



## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear SAIL Family and Friends,

As we reflect on this past year, I am filled with gratitude and pride in the incredible progress we've made together. Our focus for this year has been on strengthening connections through our **Cohort** program, and I am pleased to share that 60 families actively participated, finding valuable encouragement and information to help launch their loved ones into successful, independent lives. We are planning **Cohorts** for next year, and I encourage each of our members to join one of these helpful groups. More information will be coming soon, so keep an eye on your email.

The power of connection cannot be overstated. Through shared experiences, mutual support, and collective knowledge, our cohorts have created a vibrant community where families feel empowered and inspired.

In this time of upheaval across our country, funding for our loved ones is currently at risk. From The ARC of Michigan: Congress is currently debating deep reductions to the federal Medicaid budget, including major changes to Michigan's funding. If these proposals move forward, our state could see an annual cost increase of nearly \$3.7 billion. Among the changes: the loss of enhanced federal support for Medicaid expansion, reductions to provider tax funding, and the tighter restrictions on state flexibility—leaving Michigan's most vulnerable residents trapped in a dangerous political crossfire.

"This isn't a debate about dollars. It's about whether we believe everyone deserves access to care—at every stage of life, in every ZIP code," says Sherri Boyd, Executive Director of The Arc Michigan. "Medicaid is not charity. It's infrastructure. It's dignity. It's how we care for one another." I encourage each of you to express your concerns about these threats to our loved ones' future by contacting your representatives.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment, your openness to learning, and your dedication to ensuring a brighter future for our loved ones. Together, we are building a network of hope, support, and opportunity. I look forward to the continued growth of SAIL and the many successes ahead for our families and individuals.

Warm regards,

**Sara Fentress-Gannon**

President

**[Info@SailHousingSolutions.org](mailto:Info@SailHousingSolutions.org)**



## The Regatta: Celebrating 7 Months of Progress, Purpose and Connection

On the evening of May 5, the SAIL community came together to celebrate a meaningful milestone: the SAIL Cohort Regatta. Over shared pizza and thoughtful conversation, families gathered to reflect on seven months of dedication, learning, and forward motion through the SAIL Cohort program. The Regatta was not just a recap of completed tasks – it was a celebration of progress made and community built. Families who began this journey unsure of the path ahead found themselves sharing knowledge, offering support, and cheering each other on.

Several key themes emerged:

- Being part of a group increased accountability and helped people move forward
- Families discovered critical services and resources—many of which were new to others in the group
- Success in housing is more than just securing a place to live—it means building a full life with the right supports and connections

Together, much was accomplished

- Created and nurtured strong relationships between families
- Explored housing guides and SAIL resource materials in depth
- Developed Letters of Intent or DANI Plans and housing timelines tailored to individual goals
- Built trusted peer support networks that many plan to sustain beyond the cohort experience

## Looking Ahead: What’s Next for SAIL Cohorts

Building on this year’s momentum, SAIL is excited to launch a new round of Cohorts next year. These will offer targeted support based on families’ needs and stages in the process:

### High Needs Focus

For families navigating more complex physical, intellectual, or emotional needs. This group will dive into real-world challenges and tailored solutions.

### Setting SAIL

Designed for families just starting out. Topics include applying for SSI and Medicaid, creating Special Needs Trusts, setting up Power of Attorney, and more.

### Charting Your Course

Focused on exploring housing options—locally, regionally, and nationally—and beginning to build partnerships with other families.

### Executing Your Vision

For those ready to take action on staffing, community building, and funding. This group supports families prepared to implement their housing models.

All SAIL families are encouraged to join one of these upcoming Cohorts to continue building momentum and move closer to launching their loved one into a supported and meaningful life.

The Regatta was a reminder that with collaboration, commitment, and community, incredible progress is possible. We look forward to sailing further together.



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## What are Cohort members saying about their recent experience?

- I would recommend the COHORTS! As you know, it is a very emotional and difficult journey. The Sail website has wonderful guides and information about the process, but it is so overwhelming. To be able to talk to others who are going through the same thing was very helpful.

