

## HOAP FOR THE FUTURE

**“Hope lies in dreams, in imagination, and in the courage of those who dare to make dreams into reality.”**  
—JONAS SALK

For many working families on MDI, finding an affordable home can be discouraging. Island Housing Trust helps people turn their hopes into owning a home on MDI a reality, through its Home Ownership Assistance Program – HOAP.

IHT found that what often stands between potential homeowners and actually purchasing a home is the lack of an adequate down payment. In 2010, IHT’s Board of Directors established HOAP to solve this problem. HOAP provides funding to home buyers who can afford the mortgage payments of a home purchase, but do not have sufficient cash in hand for the required down payment or closing costs.

HOAP is available to working people who meet IHT’s eligibility requirements: earn a household income no more than 120–160% of the area median income depending on circumstances; plan to live in the house year-round; qualify for bank financing; and a portion of at least one adult’s income earned from working on MDI; and agree to IHT’s affordability covenants that keep the

home affordable into the future. Since its beginning, HOAP has helped 16 working families purchase homes on MDI, with an additional home planned for 2021. The program is supported by donations from individuals and foundations, and each of MDI’s four towns provides funding. The typical HOAP award is \$25,000–\$30,000. HOAP funding remains with the house, so that it resells at a price reduced by the awarded HOAP funding, benefitting each next homeowner. IHT holds affordability covenants that transfer with the property.

Every HOAP property builds the portfolio of protected homes, which keeps our year-round neighborhoods more intact, allows employees to live where they work, have their children in local schools, and fosters a stronger community of volunteers and customers for MDI’s businesses—all essential to our year-round communities.

For more information about HOAP, visit [islandhousingtrust.org/hoap](http://islandhousingtrust.org/hoap)

**“A HOAP grant is THE thing that will make our dream of home ownership, here on our island that we love and live and work on, a reality.”**  
—HOAP homeowner

## WAYS OF GIVING

Your gift to IHT will help ensure a vibrant year-round community on Mount Desert Island. Gifts of all sizes are welcome. You can support our work in a variety of ways.

- Send a check  
Mail to IHT, PO Box 851  
Mount Desert, ME 04660
- Donate online at [islandhousingtrust.org/donation](http://islandhousingtrust.org/donation)
- Call us at 207-244-8011
- Choose IHT as your charity through Amazon Smile
- Become a monthly donor and join Community Keepers
- Give through your donor-advised fund
- Donate stock
- Donate real estate on MDI
- Include IHT in your estate plans and join the Covenant Society
- Become a Business Partner

*For additional information on supporting Island Housing Trust, please contact Gail Thompson, Development and Communications Manager.*

[glthompson@islandhousingtrust.org](mailto:glthompson@islandhousingtrust.org)

W: 207-244-8011

C: 207-479-5501

ISLAND HOUSING TRUST  
PO BOX 851  
MOUNT DESERT  
MAINE 04660



## PROGRESS AT JONES MARSH

Late last fall, site work began at our Jones Marsh property, bringing this new neighborhood closer to reality. Test wells were dug and, with the late winter rise in temperature, draw-down tests were completed.

We are finalizing the energy-efficient designs for six single-family houses and two duplexes. IHT’s planning team has flagged the eight lots and the location for the new drive into the neighborhood in preparation for the Bar Harbor Planning Board’s review in March. IHT is scheduled to submit its final permit application in April for Planning Board review in early May. We hope to have a permit to begin construction by early fall.

We will keep you posted as the neighborhood takes shape!



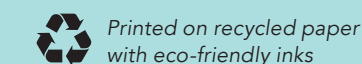
Test wells at Jones Marsh. IHT PHOTO

## WELCOME TO IHT’S NEW MEMBERS: We appreciate your support!

*April 2020–March 2021*

Rosemarie Avenia	Deborah Cressler	Bruce Jacobson	Jamie O’Keefe	Cecily Swinburne
Mary and Wells Bacon	Fisher Charitable Foundation	Sandra Johnson	Ellen Pope	Gail and Thomas Thompson
Ledlie Bell	Lee Fox	Jennifer Jones	Richard Price	Town of Southwest Harbor
Doug Bird	Nancy and William Kales	Nancy and William Kales	Henry Raup	Town of Tremont
Madeleine and Bob Braun	Katy Longley	Katy Longley	Somesville Union Meeting House	Mary Veit
Erica Brooks	Alexander Gleason	Ann Luther	Laura Spadone	Margaret Vose
Kathy Kennedy Brown	Tim Glidden	Barbara McCrum	Gary Stellpflug and Terese Miller	Kyle Wildnauer-Haigney
Lisa Horsch Clark and Bob Clark	Karen and Ron Greenberg	Sandy McFarland	Mayra and Stephen Stroud	Deanna and Blake Whyte
Judy Hazen Connery	Janet Hamel	Lincoln Millstein		
Sarah Creighton	Lindsay Hopkins-Weld	Amy Morley		
	Colby Houghton	Nemo Fund		

