



community development partnership

Creating opportunities for people to live, work, and thrive on the Lower Cape

It was just supposed to be siding: A Housing Rehabilitation story

"A lot of people are just reluctant to ask for help, but you have to look into it!"

Carol Nickerson
Housing Rehabilitation Client
Truro



Carol sits on the new front steps of her newly sided house.

Six months into the year and the CDP's Housing Rehabilitation program is at capacity. With 20 low to moderate income households participating from the towns of Truro, Wellfleet, Provincetown and Eastham, over \$600,000 will be paid to six local contractors to complete critical repairs ranging from installing a new septic system to lead-paint removal. Among our current clients is an 81-year-old woman who has been showering at the gym since her septic system failed last March and a young family who recently discovered that their house was full of lead-paint after their infant tested positive for high levels of lead.

In June, our housing rehab team received a request from a Truro resident for siding. It was from Carol Nickerson, a long-time resident of Truro, and retired Town Hall employee who is undergoing treatments for a medical condition.

Her house is a sweet little cottage set back in the woods surrounded by newly planted annuals. Carol moved to Truro in 1974. After Carol married, she and her husband bought their house in the woods in 1987. They had done little more than fix a window and door when Carol's husband died less than ten years later.



Carol's house before the repairs.

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Carol's porch before...

Alone and on a tight budget, Carol was unable to keep up with the maintenance and repairs over the ensuing twenty-three years.

Over the years Carol had heard about the housing rehabilitation program but had never made the connection that it might be something she could use. But her siding was rotted and she was having problems with bugs, so when she saw a brochure at the Council on Aging this spring, she decided to apply. She says of filling out the application, "There was a lot of paperwork, but the staff was very helpful in helping me get through it. The lesson learned is that you need to keep your documents in order!"

According to Carol, "I only asked for some help with the siding. I didn't want to take advantage, there are so many people out there who need help." But when CDP staff arrived at the house to conduct the assessment, there were numerous code and safety issues that needed to be addressed. In addition to the siding, the concrete steps leading to the front door were crumbling and unsafe, the roof needed to be re-shingled, gutters needed to be added, the stairs down to the basement needed a railing, a window, door & slider were rotten and needed to be replaced. There were also a couple of places where lead paint needed to be removed. "I was just stunned and thrilled by the results of the inspection," says Carol.



...and after.

In June a local construction crew came out and worked on the repairs for the next for 3 1/2 weeks. Carol remarked "My husband was a contractor and I've never seen contractors work like these folks." On the days after she came home from her medical treatments she says "the crew tried to keep the noise down. They were the best!"

When the repairs were complete, Carol was so pleased with the results that she hosted a cocktail party for 22 of her friends to show off the improvements. She also recently appeared on the CDP's bi-monthly radio and TV show, *This Place Matters*, where she talked about her experience working with the CDP staff and construction team. She has been amazed by all the positive feedback she has been getting about her house and wants to help spread the word about the program. She notes that "A lot of people are just reluctant to ask for help, but you have to look into it! "

To date the CDP has assisted over 400 homeowners, paying over \$10 million to local contractors since the program was established in 1994. Repairs of up to \$40,000 are paid through a no interest, no payment, 15-year forgivable loan. Energy efficient upgrades are applied to all repairs which helps to lower the monthly utility costs for homeowners. For many there is the additional benefit of having someone else manage the renovations and ensure that the work gets done in a timely fashion and done well.