

Couleecap's Weatherization Program Provides Tranquility, Safety, and Comfort

A home should be a sanctuary, a place for peace and quiet. A place to unwind after a long day. But sometimes there are aspects of one's home that take away from the tranquility, safety, and comfort. When that is the case, Couleecap's home weatherization and home rehabilitation program maybe able to help.

Sarah Caldwell enjoys the December morning tucked inside her quaint and colorful home in Viroqua. "I like to run a warm home," Sarah notes as she pulls on her leather gloves to toss a log into her small kitchen wood stove. "I always knew I'd want to use a wood stove in this home, but when I bought the home, the furnace was already 35 years old. There was a bid in ahead of mine to purchase the home, that backed out because of the age of the furnace. It was always something looming in the back of my mind, what if I did need to turn it on and then it wouldn't work? What would I do? I'm very grateful to have a new one now." Sarah who has worked in the healthcare field for over 14 years found her home in need of various renovations to help make it a comfortable and safe space for her to unwind after a hard day at work.

Earlier this year after being on the waiting list, enduring COVID-related supply chain shortages and challenges finding available contractors, Sarah was finally able to complete the process of her home renovations with Couleecap. "There is a learning curve. Making calls to contractors and working to not seem so green to the process. At times it could feel like I was walking on the gang plank above crocodiles," Sarah added with a chuckle. "I found myself praying for guidance to help work through the process. After talking to a client I work with I was able to make a connection with a local contractor who was happy to work with Couleecap and me and he really went above and beyond," Sarah explained. With the help of her contractor, they were able to secure local, honest, and trustworthy subcontractors that helped make the process easier. Although the struggles of the pandemic made supplies difficult to source at times, the contractor was able to work through obstacles with Sarah and Couleecap to accomplish the goal while accommodating Sarah's needs. "When it was done, I felt empowered. I thought 'Wow! I pulled this together and I found people I could trust.'"



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Our Mission

Couleecap fights poverty and promotes self-sufficiency, economic development, and social justice. We are **People Helping People**, and every day our actions make a difference in the lives of people and families throughout the Coulee Region.



Sarah had heard about Couleecap's work through others in the community and made the decision to reach out and see how they could help. "It was really interesting," Sarah explained of the process. "She (a worker with Couleecap) came over and went through the house with me with a fine-toothed comb." Through this process Sarah and Couleecap were able to identify many different needs that they would be able to help with. In the end, Sarah's little home was given quite the face lift. New windows throughout the home now have eliminated her need to put up plastic in the winter for the first time in 11 years, with the bonus of increased quiet and calm, a new storm door helps to keep the heat in and makes getting in and out a lot easier. An once lead paint covered and dilapidated garage door on Sarah's attached garage now offers her piece of mind and ease. Other touches like increased insulation and new drywall as well as replaced carpet and bathroom flooring round out the experience. Throughout the process Sarah was also able to work with local businesses to fulfill her needs, sharing that she was able to pick out aspects of the renovations like flooring. "I was able to go to Sealand's in Coon Valley, a locally owned business, and was given a budget for flooring," Sarah explained. "It can be a bit overwhelming in the showroom but I'm an artist and I went with my gut and was very happy with how it turned out."

"My favorite change is definitely the bathtub," Sarah says with a hint of a grin. "The old one always had mold on the caulk and other challenges, the one they installed is designed in a way that I'll never have to worry about that happening anymore. They were even able to install a grab bar for me when I told them I'm not getting any younger."

During her previous years at home, Sarah put a lot of work into creating the outside of her home a comfortable and special place for her while touching up parts inside to reflect her artists spirit. Through her work with Couleecap, Sarah's house is now not only a beautiful, colorful comforting place inside and out but also safe, efficient and ready to be a sanctuary for her for many years to come.

Couleecap programs, such as our Energy Services home weatherization and home rehabilitation program, serve thousands of people in the Coulee Region each year. These programs are possible because of the financial support from donors like you. Your support has given Sarah the help she needs to succeed.