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The Parish House: A Long Road with Many Partners

The renovated historic building in Bar Harbor will soon be opening its doors to residents

Bar Harbor, Maine: Local Solutions and Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) have partnered with Volunteers of America Northern New England to provide supportive permanent housing for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Local Solutions, a group of parents and concerned citizens from Mount Desert Island, began working in 2011 to create housing where people with special needs on Mount Desert Island would flourish.

In 2013 St. Saviour's Episcopal Church offered to donate their historic Parish House to the group to be renovated into housing. Local Solutions recognized that they did not have the experience to undertake this project on their own. A chance meeting with the director of Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) of Portland led to a partnership that made this project possible. While Local Solutions raised revenues locally for this project, CHOM, a nonprofit affordable housing developer, undertook the bulk of the fundraising. 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 Community Housing of Maine. The Parish House building has been developed into six one bedroom apartments, staff space, common kitchen and community space. The MDI Housing Authority has been instrumental in securing six project-based Section 8 housing vouchers. "This project is the culmination of years of dedication, collaboration, and hard work on the part of all involved project partners, funders, and the Mount Desert Island community," said Erin Cooperrider, Community Housing of Maine's Development Director. Ms. Cooperrider continued, "Parish House was designed and developed to be an inclusive community, where people will have the opportunity to live, thrive, and be active participants in the Bar Harbor community."

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) introduced Volunteers of America to Local Solutions. With many years of experience staffing and administering developmental and behavioral health programs, Volunteers of America is an ideal partner. Volunteers of America has developed a model of care for the Parish House that emphasizes health and wellness, engagement with community, and fosters a nurturing environment. "We are very happy to be partnering with organizations that are working hard to build a bright future for their community." said June Koegel, Volunteers of America President/CEO.

Opening Dedication Ceremony and Garden Party

On September 6 from 4-7 pm, Local Solutions and CHOM will host an Opening Dedication Ceremony and Garden Party at the Parish House. 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 island-wide effort of compassionate support and six beautiful new forever homes.

Additional Information about the Organizations, not intended as part of the Press Release

Volunteers of America: 14 Maine St, Brunswick, ME 04011 | 207-373-1140 | www.voanne.org

Local Solutions: PO Box 512, Bar Harbor, ME 04609 | www.localsolutionsformaine.org

Community Housing of Maine: One City Center, 4th Floor, Portland, Maine 04101 | 207-879-0347 | www.chomhousing.org

About Local Solutions

Local Solutions is a nonprofit formed in 2011 by a group of parents and concerned citizens on Mount Desert Island for the purpose of creating local housing and services for young adults with disabilities that would ensure a stable, long term healthy environment.

About Community Housing of Maine

Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides workforce housing, along with advocacy, supportive housing, and community inclusion for special needs populations across the state. CHOM develops, owns, and maintains high quality, affordable, service-enriched housing for people with low incomes and disabilities. Founded in 1993, CHOM has become the largest supportive housing developer in Maine. CHOM has provided stable homes to thousands of disadvantaged people.

About Volunteers of America

Volunteers of America was founded in 1896 by social reformers Ballington and Maud Booth. They envisioned a movement dedicated to “reaching and uplifting” the American people. For over 120 years, VOA has taken on the most difficult tasks to help the most underserved. With more than 30 programs in Northern New England, Volunteers of America Northern New England (VOANNE), headquartered at 14 Maine Street, Suite 100, Brunswick, Maine strives to end homelessness, restore hope, and build communities for children and young adults, Veterans, seniors, adults living with mental illness, and adults involved in the criminal justice system.