

# THE YEAR-ROUNDER

a newsletter of Island Housing Trust  
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## IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Island Housing Trust's current project on the Beech Hill Road in Somesville exemplifies what it means to "work together to solve the housing problem on MDI."

The project began when a generous summer resident offered to donate, and move, a small house (pictured above before the move) on the condition that it be occupied by a year-round resident employed on MDI. Next, Mount Desert residents voted at their Town Meeting to donate a small parcel of land on Beech Hill Road for the project. The only stipulation from the town is that any income after expenses be dedicated to additional workforce housing in Mount Desert. *[Village continued inside]*



## URBAN LIVING

This past spring Rae and Barbara Urban moved from one small town to another. They had been living in Franklin, Maine, and as employees at the Jackson Laboratory in Bar Harbor, their commute could sometimes take over an hour to or from their work. They had not even considered looking for houses on MDI because of the high cost of housing, but when they heard about IHT through a seminar at the Lab, they set up a meeting, learned more about IHT's Homeownership Assistance Program, and started hunting for a home. They saw several properties before falling in love with the house they chose in Southwest Harbor. "Thanks to IHT, we were able to buy a wonderful home on the island," said Rae. *[Urban continued on back]*



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## MISSION:

Island Housing Trust promotes viable, year-round communities by advancing permanent workforce housing on Mount Desert Island, Maine.

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## ISLAND REFLECTIONS

from Ted Koffman, IHT Board President

An essential ingredient of successful, enduring 18th-century colonial settlements was their diverse workforce. Carpenters, blacksmiths, coopers, tanners, and many other artisans supplied goods and services for a thriving community. Likewise, today's vibrant communities are supported by diverse tradespeople and skilled workers who produce and consume goods and services--keeping year-round businesses in business. But in order to attract and retain a diverse workforce and sustain a community, employees and independent contractors need a place to live.

Here's the rub. Mount Desert Island faces a mathematical hurdle. The cost of homes has risen, and continues to rise, much faster and higher than the incomes of a large percentage of our workforce. Consequently, for decades we have experienced a kind of exodus--a reduction in MDI year-round employees who would have resided on the Island, but now make costly commutes to homes in towns off the Island. Our school populations reflect the loss of year-round families. Fewer customers in the off-season and fewer volunteers to support civic organizations is thinning the community fabric. And recruiting and retaining high quality workers for businesses and nonprofits is more challenging if these workers cannot afford to live here.

The insufficient supply of affordable housing is an island-wide challenge. The solution will require an island-wide collaboration. Here are some actions we all can take: 1. Stay informed about local housing policies and their impact on development; 2. Look for creative solutions such as offering affordable year-round rentals, selling property at a reduced rate, or donating land; 3. Tell your story; and 4. Support Island Housing Trust. IHT is focused on finding solutions and we know our best chance at solving the housing problem on MDI lies within our communities themselves. Working together we can preserve our year-round communities.

## RIPPLES HILL CELEBRATION

In August we celebrated the completion of phase II of the Ripples Hill community in Somesville with a Saturday morning open house. Thank you to our sponsors, Old Dog Bakery, Skip's Automotive and Car Wash, and Village Green Coffee, and thank you to our homeowners for opening their homes.

## NEW ON BOARD

Susan Buell and her family moved to Southwest Harbor in 1985, and her three children attended Pemetec School and MDI High School. Susan has volunteered her time and energies for many organizations, including serving as a member of the Pemetec School Board and the St. John Episcopal Church vestry. Her current involvements include the SWH Waste Prevention Committee and co-chairing the Westside Food Pantry. "Over these years," she says, "I have watched year-round families move off the Island because they cannot afford MDI housing prices. We have a crisis. I am committed to doing what I can to maintain a year-round community of people of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds."



Kendra Rand returned to Bar Harbor in 2014 when her husband, Tim, took a supervisory law enforcement position with Acadia National Park. Their relocation to MDI was particularly joyful, as the two met in Acadia in 2002. However, returning with two children presented a new set of challenges in finding affordable housing on MDI, and the Rands turned to IHT. They purchased their home in Sabah Woods in 2015 and consider themselves some of the island's most fortunate homeowners. Kendra serves on the MDI MLK Day Committee, Jonathan Fulford's campaign for US Congress, and the University of Maine's Diversity Leadership Institute. She teaches Communication Studies part-time at the University of Maine and College of the Atlantic.



### ***Village continued***

Numbers of Island businesses and professionals willing to donate time and expertise stepped up to help IHT develop the site. Todd

Stanley of Downeast Home Design contributed the design with which Gott & Sons built the foundation (pictured below); Tobin Peacock of Peacock

Builders donated labor for carpentry work; Roger St. Amand of Atlantic Resource Co. facilitated a donation of a Presby Environmental EnviroFin septic system from Maine Septic and Plumbing; Linda Higgins contributed real estate expertise; and Mike Tadenev at Eaton Peabody provided free legal services.

IHT is grateful to the donors of the house and the many local partners and advisors who are helping make this new affordable, year-round home available.



## *Urban continued*

“It is the home we would have built for ourselves if it wasn’t already there.”

“The house is a perfect size and fit for us,” said Rae. “We are adding solar panels, a heat pump, and a hot water heater from ReVision Energy to save money by reducing the costs for heating and cooling. The only real negative is that prices tend to be higher on the island, and we have to plan more carefully to get everything we need when we go ‘off-island’.”

Fortunately, now having cut their commute in half, going “off-island” is a choice and not a work-day necessity. Surrounded by the Park, they have more time for the things they love--hiking and biking on the trails, kayaking on the ocean, and sitting out on their deck watching their dogs having fun in the backyard. They also enjoy the Common Good Cafe, a favorite place on weekends for popovers and community.

“IHT was great to work with and answered any questions we had at any given time, even five or six times a day,” said Rae. “They were truly wonderful. IHT is an important organization to keep this island affordable for the working population. We are extremely proud to be a part of this mission. We love our new home and plan on doing our part, both working and volunteering, to help this community thrive!”

## JOINT VENTURE AT JONES MARSH

Island Housing Trust (IHT) and Maine Coast Heritage Trust (MCHT) formally entered into their second partnership this past spring. IHT and MCHT previously collaborated on a project to permanently protect the public canoe and kayak access to Northeast Creek and ensure the affordability of an adjacent single family home in Bar Harbor. Now, with the purchase of a 60-acre parcel of land adjacent to Jones Marsh on Route 3, the organizations have another opportunity to work together to forward both their missions.

For some time, MCHT has been interested in preserving the 30-acre bog and forested wetland portions of the Jones Marsh property, but the owner wanted to sell the entire 60 acres. So MCHT approached IHT with the idea of using the uplands half of the parcel to create



year-round housing. “To have an organization on the island, and such a credible one, step up and take initiative to collaborate is such a positive thing,” said IHT Board President Ted Koffman. “We really want to thank them for working with us to meet a critical community need.”

IHT completed a preliminary assessment of the Jones Marsh parcel in 2016, including sketches of possible housing development scenarios. This past spring, IHT signed a purchase option

agreement for the 30-acre parcel to be used for housing, and is completing the initial due diligence work to determine the best configuration for development. Currently, the plan is to create a workforce housing subdivision with 12-15 house lots. Homeowners in the proposed Jones Marsh neighborhood will need to meet IHT guidelines and agree to covenants that ensure affordability in the future.