

Couleecap's Weatherization Program Provides Physical Comfort and Relief



The Coulee Region is dappled with old houses. Dating back to the turn of the century and before, these homes can offer charm, beauty, and a glimpse into Wisconsin's past. However, often, they also present challenges like outdated heating mechanics as well as lacking enough insulation.

Bridget and Don moved into their home in rural Crawford County in 1987. At that time the home had already been standing for nearly 120 years. "We moved to Ferryville from Milwaukee at first," explained Bridget. "Then it was time to find a new home for ourselves and I went driving around and saw a tiny 'FOR RENT' sign in the window of this house. I found out the family was selling it on a rent to own basis, and the rest is kind of history."

The home was originally a small cabin constructed in 1886, with additions built on in the 1940s. The home still holds a lot of the old-world charm of a farmhouse from those eras. "Couleecap came in and did a lot of work, you can't exactly see it all, but you can definitely feel it!" Bridget explains as she stands in the room which was once the original cabin. "This room is always the coolest in the summer, and warmest in the winter." A long radiator runs along the back of the family's sofa, and another stands guard near the front door and kitchen. "They used to get so blazing hot you couldn't touch it. When they were ran on wood heat it would be harder to regulate the temperature."

Since they had moved there in the 80's the family had utilized a large, old wood burning stove to heat the home. Located in the basement they would toss the wood down through an old coal chute to access it for their basement stove. Burning about 25 cords of wood to compensate for the fact the house was under-insulated, and the stove was outdated, the family spent many years feeling the burn of the hard work and cost associated needing to stay warm through the long winters.

"When we were younger, it wasn't so hard to run out into the woods when we'd run out of wood in the middle of winter and chop a little more to get by," shared Bridget with a chuckle. "But, we're older

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-Bridget

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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.

now and in our 60's and we just didn't want to be needing to do that anymore." Difficulties that come with age as well as the ever-looming fear of a chimney fire helped to give the family a push to explore options with Couleecap's weatherization and energy services programming.

Through the weatherization program that the family participated in with Couleecap, they were able to have a high efficiency LP boiler installed in their basement, expertly linked to their existing radiators. "I love my radiator heat," Bridget explained. "So, I am so grateful they were able to make it work." In addition to the furnace and its workings, which Bridget notes she refers to as "a work of art" Couleecap was also able to fill all the inner nooks and crannies of the old farmhouse with thick insulation to keep the warm air in and the chill out.

"Before, the walls in our bathroom had frost on them every winter," Bridget noted of the quaint small bathroom on the first floor which is now filled with various plants, thriving in the warmth and sunshine of the room.

In addition to the work that was done Bridget also touched on the workers that conducted it as well. "The crews that came here were just absolutely awesome," Bridget boasted of the in-house weatherization crew that is employed by Couleecap, noting that through the process she found them thoughtful and conscious of her' questions and concerns. "I was so pleased with the way they worked so well together and didn't mind me asking questions."

Now in the second winter following the family's weatherization work, Bridget can confidently say that it has really changed their life for the better. "We loved burning wood, and we love this old house but we couldn't afford it anymore and we couldn't do that anymore," Bridget explained. "With the efficiency of the heat in the new house we now can afford it, and it not only provides physical comfort, but it's creating relief for us as well."

Couleecap programs, such as our Weatherization program, serve thousands of people in the Coulee Region each year. These programs are possible because of the generous financial support we receive.