REPORT TO
THE COMMUNITY

2021 WARMSHOWERS.ORG FOUNDATION
A Message From Our President

As the world changes and situations upend our understanding of what "normal" looks like, we should challenge ourselves to prioritize the things we love most in life. There is great beauty, interest, and kindness everywhere. What better way to connect with great friends we haven't met yet, and explore places we haven't stumbled across yet, than from the seat of our bikes. As an organization, we are not letting the world change us. We forge on with our journey to make Warmshowers.org an even better platform to support our community of adventurers and gracious hosts.

Our Board is now far more diverse than it has ever been, with members from across the globe. Our newest members hail from Italy, the Netherlands, Canada, and USA. Our primary function is to provide you with the best technology and media platforms. It’s exciting to have new members on our Board with backgrounds in technology, media, and communications.

Our current website is written in Drupal 6, a platform at the end of its lifespan and now no longer fit for purpose. Our changes to our business model in 2020 have worked. We now have a more resilient organization and the capacity to upgrade our technology.

With your help and input we spent most of 2021 analyzing our current technology and planning for future enhancements. Our research is complete, and we are very excited to embark on a platform upgrade that can be constantly improved and include the features you have requested. We hope to complete the rollout towards the end of this year.

Our newly formed Global Development Committee has already begun developing a framework to help expand our community further. We aim to strategically expand our network of hosts across the globe so that our touring community will have more hosting opportunities and more up-to-date information. We will be prioritizing where we grow to deliver an effective and well-developed network supported by a significantly improved technology upgrade.

Our most valuable asset, our community, has flourished and remained strong despite the challenges of the past few years. Our hosts and touring cyclists are resilient and have found unique ways to keep riding. I am encouraged daily by reading the comments in our forums, Facebook group, and on Instagram. If you are not already following Warmshowers.org’s social media channels, now is the time. Join our private Facebook group and tag us in your photos on Instagram so we can share. It’s a great way to follow the adventures of our users and stay connected.

My thanks to our hard-working band of volunteers who sit on the Board, contribute to committee initiatives, and support our outstanding part-time Executive Director, Tahverlee.

Now, more than ever, though, let’s face forward confidently, with passion and kindness – we have the very best world in the Universe.

Lance Bickford, Board President

A Message from our Executive Director

If there’s one thing we’ve learned in the last few years, it’s resiliency.

The last two years have been challenging. Cyclists and hosts had to adapt quickly to the ever-changing environment at home, in their communities, and on the road. We faced the demands of restrictions locally and on a global scale with looming delays to our cycling and hosting plans.

As the world changed and experienced many, often devastating levels of challenge, our community remained strong, even when our plans to tour came to a crashing halt. We focused on providing resources and connections to all of our users during this time.

We found inspiration and motivation in the incredible resiliency of our hosts in creating new ways to welcome cyclists within safety parameters. We witnessed cyclists taking shorter, local tours to remain on two wheels when long-distance travel wasn’t possible. We stayed in touch through the thoughtful stories shared across our platforms and podcasts. Thanks to you, we remained connected.

Our primary focus these past few years has been ensuring you have access to our vibrant community and that our technology remained stable and secure. We continued to partner with industry organizations and companies that were committed to adaptability and connection. We rolled out the new mobile app, some new user applications, and embarked on a complete review of our technology and security to determine how we can support increased diversity and flexibility in these ever-changing times.

Looking forward, we are excited to begin implementing a new technology platform that will improve functions and smooth out accessibility issues. Your feedback and participation in surveys have been vital tools in helping us create an excellent technology plan. When you speak, we listen.

We extend our sincerest gratitude to all who make this organization a vibrant, open, and resilient community. We look forward to exploring the world with you in 2022 and beyond.

Tahverlee Anglen, Executive Director
A Great Big Thanks

Meet Jack Turner. A Warmshowers user for 23 1/2 years, former board member, host, cyclist, original software developer, and our longest standing volunteer. If you’ve contacted our help desk or requested support, Jack was likely on the other side of the internet, working to solve the problem and provide help.

In 2021, Jack officially retired, and we miss him greatly. His dedication to the organization from its early days, through almost 24 years of service to our entire community, has been a gift to us all. His willingness to work on any problem and dedicate more hours than we could possibly count has been one of the key reasons Warmshowers is what it is today.

Thank you Jack. We are forever grateful for all you have done, and please know that every time a cyclist and host connect, you were a part of making that happen.
Strategic Areas of Focus

1. **COMMUNICATION**
   
   *Increase storytelling capacity across organization platforms*
   
   The Warmshowers private Facebook group and Instagram feed are where you will find unique posts and pictures from touring cyclists and hosts across the globe. We share many great posts on our main Facebook page which has increased awareness of our organization and brought new users to our community.

   Our newsletter has grown into an enhanced publication full of the latest news and monthly features such as Stories From the Road and Host’s Corner. The top-rated Bike Life podcast continues to bring the stories of cyclists, hosts, activists, and real people from our community to every corner of the world.

