



Representatives of Local Solutions, a project to create a supported living facility for local adults with disabilities, celebrated the official start of the renovation of the former St. Saviour's parish house Tuesday by signing a beam intended for the new facility. They were joined by supporters from St. Saviour's Church, Camden National Bank, Community Housing of Maine, CWS Architects and E.L. Shea building contractors. ISLANDER PHOTO BY LIZ GRAVES

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## Building rehab begins for special needs home

November 10, 2016 by [Liz Graves](#) on [News](#)



BAR HARBOR — Work has begun on a project to renovate the former parish house at St. Saviour's Church into a facility to house six local adults with developmental disabilities. Representatives of Local Solutions, the group behind the project, celebrated the official start of the building renovation Tuesday by signing a beam intended for the new facility.

"With a target completion date of seven months," a statement from Local Solutions said, "the board is working hard to ensure that all the pieces are in place and the building is furnished and staffed so that

residents can move in as soon as possible.”

The project has been in the works since 2010, when residents Dee Karnofsky and Lee Haynes became aware that their son Norman would not be able to live independently as an adult. As he neared high school graduation, they started looking for future living possibilities that would keep him on Mount Desert Island, close to family and friends.

The Karnofskys founded Local Solutions along with other local parents in similar situations, friends and advocates. The group connected with others doing similar work in Maine, and a series of partnerships helped move the project forward.

The Charlotte White Center, a nonprofit supporting disabled persons, helped Local Solutions incorporate as a nonprofit.

St. Saviour’s offered to donate the parish hall building, which the church could not afford to maintain, in 2013.

“We as a parish were trying to figure out, ‘What are we going to do with this big white elephant of a building?’” the Rev. Tim Fleck said at the time. “It was a real ‘Aha!’ moment.”


Local Solutions has held several [fundraising events](#) and received a grant [in May](#) of this year from the Jonathan Stein Charitable Trust.

It has taken time, though, to coordinate all the moving parts.

Community Housing of Maine (CHOM) is serving as the owner and developer of the property. CHOM currently has 20 housing developments in its portfolio, including the Cindy Cookson House for formerly homeless families in Ellsworth. The group develops, owns and manages the properties, working with other social service agencies to provide support to residents.

The MDI Housing Authority helped secure Section 8 housing vouchers to support the individuals in the home. Residents also will pay rent, based on a percentage of their Social Security and income.

A grant from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development closed last month, Fleck said, enabling CHOM to give the go-ahead for construction to begin.

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