

# LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Fall Newsletter 2020

## LOCAL SOLUTIONS: WORKING WITH PARTNERS

*Creating inspired housing in the heart of a thriving supportive community on MDI where people with special needs can flourish.*

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Your donations  
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### Local Solutions

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Stock contributions  
are accepted.

## The Parish House Response to COVID-19

*A message by Julie Dufour, Program Manager,  
Volunteers of America Northern New England*

The Parish House residents and staff never expected to experience a pandemic in our community on a small island in Maine. Our goal was to work together as a team to create a bubble of safety around the house, our yard, and our minivan, known affectionately as "Mini Bubble". We all had to practice mask wearing, physical distancing, hand washing, and surface sanitizing. Asking family and friends not to enter our home was a difficult step. We now have one staff person designated to do all the

weekly shopping. More time spent at home meant more fun activities as a group, and staff have done an awesome job creating activities to keep residents active and engaged. We have all become experts in Zoom meetings with family, friends and supportive services. We are lucky to have a beautiful yard where we can picnic and meet with others at a safe distance. The world has changed but we continue to stay active, learn new skills, and look forward to a time when our lives can return to normal.



**Zach, Sara, Pauline, Annie and Norman**

A big thank you to all the volunteer mask makers who donated to the Parish House: 54 Herrick Wellness Collective, the MDI Pandemic Facebook Group, Nichole Johnson, and Line Rechholtz.

We graciously accept donations. Due to the economic hardship COVID-19 has placed on so many in our community, we have decided not to send an annual appeal letter this year.



With COVID-19 limiting people's ability to fully engage in the community, Local Solutions purchased a treadmill to help residents remain active and fit!

Pictured is Sara who also works at the MDI YMCA as valued member of their Daycare team. Outside play allows the children to take off their masks, get some fresh air and have some lively playtime.

As the season progressed and things opened up in Bar Harbor, residents of the Parish House started returning to jobs, classes, and other activities.



Norman loved going to the Y when he was on the Swim Team. He volunteered in high school and after graduation became an employee in the maintenance department. "Norman doesn't just work here. He is a valued member of our YMCA family," said Mt. Desert's Tommy Parkam, Executive Director of the YMCA.



This was Pauline's second summer as a hostess at the West Street Cafe in Bar Harbor. "We love Pauline. She is a part of our team and always has a smile." – even if it's under her mask!



**Zach, Pauline, and Annie working out!**



# Welcoming Ravon as the Manager

After three years as Manager at the Parish House, Julie Dufour will be moving on to help Volunteers of America Northern New England establish another residence in Belfast, Maine. We are so grateful for her management skills, talents, and sense of humor. She helped to make the Parish House the success it is today. We wish her the best of luck.

Ravon Palmer has been promoted from her Assistant role to Manager. She has worked with the residents since the Parish House opened, and we welcome her to this new position and look forward to working closely with her in the future.



## To Our Supporters

Before the pandemic, Local Solutions' main focus was to create more program opportunities on MDI, not just for the residents but for the wider community. The Parish House was becoming a gathering place for other young adults. We hosted art projects, music evenings, and social activities. Plans were underway to use space in St. Saviour's Church as a venue for activities involving the arts and volunteering. Everything now must remain on hold as we all cope with Covid 19. We continue to use this time to evaluate and plan how we can best help those who have so much to contribute.

*Thank You,  
The Board of Local Solutions*



**Zach, Norman, Sara, and Pauline  
making art in the parking lot**



## Highlighting the Parish House Staff

"This position comes naturally to me. I connect well with residents because I enjoy learning; listening to them I gain knowledge of who they are and their aspirations."

— **Veronica, Direct Support Provider at the Parish House**

# Ocean Breeze

*By Colin Albert-Knopp*

As I walk along these wild waters of  
Nature,  
Where a wind stirs amidst the water of  
This ocean,  
And when life can't get any better wherever  
My dreams take me,  
An ocean breeze blows through my hair.  
I love nature no matter what surprises may  
Linger ahead.  
When I come to a stop so I can watch over  
These mysterious waters,  
A cool ocean breeze makes me feel like I  
Want to fly away.  
This wonderful sight to see is a picture perfect  
Scene for any of my photo albums.



**The Parish House  
Resident Poet**



## A Shout Out For Zach!

Zachary wanted to learn his blood type so his parents signed him up for his first blood drive to get his results. What he got in return was a letter telling him he had one of the rarer blood types and that he saved lives by his donation.

Zachary took that information and made it his mission. Every 60 days he can make a difference in the world and save a life. The Coronavirus was not going to slow him down or deter him because the need for blood is not going to stop and neither is his willingness to give it. In his view this is his job and he is an essential worker.

Zachary has given blood at the beginning of the state shut down and again on June 8th. He will join the elite few who have donated 1 gallon of blood to the Red Cross. His excitement has peaked the interest and inspired his fellow residents at the Parish House who have expressed an interest in giving as well.





# Our Gardening Project

Marty Lyons and Pam Walsh organized with staff and residents to create a gardening program. It is an ongoing vision to provide fresh vegetables for our kitchen.



**Pauline and Zach working together**



**Annie picks her first carrot**

This summer, Annie tried a handcycle for the first time through Maine Adaptive Sports and Recreation. She described her experience as “awesome!” Her coach said she “killed it!” She is looking forward to going again soon and hopes to get her own bike.

This fall Annie is participating in the Transition to College Program at the University Center in Ellsworth, Maine. Through participating in Adult Ed she is preparing to enroll in a college program.





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