



Representatives of Local Solutions, a group creating a supported living facility for local adults with disabilities, outside the former St. Saviour's parish house in November. Local Solutions has partnered with Brunswick-based Volunteers of America to provide staff for the facility. ISLANDER FILE PHOTO

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Special-needs home hires staffing partner

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BAR HARBOR — The group building a new housing facility for area adults with developmental disabilities has contracted with a Brunswick agency to provide support staff and programming for the residents.

Local Solutions, a group of parents and concerned citizens from Mount Desert Island, has been working since 2011 to create a solution for supportive permanent housing for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Last week, the group announced a partnership with Volunteers of America Northern New England to staff the new facility.

Officials at the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) made the introduction between VOA and Local Solutions. VOA provides housing, behavioral health, veterans’ support and other services supporting vulnerable populations. The groups have agreed on a model of care for the Local Solutions house that emphasizes health and wellness, engagement with community and fostering a nurturing environment.

“Finding Volunteers of America (VOA) was the final piece of the puzzle, and we couldn’t be happier,” said Roberta Raymond of Local Solutions.



Renovation is nearing completion at the former St. Saviour’s parish house, which the church offered to donate to the group in 2013. While Local Solutions raised some revenues locally, it also partnered with affordable housing developer Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) of Portland, which undertook the bulk of the fundraising.

The parish house building has been developed into six one-bedroom apartments, staff space, common kitchen and community space. The MDI Housing Authority helped to secure six project-based Section 8 housing vouchers for the residents.

“This project is the culmination of years of dedication, collaboration and hard work on the part of all involved project partners, funders and the MDI community,” said Erin Cooperrider of CHOM. “The house was designed and developed to be a place where people will have the opportunity to live, thrive and be active participants in the Bar Harbor community.”

An opening ceremony and garden party at the parish house are planned for Sept. 6. “All are invited to come and learn about these incredible partnerships that have grown out of families’ concerns for their children’s future into an islandwide effort of compassionate support and six beautiful new forever homes,” representatives of Local Solutions said in a statement.

Funding is being provided by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston’s Affordable Housing Program and through a significant investment in the project by Camden National Bank and CHOM.

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