



# A Second Way Out:

## How Mission at the Eastward Helped Linda Feel Safe at Home Again



Linda has been a “Farmington girl” her whole life. She and her husband moved into their home in 1989, and for decades it was the steady center of their lives together. After her husband passed away in 2022, Linda found herself facing the realities of homeownership on her own as grew older.

When repairs started piling up, she was stuck in a situation many Maine homeowners know too well: the work was needed, but the cost was out of reach.

*“It wouldn’t have gotten done if MATE didn’t do it,”* Linda said, explaining that she didn’t have enough money to make the repairs on her own.

## A Home That Needed Protection

Over time, the skirting around Linda's home had taken the full force of Maine's harsh weather. *"It was pretty rotten,"* she said. After all the winters and rain, it had *"rotten and fallen apart."*

The MATE Housing Repair program was able to come alongside Linda and complete critical improvements, starting with new skirting, chosen in colors Linda loved.

*"I picked the colors I wanted and MATE followed through with it,"* she said.

The results were immediate and practical. *"The floors are warmer,"* Linda shared. And for someone worried about what the cold could do to her plumbing, another change brought real relief: *"My water pipes haven't frozen! I was real worried about that."*



## A Safety Issue with No Easy Answer

But one of the most urgent concerns wasn't about comfort: it was about safety.

Linda had an opening for an exterior door, but no door was there. That meant she didn't have a second exit if something went wrong. *"It was a big safety issue."*



MATE built an exterior door and staircase so Linda would have a safe second exit. The difference wasn't just physical, it changed how she and her family felt about her being alone in the home.

*"Yeah, it feels good to have a second exit. My kids are a lot happier," Linda said. "They didn't like me not having one. They were afraid I wouldn't be able to get out in a fire."*

Now, she says, there's a deep comfort in simply knowing it's there:

*"It's good knowing it's there. It's a safety thing. I feel like I can get out now if I need to get out. Before I would have had to try to squeeze through a window, which wouldn't have worked."*

## **"Great Kids" — And A Lot of Heart**

For Linda, the work MATE provided mattered, but so did the people who showed up to do it.

*"First group was mostly teenagers. I loved them to pieces. Great kids!" she said.*







She talked about how meaningful it was to spend time with them: talking, learning about their backgrounds, and watching them work with joy and care.

*“Me and the kids really got into it! It was great. All the different backgrounds they had. What they do for jobs. It was really interesting! I loved that.”*

When asked what was most meaningful, Linda didn't hesitate:

*“The kids. I loved them! They are so sweet. They always had smiles on their face and always willing to do the extra step, if I needed something, they were right on it. I'm not used to that.”*



Their kindness affected her deeply.

*“I cried when they left... We did a lot of hugging! I miss them,”* she said, remembering how they promised to visit again if they returned to the area.

## More Than Just Repairs

The impact went beyond the project itself. Linda shared honestly about the loneliness she experiences, especially around holidays.

*“I got stuff done that needed to get done. I have no one to do it. My kids live too far away. I don’t have anyone come; it’s just me here. I don’t even really see my kids on holidays. Just me and the cat,” she said.*

For many homeowners experiencing a degree of isolation, MATE volunteers bring something that many often don’t expect: companionship.



*“The volunteers provided a lot of company. They kept me active and talked with me.”*

Linda also spoke warmly about MATE staff, including a team member who made her feel heard throughout the process.

*“Pete... he’s great! Very polite, very nice, and he knows his job! ... He listened to me.”*

## “Nobody Else to Do It”

When Linda reflects on what MATE did, she comes back to something donors and volunteers should never underestimate: for many homeowners, there truly isn’t another option.

*“I think MATE’s great... what they help with, we really need a lot. Nobody else to do it. And no money to do it with. They helped a lot. They really did.”*

And for those considering giving, her message is simple and powerful:

*“MATE does what they say they’re gonna do. They’re very dependable.”*

As for the volunteers who served her, Linda hopes they know what their time meant.

*“I really appreciate what they did for me and that they’re great people.”*

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## **Support MATE’s Volunteer Home Repair Ministry**

Your gift helps Mission at the Eastward continue providing critical home repairs for neighbors who are living on limited income and don’t have anyone else to turn to, repairs that bring warmth, safety, and peace of mind.

**Support MATE’s Work:** <https://givebutter.com/MATE>

\*Name of homeowner changed to protect homeowner privacy\*