## FOLLOW US



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# THE YEAR-ROUNDER

a newsletter of Island Housing Trust  
Volume 17 | Issue 1 | Spring 2021



IHT PHOTO

## WHAT MIGHT BE LOST

By Kendra Rand, IHT board member and homeowner

My family and I recently marked five years living in our home in Sabah Woods, an IHT neighborhood established in 2010 in partnership with the very generous and visionary Emily Sabah-Maren. This home has rooted us all, grounding us in this island community in ways that we promise never to take for granted. Our children attend Connors Emerson, my husband and I have easy access to our jobs and volunteer sites on the island, and our network of friends is as precious to us as the home that shelters us.

But in those five years, we’ve seen a number of families struggle to stay on this island. “You have to be out by May” has been a common refrain, sometimes with a long notice and sometimes quite by surprise. At

least five times in the past five years, we have received panicked calls or emails from friends who suddenly find themselves with no place to live come the start of the island’s busy season. One family cobbled together a less-than-ideal rental arrangement on the island. One family purchased a home in Ellsworth. The rest remind me of silhouettes: children who once attended school and Girl Scouts with my own, families who wanted to stay rooted to this island and continue being a part of this community. But they couldn’t. They couldn’t find a place to live. And we miss them quite terribly.

I was recently asked to tell my story of becoming an IHT homeowner. My story has a happy ending, I said. We moved here in late 2014 and by

**These are people who have much to give to the community beyond their employment on the island.**

the fall of 2015, we had found our forever home, thanks to IHT. I am happy to tell that story and I’m still profoundly grateful, but my story isn’t the one that needs telling right now. The more important stories are of the families we’ve said goodbye to in the past five years. The most urgent story is of the family who moved here last



ISLAND HOUSING TRUST

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*Program Associate*  
Gail La Rosa Thompson  
*Development and Communications Manager*

## MISSION

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

## CONTACT US

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www.islandhousingtrust.org

Follow us on Facebook  
@islandhousingtrust  
Instagram #IHT\_MDI

# Give the Gift of Community

When you support Island Housing Trust, you support your MDI community. MDI is an interconnected network of people and towns, of businesses and organizations, of nature and the environment. What affects one piece affects us all.

Island Housing Trust works to ensure that our work force has access to year-round homes so they can stay where they grew up or put down new roots here, and to be part of what enriches this vibrant, vital community.

You can help provide housing opportunities that are affordable to the people who teach our children, take care of our sick, and provide food for our tables.

Make your gift by returning the enclosed remittance envelope to IHT, or make your gift online at [islandhousingtrust.org/donation](http://islandhousingtrust.org/donation)

Thank you for joining IHT in support of your MDI community.

ARTWORK COURTESY OF JENNIFER JUDD MCGEE



WHAT MIGHT BE LOST, continued from previous page

April and is struggling to find a place right now because they “have to be out by May.”

These are all families who are good friends of ours, who either had to leave the island altogether in the past five years or who are managing to live on the island under very precarious circumstances. We are still trying to help our new friends find a place to live. I can only imagine how many other island families are anxiously watching the calendar creep towards

May right now. These are people who have much to give to the community beyond their employment on the island. Their presence benefited our community in immeasurable ways.

I know ours is not the only family that has lost friends and connections. Probably all of us know of someone, some family, our community has lost because they couldn't find a place to live.



LEFT: PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN PIERGALLINI, RIGHT: IHT PHOTO



## EXACTLY WHERE HE WANTS TO BE

Sometimes, when you find the right house, you just know it. That's what happened to John Piergallini when he saw the house in Somesville.

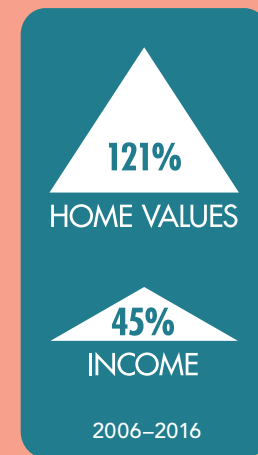
John is a graduate of College of the Atlantic and had lived on MDI in the 90s. He moved back home to Pennsylvania, and returned to MDI three years ago. A custom woodworker with more than 20 years of experience, John quickly found work with AB & JR Hodgkins. He settled into a rental in Otter Creek and began saving for his own home. Quickly realizing that most homes on MDI were out of his price range, John shifted his thinking to purchasing property and building his own home.

