



SAIL Connect

"We dream of a day when all individuals, with their unique abilities and talents, can enjoy lives of inter-dependence, empowerment, and purpose in the community of their choice."

-- SAIL Vision Statement

Solutions for Adult Interdependent Living

March 2021

Why are you receiving this?

Sometime during the last two years you gave your email address at a meeting on *housing solutions for adults with disabilities* at First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham; or you attended an event at the Troy Community Center led by *Bill Godfrey and [Three Oaks Communities](#)*. At that time, the organizers of the events promised to follow up. We are now trying to fulfill that promise!

What has been happening since we met?

First Presbyterian's group, led by Cindy Merten and Rev. Joanne Blair (of First Presbyterian's All Abilities Inclusion ministry) and Cheryl Loveday (Executive Director of Angel's Place), held several meetings for families in late 2018 and early 2019. They sent a survey to all families who gave their email addresses asking about level of interest in developing housing solutions and timeline for placing loved ones. In the end, 10 families chose to join an effort to come up with solutions for housing adults with disabilities – their own and others'. These families attended training in Evanston, IL, led by the [Center for Independent Futures](#) (CIF) in July 2019. These same families also committed to working together for at least 18 months and paid for part of the training.

CIF's training included guidance on working together and decision-making processes. It also covered identifying resources, working with local governments and community organizations, identifying strengths and challenges. We visited three local communities that CIF had founded and learned more about the "community builder" concept; an individual who devotes 20-25 hours a week to creating social activities both within the

group of people with disabilities they serve and in the broader community. Community builders also typically provide overnight monitoring. The group of 10 families began meeting monthly in August 2019.

What have we accomplished since August 2019?

To begin with, most of the families did not know each other. So, we began by learning about each other's loved ones with disabilities, who are at the heart of the matter. We shared some of our dreams for the future for our loved ones, as well as the dreams those individuals have. We sought to find commonalities but also found many differences in the level of care, the kinds of neighborhoods, the ability to work and manage transportation, recreational interests and personalities of our loved ones.

We created a Vision for ourselves as an organization; and came up with a name: Solutions for Adult Interdependent Living (SAIL). Although Cindy, Joanne and Cheryl led us for the first several months, we eventually elected Co-Chairs, a Librarian, and Secretary. Meanwhile, we visited, either in person or virtually, a variety of existing neighborhoods or residential settings to consider as models, including:

- [Intentional Communities of Washtenaw County](#)
– has both condos and apartments and includes multiple Community Builders. An established community in Ann Arbor that also participated at CIF, has become a 501c3 non-profit and raises funds to finance the community builders it employs. Established approximately 2008.

- [Saline Maple Oaks](#) – a neighborhood created by developer Bill Godfrey and his associates, along with a team of families, which includes two large units within which exist four two-bedroom condos owned by people with disabilities, ensconced in a neighborhood of newly built detached condominium houses owned by the general public. Still partially under construction.
- [Community Homes, Inc](#) – owns and/or manages a variety of homes for adults with disabilities within Oakland County, while at the same time providing all services for the individual residents. CEO has run this organization since the 1990s.
- [Oasis Community of West Michigan](#)– a community in the Grand Rapids area that has built relationships within its membership over a 10-year period, hosts regular social gatherings and relevant educational sessions. Recently (2019/20) started construction of an apartment complex to house multiple individuals with disabilities. Founders of this group also attended CIF training.
- [Integrative Neighborhoods of Oakland County](#) – founded by a group of parents about five years ago, now has approximately three apartments with residents with disabilities in an apartment complex in Farmington Hills. Did not attend CIF training, but committed to the Community Builder concept.
- [On My Own of Michigan](#)– a nonprofit that supports residences primarily in Somerset Apartments in Troy, provides club activities for residences and independent living classes for a monthly membership fee. Geared toward individuals with higher level of independent living skills. Very established organization.

We also researched numerous other developments and organizations that either already have created or are in the process of creating neighborhoods for adults with disabilities throughout the US. Just a few examples include:

- [Main Street](#)
- [Champions Community Foundation](#)

We formed geographic “Ports”

As the group worked together, we discovered three geographical areas of interest for our loved ones, which resulted in the creation of three “Ports”: Rochester, Troy/Birmingham/Beverly Hills, and the West side of Oakland County. The families in these ports began meeting regularly to refine their priorities and needs, each working in the direction which makes sense for them.

What are we working on currently?

The SAIL group is actively working on several initiatives:

- **Friendship Connect** - we are creating a resource for families to meet one another, to allow our loved ones with disabilities to find companionship, and perhaps roommates.
- **Launching and Exploring Housing Solutions** – we have a few families planning to launch loved ones in a Troy apartment complex this Spring; we are working with Three Oaks Communities on building neighborhoods in Oakland County in the next few years.
- **Website** - our website is under development and will support families both inside and outside of the SAIL group.

What about new Members?

We are currently refining our membership plan to bring in additional member families. There will be opportunities for families to join us at the larger SAIL level – to help us achieve our vision of communities where our loved ones can have a full, happy life; and/or at the PORT level -- to work closely with neighboring families to identify and build alliances to help our loved ones succeed and be happy in the community.

Want to hear more?

We will include you in future mailings unless you ask to be removed. If you have specific questions or are interested in working with SAIL, please send an email to info@SAILHousingSolutions.org.