

THE YEAR-ROUNDER

a newsletter of Island Housing Trust
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Photo by Virtual Tours Downeast

With much fanfare, a small one-bedroom house travelled to its new home on the Beech Hill Road on a drizzly winter morning this past February. The community came together on the project and helped create another affordable year-round housing opportunity. Thank you to everyone involved!



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NEW TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The residents at Sabah Woods welcomed new neighbors and Island Housing Trust completed its sixth successful resale this past November when the Healey family moved into their new home. Travis and Ana Healey completed a few small renovations and, with their 20-month-old daughter, settled in as the first flurries of the winter season fell on the community of four homes. Now that spring has finally arrived, they're getting acquainted with their new yard and sprucing it up for

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

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HOUSING MDI'S YEAR-ROUND COMMUNITIES

from Ted Koffman, IHT Board President

Large and small communities along Maine's coast share a shortage of affordable housing stock. Year-round employees and their families seeking affordable home ownership and rental options face stiff competition for available housing stock, which often is priced out of reach. This affordability gap impacts our economy and quality of life in many ways. Businesses, research and non-profit organizations, hospitals, schools, and municipalities struggle to attract and retain skilled employees and essential personnel. According to a recent short survey sponsored by Island Housing Trust (IHT) of employees on MDI, seventy percent of the respondents would prefer to live on MDI if they could find an affordable home.

IHT, with the support of partner organizations, has commissioned a housing study to increase our understanding of the need, hopes, and approaches for year-round housing on MDI. The study will analyze the current situation and forecast housing needs in MDI's four towns to give IHT and our partners the practical understanding to pursue solutions.

For the past 15 years, IHT has been working to address the decreasing opportunities for affordable year-round housing on MDI. Whenever possible, the organization works hand-in-hand with partners island-wide to promote and create housing opportunities for MDI's year-round community. Elected officials and non-profit organizations are collaborating in a variety of ways. The Housing Study will be an important tool for IHT and our partners to understand the need, and define effective strategies to alleviate the need for year-round housing on MDI.

Island Housing Trust's Porch Light Circle membership is a fun - and meaningful - way for our neighbors to be part of IHT's work. Join your friends and neighbors in creating new year-round housing options for many who work here and want to live here. Porch Light Circle members gather at events and keep in touch with the IHT bi-annual newsletter. Please consider joining our Porch Light Circle with a suggested donation of \$25.

Neighborhood continued

their daughter and her pet bunnies to enjoy.

“Our path to IHT started two years ago,” said Travis. “We were renting a condo in Bar Harbor and had just welcomed our daughter into the world. We quickly realized we had new neighbors every other day, thanks to the booming rental market. We knew we wanted to raise our daughter with a sense of community.”

Travis is the general manager at Geddy’s while Ana keeps the books for the popular restaurant. Both anticipate a busy summer season, but they look forward to recharging when they can in their wooded backyard. They describe their house-hunting experience as a year-long process, but knew right away when they found their Sabah Woods home that

they would love living in their “gorgeous house, nestled in nature.”

The Healey’s aren’t the only ones who are happy about their arrival; the whole neighborhood is delighted to have them next door. “It’s really nice to have the Healeys here,” said neighbor Kathy Grant. “Sabah Woods represents so much of what’s important about IHT’s work: community-building and neighbors helping neighbors.”

“Thanks to the thoughtful structure of IHT,” said Travis, “we knew we could raise our family the way life should be.”

Kendra Rudolph Rand teaches communication studies at UMaine, serves on IHT’s Board of Directors, and lives at Sabah Woods with her two children and husband, who is an Acadia National Park Ranger.

RESTORING COMMUNITY

As the Island awakens with warmer weather, Island Housing Trust is nearing completion of a house renovation project that represents a new approach for IHT. 13 Sylvan Road in Northeast Harbor, a two-bedroom house built in 1890, is the first house IHT has purchased to restore and sell to a qualified applicant. Located just a short walk to the library, elementary school,

and village center, the house is ideal for a working family. It is also a boon for the community—like all IHT houses, 13 Sylvan Road will be sold with covenants ensuring that it will remain affordable as a year-round home in perpetuity.

Last summer, IHT committed to purchase the house; worked with architect Gregg Scott, who donated his services, to imagine a restoration of the building; and completed an inspection to

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DALTON JOINS BOARD

IHT is pleased to announce that Greg Dalton, Executive Vice President of Business Banking with Bar Harbor Bank & Trust, has recently joined the Board of Directors. Greg has over 30 years of experience with financial institutions in Maine and currently chairs the Maine Bankers Association Lending Committee. He has been involved with several area non-profit organizations. He and his wife Anne live in Somesville and have four grown boys.

“As the Community Reinvestment Officer of BHBT, I assess community needs and income demographics and am acutely aware of the housing need on MDI,” says Greg. As a community member, I have witnessed the dramatic decline in the number of year-round families living on the Island. The livelihood of our island communities and schools is so dependent on working families, who unfortunately today simply cannot afford to live on MDI.”

Restoring continued

confirm that the project would be suitable for an IHT applicant. More and more often, hopeful homeowners communicate that if they can find an affordable house, they can't afford the renovations necessary to make it livable. IHT's approach with Sylvan Road will remove the barrier of renovation costs and ensure that the house is safer and more energy efficient.

The renovation includes

electrical wiring, plumbing, insulation, and windows. The interior walls are painted, new flooring is in place, and fixtures and finishing touches are bringing the house to life. In May, the carpenters began work outside, replacing the roof and painting the exterior of the house.

Sylvan Road required a larger initial investment from IHT in order to purchase and renovate, and then to offer the house at a reduced, affordable purchase price. Thanks to several generous donors, including the nonprofit

Mount Desert 365, work began early this winter and will be complete by late June. IHT is looking forward to placing a qualified family in the house and sharing the project with the community at an open house this summer.



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