   Join our Facebook group, Warmshowers.org, follow us on Instagram at @Warmshowers_org, and listen to Bike Life at Podpage.com/bike-life.

2. **GOVERNANCE**
   
   *Improve Board Governance Practices*
   
   Over the last several years, we have focused on improving the systems and structure for our strategic planning, evaluating feedback from our community, and putting it into action. We listened deeply to our community and developed future technology plans and community-building strategies based on your highest priorities. To support these priorities, the board of directors improved their structure to increase global representation on the team, created new data and analytic teams to remain informed, and rolled out a Code of Conduct to ensure the reliability and safety of our community.

3. **PARTNERSHIPS**
   
   *Develop partnerships that bring value to the organization and the users*
   
   In 2021, Warmshowers.org Foundation increased its strategic partnerships to four by bringing on new organizations that add value for our community. Our continued collaboration with BikeFlights offers our users superior bike shipping at a discounted rate. We have formed new partnerships with Filmed by Bike, East Coast Greenway, and Rails to Trails to increase awareness of their premier benefits to cyclists across the United States. Our goal for 2022 is to create partnerships with organizations that have values similar to ours and are located in strategic areas that will support our users’ needs.

Emergent Area of Focus

4. **TECHNOLOGY**
   
   *Develop a framework for excellent technology*
   
   Warmshowers.org Foundation has undertaken a full-scale review of our technology systems to bring users an up to date and superior experience. In early 2021, we conducted a comprehensive user survey to fully understand the community’s needs and wants. Using that data as a basis, our technology committee performed a thorough analysis and accepted proposals from website developers across the globe. The process was exhaustive, and using the technology committee’s expertise, the Board of Directors selected a development company able to take Warmshowers’ technology to the next level. The project is extensive and is estimated to be complete in late 2022.
The world began to tour again in 2021! It is so good to hear your cycling and hosting stories about making up for lost time, making new connections, and renewing old ones. Warmshowers used 2020 downtime to solidify our operations, launch our mobile app, and further refine it by adding a free Host-Only mode. These efforts paid off in a big way and provided a solid financial 2021.

Source of Funds

New user one-time registration fees and increased mobile app downloads accounted for the bulk of our revenue. Fundraising remains a vital and integral part of our operations with regular donations and our annual bike giveaway fundraiser. Partnership income was a small percentage of our revenue in 2021, but enhanced partnerships and event sponsorships are in the works for 2022.

Operating Expenses

Technology remains our most significant operational expense. Dealing with periodic cyber-attacks on our website makes up the bulk of our technology expenses. However, it is a small price to pay to keep your data safe. In 2021, we added one part-time contractor to our administrative staff to support our Executive Director. These two positions are Warmshowers’ only contracted paid staff. Our stellar and passionate team of volunteer Board members from across the globe oversee the remainder of our operations.

Thanks to an increase in new users, app revenue, and donations, we ended the year with a 60% increase in our year-end cash position. This puts Warmshowers in the perfect position for BIG technology upgrades coming in 2022 to keep your data safe and improve your touring and hosting experience!
Keeping In Touch

Warmshowers.org Forums

The Warmshowers forums were established as a communication hub for our users to discuss their travels, hosting experiences, best routes and equipment and more. They are a great resource for many people; both on the road and off.

- **Looking for hosting, a travel partner or route and country information? Post in the Planning Your Next Trip forum.**
- **Do you have a blog, YouTube channel or media resources to share with our users? Post links and information in the Share Your Blog and Videos Here forum.**
- **The Equipment, Resources and For Sale forum is the perfect place to post equipment for sale, let the community know you are looking for specific equipment or find resources for the best equipment to meet your needs.**

The forums are the perfect way to communicate with fellow users, get answers to your questions, and find out what’s happening in the community.

Host and Guest Feedback

Feedback is an integral part of the Warmshowers community that helps others make informed decisions. Leaving positive feedback for an excellent host or guest is easy. But what happens when your experience is not so great? Consider reframing your comments to be as polite as possible.

- **Guests:** instead of saying, “The house was overrun with cats and smelled like urine.”, consider saying, “My host had several indoor pets, which made it almost impossible for me to be inside as I had an allergic reaction.”
- **Hosts:** instead of saying, “After agreeing on a departure time, my guest slept in and made me late for work.”, consider saying, “Our guest had great difficulty leaving in the morning at the discussed time.”

Remember, if you felt unsafe, harassed, or misled, please use the “Contact Us” button on the website to report the member to our Trust and Safety Committee so we can take action. Open and honest feedback, given politely and with kindness, will go a long way in keeping our community thriving!
Warmshowers.org Facebook Group

The Warmshowers.org Facebook group is the perfect place to share your latest adventures with our community and is intended for announcements, stories, and celebrations.

The Facebook group is private and open to all Warmshowers users. If you are not a member yet, join our Facebook group (Warmshowers.org) and answer three simple membership questions to be automatically approved.

DO:

- Share your trip experiences, challenges, and celebrations with the community.
- Include lots of pictures in your post! The community loves to see your smiling face and where you have been.
- Hosts: please tell us about your amazing guests, where they are from, and where they’re headed next.
- Ask the community for equipment recommendations, what to pack, sites to see, and routes to take.