Then in October 2020, John saw IHT's ad in the Mount Desert Islander and thought, “That's it! That is my house.” John was unfamiliar with Island Housing Trust but after speaking with coworkers and friends learned IHT was his key to becoming an MDI homeowner. He spoke with Bar Harbor Savings and Loan and was urged to make an offer. John also contacted IHT to learn more about the application process and how to qualify to become an IHT homeowner. The idea of covenants was appealing to him, knowing it would keep the home affordable for another island worker if he decided to move on.

Becoming an IHT homeowner was a quick process for John. Between

October when he first saw the ad and December when he closed on the property, John applied, qualified, and was approved for a mortgage. John will put his woodworking skill to good effect in turning his new home into his very own, updating the kitchen first as he loves to cook. He's looking forward to having friends over to hang out on the deck when casual gatherings are safe to resume.

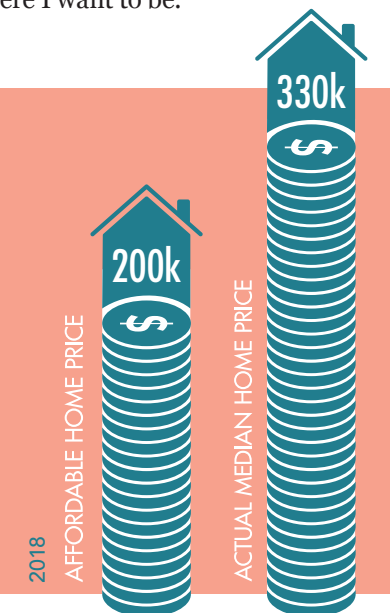
“Working with IHT was a great experience,” said John. “I love living on MDI with its access to hiking and the water. My house is in a beautiful spot and feels remote although it is centrally located. IHT helped me get exactly where I want to be.”



## Did you know?

There is a significant gap between what median income earners on MDI can afford and the median house price on the Island. From the 2018 housing study: “Over 84% of homes sold on the Island in 2017 were unattainable to median-income households.”

The housing assessment showed that the growth in home prices has outstripped growth in wages. Since 2018, the situation has been exacerbated by an even higher demand for housing during the pandemic.



## ISLAND NOTES

The headlines over the past year have told the story that many of us are seeing in person: real estate in Maine, and on MDI, is hot.

For example:

### “SOLD! Maine Real Estate's Wild Ride.”

—Down East: The Magazine of Maine, March 2021, cover.

### “Low mortgage rates, pandemic flight fuel another record year for Maine home sales.”

—Mainebiz: Real Estate Insider, posted January 25, 2021.

The effects of the pandemic that unexpectedly triggered flight to Maine are becoming familiar:

- People are choosing to leave crowded urban areas for less densely populated cities and towns in Maine.
- COVID-19 restrictions have made it more acceptable for people to work remotely, and therefore to choose Maine as a place to live and work.
- Maine property prices are relatively low compared to properties in urban areas.

Mainelistings.com reported that in Hancock County, sales of single-family homes between December 1, 2020 and February 28, 2021, were up nearly 51% from the same period a year previously. In that same time frame, median sales prices increased more than 41%.

What does this mean for MDI and Island Housing Trust?

More calls to IHT have come from people looking for a place to rent or buy and from others helping friends and neighbors in

their search. Year-round rentals are being sold, and rental rates are increasing in response to a growing demand. This convergence of market events is sending long-term renters scrambling to find the increasingly dwindling opportunities to remain in their communities, to keep their children in their familiar schools, and to continue to live close to their work.

From talking with realtors and looking at these sales statistics, we know that the already limited stock of houses affordable to our island workers is decreasing rapidly. At the time of this writing, 56 residential houses are listed for sale on MDI; only six (11%) of those listings are affordable to a household earning a median income, and the competition to purchase is oppressively high.

In the face of this extraordinary real estate demand, IHT is working diligently to provide additional year-round housing opportunities affordable to MDI's workforce. The current housing challenges are not new, nor is this an easy problem to address, but there is reason for hope in the growing awareness and support from our neighbors—individuals and businesses, year-round and seasonal—who are stepping up to help us create more opportunities to ensure that our communities are vibrant and resilient year-round.

Please join us.

*Marla S. O'Byrne*

Marla O'Byrne,  
Executive Director



## Year-round Homes of IHT

