building that would take several cords of wood, wood pellets, propane and a heat pump to the tune of \$4K each winter to keep it to a miserable 59 degree temp and never any higher. I've personally lived through seven winters and although you do get used to it, not only does it leave you always cold with many layers on and gloves on at all times, it creates an unsettling feeling within that life is not supposed to be this way in my 60s. All that has changed in just two weeks since the SEVCA weatherization team planned out the work, did the necessary tests and went to work. From the moment they arrived I was greeted with friendly faces eager to make my home as comfortable as it could possibly be. They even were well aware of my pets, made fast friends with them and made sure they stayed safe during the seven-day process. My home was a real challenge for the crew but each roadblock they hit, they came together to solve the problem and continued on. They found additional spaces to insulate and filled every nook and cranny they found. Their work was also very aesthetically pleasing and professional- looking. Afterward my house attained a 42% improvement, which I can already feel around me. When the team arrived, they came as workers and left as friends. I cannot thank each and everyone of them enough in their profound desire to make my house a home.

- Ann Smith Westminster

# *Testimonials*

## It can take a Village

“Hi all you who helped me beat the weather: the Crisis Fuel/Utilities specialist at CVOEO, the Heating contractor, installers of the system, all the folks from the Champlain Valley Weatherization Service, the Case Manager at Age Well, and the Housing Retention Specialist at Burlington Housing Authority. Last week my new heating and water system achieved peak performance, and I am liberated from fear of winter! It's 70° steady here, it doesn't make a sound, it takes up NO space, mounted on a wall, and honestly it's really something to see. I am safer now. Happy to report another enormous benefit - for the first time in 30 years, I can get through a shower without running out of hot water. Cannot tell you how happy that makes me. So you've all changed my life so much for the better. I want you to know that. I thank you all.

Your friend forever.”

# Working in WAP

Weatherization changes the lives of workers as well as clients.

It's more than a job - it's a career if you want it to be.

- Good pay.
- Good benefits (health insurance, retirement, paid time off, etc.).
- Education and continuous training.
- Frequent opportunities to participate in conferences and learn and network with people across the country, and travel.
- **This is a job that makes a difference for society.**
- Many opportunities to develop local, state, and national friendships and relationships in the network.
- Opportunities for advancement (the sky's the limit).
- Building science and social service are pretty cool things to make a living from and this job sparks a desire to go to work every day for most people who do it.

# Questions and Comments



# Staying in Touch

Thank you!

If you'd like to stay in touch or ask any follow up questions you can reach us at:

will@capstonevt.org

geoff.wilcox@vermont.gov

