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## 'Helping Hands' Thrives in Barnard

By Ben Strange



**Kim Furlong, co-owner of the Barnard General Store, helps lead Barnard's Helping Hands, an organization whose goal is simple: try to help people. (Herald / Tim Calabro)**

Kim Furlong, though already a hardworking owner and operator of the Barnard General store, also helps direct Helping Hands, a Barnard organization that simply tries to help people.

While that sounds a little abstract, it may be the only definite way to describe the scope of their mission. When people need help meeting the rent, Helping Hands steps up. The same goes for when families can't afford to heat their homes during the long Vermont winter.

They also operate events like "Firewood Fest," a day of collecting and chopping up fallen trees for crucial firewood. Furlong also said that the organization has in the past found homes for people whom, for whatever reason, needed to make new arrangements.

But their efforts are not tied solely to the Barnard area—or even Vermont. In November of 2006, Helping Hands endeavored to fill a 48-foot trailer with clothes and food for victims of hurricane Katrina—at a time when "survivors had little reason to believe that they were not forgotten," said Furlong at the time of the clothing drive.

They filled the entire trailer and donations were rushed to victims of the natural disaster in need.

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