



# THE YEAR-ROUNDER at home

a newsletter of Island Housing Trust  
Volume 16 | Issue 1 | Spring 2020



## message from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This has been a spring like no other. Island Housing Trust's office closed in mid-March to promote the well-being of our employees and island communities, but our work continues at three locations – our homes.

Despite closing the physical office, the staff continues to work to support Mount Desert Island's year-round communities. We are still available by phone and email to answer questions, address your concerns, or talk about project ideas you might have. You can stay in touch with us on social media as well.

I am happy to introduce you to our newest team member – Gail La Rosa Thompson – who is hitting the ground (floor) running from home. Gail is our new Manager of Development and Communications. Gail has many years of nonprofit experience in Maine, including with the College of the Atlantic, Abbe Museum, Maine Public, and most recently the Natural Resources Council of Maine. She will focus on coordinating fundraising efforts and managing our communications.

I don't think there could be a stronger demonstration of the importance of our work than what we're all experiencing now. As we shelter in place – on MDI or somewhere else thinking of when we can be on MDI – we understand how much we rely on people being here to ensure that our communities thrive. Volunteers are helping our towns make difficult decisions to protect their residents. The hospital is caring for the ill, the confused, the scared – the voices of assurance are nearly as important as the hands providing care. Our neighbors – businesses, volunteers, employees – are providing meals, face masks, information, and tremendously important laughter to help us through these unsettling times.

If you are here on MDI, thank you for helping to keep your neighbors healthy and safe. If you are off-island and dreaming of the day when you can come up, thank you for being a part of the

long-term resilience of our island communities.

We hope that you are all healthy and safe, and with the coming of warm weather you'll be able to spend time outside and enjoy the season. We look forward to seeing you as soon as we are able.

*Marla O'Byrne*

## NEW to the neighborhoods



In 2019, for the first time in our history, IHT had three houses for sale and in January 2020, we helped a homeowner keep her home. We are so pleased to introduce you to the newest homeowners to our neighborhoods:

**Margaret Houghton and her son, Oliver**, are the new owners of the house in Northeast Harbor that IHT purchased and renovated, then sold using a lottery process. They have been seasonal renters in Northeast Harbor and Islesford for several years, and wanted to remain in Northeast Harbor as year-round residents. With the assistance of IHT and The Stroud Fund, Margaret and Oliver now have a permanent home on MDI.

**Tony Dalisio, Susan Swift, and their toddler, Amelia**, are the new owners of the house donated anonymously to IHT and moved onto land donated by the Town of Mount Desert. Susan grew up on MDI and works at MDI High School and Camp Beechcliff. Tony is a baker, cooking instructor, wrestling coach, and stay-at-home dad to Amelia. They are delighted to be on MDI where Amelia can grow up near her grandparents.

On Christmas Eve, IHT closed on its sale of a house in the Ripples Hill neighborhood in Somesville to **Christina Spurling**. Christina is the music director at the Somesville Union Meeting Housing and a collaborative pianist at Colby College. She was delighted to find an affordable home with an addition for her music room, where she now teaches piano lessons. Her partner, Jacob Cuff, also a musician, owns and operates Sweet Peas Cafe in Salisbury Cove. He is originally from Bath, ME. Christina is originally from Little Cranberry Island.

*"When I started working at Colby, I was enticed by the housing market in Waterville but my heart wanted me to live here. I'm really grateful that IHT made it possible for me to remain on this island. I feel very lucky to have a home for me and my piano and a place to work safely during the pandemic. The neighbors are wonderful and have become like family." Christina Spurling*

IHT kicked off 2020 providing [Home Ownership Assistance Program \(HOAP\)](#) funding to help a long-time resident, **Mary Ann (Mac) Sheets**, keep her home. IHT worked with Mary Anne to bridge the financing gap she faced in trying to purchase her home of 30+ years as part of a divorce settlement. HOAP is one of the most flexible tools we have to work with home buyers, making it possible to meet down payment requirements that are often the only obstacle to acquiring an otherwise affordable mortgage.

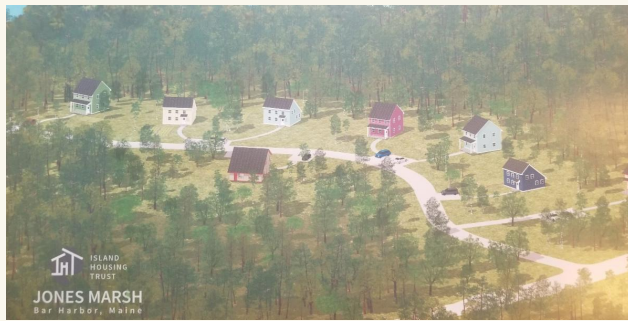
*"I am so fortunate to have found the HOAP program. I was so close to losing my home but IHT came through for me." Mary Ann (Mac) Sheets*

As are all of us, our new neighbors are sheltering in place. You can hear from a few of them directly in their own short [videos](#).

## JONES MARSH update



Island Housing Trust is moving forward with the permitting and planning phase for a new neighborhood at the head of Mount Desert Island. Jones Marsh will be a neighborhood of 10 energy-efficient homes on approximately seven acres, with the option for two duplexes to provide a diverse price point for ownership. IHT staff is working with local modular companies to develop an energy efficient building, with a New England farmhouse design.



As we all adapt to our new responsibilities of addressing Covid-19 in our lives and businesses, IHT is assessing what work can be undertaken now, what a likely timeline for completion might be, and when our target homeowners – those earning a median income working on MDI – might be prepared to undertake the purchase of a new home. We'll keep you posted!

introducing our  
NEW BOARD MEMBER



### John C. Henry

John Campbell Henry, Jr. is well-known on Mount Desert Island. From boyhood he has been an excellent sailor and he continues to race. John is also a lawyer at the NYC Attorney General's office.

A few things to know about John:

- Not the owner of the Red Sox
- Is highly competitive
- A member of the NYC Opera Club
- Is a square dance fan and caller
- Known to dive for M&M's at the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fleet whipped cream pie race
- Plays badminton, tennis, and golf
- Owns a 10 gallon hat and cowboy boots
- Is a great addition to the IHT board

looking  
FORWARD



Island Housing Trust is proud to participate in **Giving Tuesday Now**, a global day of giving and unity that will take place on May 5, 2020, as an emergency response to the unprecedented need caused by COVID-19. It is an opportunity to people around the world to stand together in unity, to use their individual powers of generosity in a variety of ways to give back to their communities.

Please join us as we unite in social connection and kindness. We all have gifts to give and there are limitless ways to show your generosity.



Watch your mailbox for more details on Giving Tuesday Now. In the meantime, if you are interested and able to support Island Housing Trust, please visit our [website](#).



Donate now to help create and sustain MDI's year-round communities.

MONTHLY GIVING

Community Keepers help ensure a vibrant year-round community on Mount Desert Island.



PLANNED GIVING

Consider including Island Housing Trust in your estate plans.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Deedie Bouscaren, *President*  
Joanne Harris, *Vice President*  
Gregory Dalton, *Secretary*  
Carole Plenty, *Treasurer*  
Susan Covino Buell  
Lydia Goetze  
John Henry  
Linda Higgins

John T. Kelly  
Ted Koffman  
Kendra Rand  
Sydney Roberts Rockefeller  
Peter Rogers  
Christopher White  
Averel Wilson

STAFF

Natalie Favazza, *Program Manager*  
Gail LaRosa Thompson, *Development and Communications Manager*  
Marla O'Byrne, *Executive Director*



ISLAND HOUSING TRUST



[Connect with us on Facebook](#)