DON’T:

- Include any outside links or YouTube links in your post. Create the post without the links, and once approved, you can add the link in the comments.
- Post requests looking for hosts along your route. Please use the “Planning your Next Trip” forum on the website for all host searches.
- Post cycling equipment for sale or looking for equipment to buy. Please use the “Equipment, Resources and For Sale” forum on our website.
- Post technical questions or problems accessing the website or mobile app. Please report those issues directly on the website using the Contact Us button or the Report an Issue button in the app.

Photo Credit: Dan Beaumont
Bike Life Podcast

Warmshowers Bike Life podcast continues to grow and is available in over 75 countries around the globe. In each episode, host Tahverlee brings us incredible stories of challenges overcome, personal goals reached, charitable tours undertaken, and unforgettable experiences shared by touring cyclists and hosts in our community.

Recent episodes like Queer in the Community and Women in Cycling highlight diversity in the bike community, while Reigning Kindness and Road Magic show us the generous and kind spirit of those we meet along the way. The Gift of Time and A Traffic Jam Moment teach us that life is short, and every moment should be embraced.

You can find the Bike Life podcast on Apple, Spotify, or your favorite listening app.

Join us on this fantastic journey!
In the Community

I just completed my cross Europe trip (from Berlin to Lisbon) and I just wanted to say how much I love this community. I stayed with really super amazing hosts across all the countries and this has been a fundamental part of my journey.

~Alice Segre

Third day on the C and O Canal. First two days was joined by a friend and her son. Was Great to see each other after a long time. Stayed one night in a historic lock house. The trail has been lovely and there’s always the river to cool off in. The cicadas sing day and night adding music and rhythm to the ride.

~Tom Micele

On day 74 riding self-contained from St Paul, Minnesota across the Northern Plains, Black Hills, Bighorns, and Rockies, and around Canada. Camping on the helicopter deck of the Alaska Marine Highway ferry Matanuska during the four-day voyage up the inside Passage.

Thank you so much to my hosts along the way in Ivanhoe, MN (Dana & Jeff), Huron, SD (Eric), Gillette, WY (Jim & Beth), Darby, MT (Curtis), Missoula, MT (Shawn & Arlen and Wendy & Jim), and Polson, MT (Andrea & Doug).

This adventure has been enriched by the best “trail magic” ever while staying with and getting to know my Warmshowers hosts!

~Kimo Goree

When we selected the 5+ guests option on our profile we never thought we would be welcoming a group of 28 cyclists to our home, 26 of whom slept in our house . . .

Great to host such an amazing group from The Netherlands on their way to COP26 in Glasgow!

~Bob & Deborah Gulliver

When in Waukesha, WI, ya gotta stay with Barb and Gene. They are super hosts!

Besides having kayaked the length of the Mississippi River, they bike, make wine and really make touring cyclists feel like family in their home.

Thanks for the great stay and riding out with us for 11 miles. Tailwinds!

~Frosene Sacco
Today we said our goodbyes to Stanton, who is on a long-distance ride from The Netherlands to “wherever”. Presently, he plans on spending the winter in Greece.

We ask our guests to “slam” the walls leading from the downstairs entrance up to our apartment. We started this activity two years ago. Considering the Covid lockdown period, we have 80+ individual wall slams on the walls. We ask each guest to write their name, home country, and the day’s date next to their wall slam.

As we escort our guests up to our apartment, more and more we are hearing new arrivals point out past guests they either have met in their travels or know. Our guest, Stanton, who left this morning, recognized two names on the wall. We actually have more and more guests commenting to us they want to add their handprints to the wall before they leave.

~Chuck Atkinson

I keep seeing signs for otters but think I have more chance of seeing the Loch Ness Monster.

Clear beautiful blue skies today, straight into a biting cold northerly headwind. I’m one stage away from going full Ernest Shackleton in my cycling gear.

Amazing rainbow on the beach after breakfast, and stars to gaze on after dinner outside tonight’s hobbit hut.

~Caroline Burrows

Finally at home. I never loved my home as much as tonight (21st Nov). I made ~2500 km by bike not counting when I had my bike on the train. Anyway, a big thank you to all my hosts during my bike tour to Glasgow.

Everyone was amazing! My tour would not have been possible without you.

~Dorothee Hildebrandt

All packed up and ready to explore! ONE more week away from cycling the rugged coastline of Maine.

Some people say it’s silly to cycle long distances when I could just drive a car. But my bike takes me places my car never will and nothing compares to the joy of riding a bicycle!

Hope that rain or shine - you are finding smiles with the miles!

~Katie Spotz
OUR VALUES

We are a community that VALUES inclusivity and diversity. We treat each other in a welcoming and respectful manner. We are passionate about cycling and supporting each other.

OUR VISION

We envision a future where everyone, everywhere views Warmshowers as THE community for connecting touring cyclists, and those who host them, making millions of connections possible.

OUR MISSION

To facilitate and promote safe, free reciprocal hospitality for the world-wide touring bicycling community.