



The Parish House under construction earlier this year. A grand opening and garden party is set for Sept. 6 for the Parish House housing facility in Bar Harbor. ISLANDER PHOTO BY EARL BRECHLIN

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Parish House opening set

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BAR HARBOR — A Grand Opening and Garden Party has been scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 6, from 4-7 p.m. at the Parish House, behind St. Saviour's Church off Firefly Lane. The event is a celebration of what has been a six-year, grass-roots process to create the facility.

The public is invited to tour the special needs adult home and to attend a short dedication ceremony. There will be refreshments and music.

In 2011, Local Solutions, a group of parents and concerned citizens from Mount Desert Island, had a dream: to create housing where people with special needs on Mount Desert Island would flourish. They formed a nonprofit and began having meetings and fundraisers.

In 2013, St. Saviour's Episcopal Church in Bar Harbor offered to donate their historic but deteriorating Parish House to the group to be renovated into housing. In partnership with Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) from Portland, the group's dream moved closer to reality.

After years of hard work, renovations on the Parish House began in November 2016 and were completed in July. Great care was taken to preserve as many of the historic features of the house as possible. In April, the agency Volunteers of America joined this partnership and committed to providing staff and services for the Parish House residents.

The Parish House now contains apartments for six young adults with disabilities. Each apartment has a bedroom, kitchen-living room combination and bathroom. The building also contains a common kitchen-dining area for communal evening meals, a shared living room, laundry facilities and an office. With its perfect location in the heart of downtown Bar Harbor, the residents can access all of the shops and amenities the downtown has to offer.

When asked how he felt about his upcoming move into the Parish House after viewing the completed renovations for the first time, Colin Albert-Knopp said, "I can't wait!"

The first residents moved in Aug. 7.

To find out more or donate, call 288-4365.

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