



*This barn in Peacham is getting a couple of fresh coats of paint thanks to grant funding, a donation of paint and teen painters from YouthBuild in Burlington. (Aerial Photo by Dana Gray)*

## PEACHAM

# Iconic Barn Painting Project A Win-Win

Owners And Student Painters Benefit

BY DANA GRAY  
Staff Writer

PEACHAM — When you own what some people call “the most photographed barn in Vermont,” there’s a little pressure to keep up appearances.

Thanks to a grant-funded barn painting program through the state, owners of a barn on Church Street in Peacham, Katherine Siner and Louis Lacroix II, will have a freshly-coated barn in time for fall foliage season. That’s the time photographers most often walk into the field above the barn to shoot downward, capturing the barn, the church, Peacham Village and the colorful valley below.

“Every year Yankee Magazine is trying to get in touch with us,” said Siner. “It’s crazy. In the fall our whole back field is full of photographers.”

The work done on the Peacham barn helps Siner and Lacroix keep their word. “We bought this farm from the Kemptons and we made a promise to them that we’d keep this place up,” Siner said.

A labor force of eight teen-age boys from the Burlington area is responsible for making the picturesque scene pop a little more this fall as two coats of red paint were applied to the barn.

The boys are part of ReSource YouthBuild, based in Burlington. YouthBuild is a national program for youth, providing an opportunity to earn trade certifications and an AmeriCorps Education Award, while learning construction skills. ReSource offers two YouthBuild programs in Vermont (Burlington and Barre).

The program also offers education toward a high school graduation.



*Connor Wisley, left, and Brandon Jordan paint a barn in Peacham while standing inside a fenced area for the pigs. (Photo by Dana Gray)*

Teacher-leaders Prem Linskey and David Kerr are leading the boys on the project, which was in its sixth day on Wednesday. The crew began working 10-hour days last week. They believe they’ll be done next week. On the weeknights they stay in tents on the property near the Peacham Congregational Church.

It’s hard work, said Linskey, but the project offers the boys so much in return. A partnership with the Department of Labor makes it possible to pay the boys, but there’s much more, according to Linskey.

“Communal living, camping,” he said. “A lot of these kids have had to learn how to set boundaries around like, ‘hey, I want to go to bed at 9 o’clock; your voice echoes,’ stand up and say something. Set a boundary

See **Barn**, Page A6





*This barn in Peacham is getting a couple of fresh coats of paint thanks to grant funding, a donation of paint and teen painters from YouthBuild in Burlington. (Courtesy Photo)*

## Barn

Continued from Page A1

and then teaching others to respect somebody's boundaries. That's huge.

"How to work a 10-hour day. It's definitely not a skill that many kids or adults know how to do these days. Working outdoors. Teaching them the value of working with their body and being able to see the work they do in the community ... They'll be able to come back to this barn in 15 years and this paint will still be on," Linskey said.

It was 84 degrees on Wednesday and the teens were on the job with brushes and rollers. Connor Wrisley, 17, and Brandon Jordan, 17, were working on the back wall of the barn inside a fenced area for pigs. One of the pigs hunkered down in the cool dirt nearby, keeping them company.

Both boys said they appreciate being a part of YouthBuild because they prefer learning by doing.

"This is easy to learn real life skills, and plus you can get a lot of job benefits from this too," said Jordan.

Wrisley said he's happy to be earning a wage for his work because he's got a plan on how to invest his money in his future.

"I want to be a blacksmith when I get older so I already have to start saving up for a forge and stuff like that," he said Wrisley.

Vince Danyliek, 16, of Burlington, said he too prefers on-the-job education. "I like how you can

learn useful skills for everyday life instead of just going and sitting in class."

The barn project is only the second one YouthBuild has done. A grant program through the Agency of Agriculture benefits the barn owners and YouthBuild gets the benefit of doing the work.

YouthBuild does projects throughout the year, usually they are carpentry jobs.

Linskey said he is happy his crew could paint the Peacham barn. He spoke well of Siner and Lacroix. "They've been so cool," he said. "The homeowners are just amazing." On Wednesday evening, the family prepared and served dinner to the boys.

Linskey said the overnight aspect of the Peacham project was a special benefit for the group because he and Kerr are hopeful they can take a team out of state for disaster relief work.

"Dave Kerr and I have both done disaster response work," said Linskey. "He was the lead carpenter in rebuild Waterbury after (Hurricane) Irene. I've traveled the world doing disaster response work. This for us was like a trial to see how they would do camping, how they would deal with a long day's hard work, and now we're going to start fundraising."

Siner said the boys have been great in both their hard work and their behavior in the tent compound outside the home.

She said the barn painting grant program made the project on their barn possible. Left to do it themselves, she said it would have

been prohibitively expensive.

"I'm really excited about it because it's a cost that we wouldn't have been able to handle," she said. "Peacham is a historic, registered village so we just wanted to preserve the barn."

Andrew Jope, YouthBuild director, helped make it possible. He was tasked with determining which sites for his youth team to tackle.

"I went out and scouted barns," he said, looking for the right fit for the teen crew. The Peacham barn was the right site, he said, based in large part on safety issues such as height and level ground but also on the importance of cooperative landowners.

"Katherine and Lou have certainly been that," he said. "They have been so accommodating and so generous ... Beyond the work, the whole experience has been terrific."

Jope said he hopes that barn projects can continue and that YouthBuild can be a part of the workforce. It serves the program needs for hands-on experiential learning and helps satisfy AmeriCorps requirements that members spend 500 hours a year in community service.

At 10 hours a day the time adds up quickly for the crew in Peacham as the paint buckets empty. Jope said between 75 and 80 gallons will be applied to the Siner-Lacroix barn. PC Construction based in South Burlington donated all the paint for the Peacham barn and for a second barn project at Turning Stone Farm in Greensboro.