- It's a good way to break down concepts and have people share their lived experience. It really created a sense of community.

- Participating in the discussions and learning about the experiences of others is helpful. Findings tips on ideas and resources is also very beneficial.

**Be a part of SAILS' COHORTS!**

**Sign Ups will be emailed in June. Deadline for Sign Up is August 1, 2025.**



## FRIENDSHIP CONNECT

One of the pillars of the SAIL mission is connecting people to people. This is accomplished in two ways: 1) hosting live events, and 2) with an online platform.

While the board has decided to step back from hosting bi-monthly larger live events to better promote Cohorts, we still look forward to several large annual events, including our Summer celebration in the park, New Years Party and our always popular Fall SAIL Spectacular!

Our online platform is SAIL's effort to provide parents and guardians with the ability to seek out individuals with whom they could try to match their loved one, to start a friendship or possibly find a future roommate. Information provided in the profiles includes age, location (city), activities and hobbies, a typical day, strengths, what makes them happy, life vision and support requirements. SAIL provides a secure platform so that parents who provide a profile for their loved one can safely search and view other member profiles.

Our membership has grown, and we now have 63 friendship connect profiles that parents can access! We have had several successes with connecting people, but the more people participate the better everyone's chance of success!

Visit the SAIL website, hit the Friendship Connect tab and fill out a Friendship Connect profile for your loved one today!





## SAIL HOUSING RESOURCES

One of the most beneficial perks of SAIL membership is the SAILing Guide and Resources. The SAIL Resources come from resources like the Arc and MORC, but most have been created by SAIL families to help with the various aspects of launching a loved one. SAIL members continue to develop forms and refine current documents.

Here's an example of a helpful resource developed by SAIL members, which focuses on fostering independence while your loved one is still in the family home:



### TEN THINGS TO DO WHILE YOUR LOVED ONE IS LIVING AT HOME

★ KEY: DO SOMETHING! ★

#### GOAL 1: Start engaging with staff now

**Why?** Having 1 or 2 staff people who know your loved one that will continue to support them when they move out gives both you and your loved one confidence and a start

**How?** Begin reaching out to friends and family to find support staff. Use SAIL questions to interview Staff. See Step 5.6 in the Housing Guide: Helpful SAIL Resources—Assemble Your Crew.

#### GOAL 2: Develop Supports Coordinator relationship

**Why?** These individuals are critical in developing and executing a housing plan

**How?** 1. Understand that your Supports Coordinator is not charting your course....you are. Reach out to SC and schedule the next 3 months of monthly meeting.

2. See questions in the Housing Guide under Assemble Your Crew to understand the importance of the relationship.

#### GOAL 3: Set independent living skills goals while at home

**Why?** Having loved ones do the most they can will instill confidence to build on skills

**How?** What can your loved one do at home that you are doing for them? Are you picking out their clothes when they can do this task themselves? Are you clearing their plate when they can take it to the sink? Can they rinse it? Can they put it in the dishwasher? Here's where you develop goals with supports coordinator with accountability

#### GOAL 4: Assign chores

**Why?** Because your loved one will not have maid service in their new space

**How?** Can your loved one run a vacuum? Can they wipe down a bathroom counter? Can they put new toilet paper on a roll? Give your loved one 3 mini goals a week and build on those!

For the complete document, sign in to the SAIL website and see the **Ten Action Items** and other impactful resources on the **Housing Guide Resources**.



### Michigan Tech First Task Force Launched

Two parent members of SAIL, Easterseals MORC and a service provider from Western Michigan recently launched a state-wide effort to bring Technology First to Michigan with the help of a grant from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund. They formed a Task Force of about 20 individuals representing a cross-section of organizations and individuals that advocate for or serve individuals with disabilities, including people who in fact have disabilities.

“Colleague Margaret Overton and I started the Tech First campaign in Michigan because we saw that the direct care personnel crisis was only getting worse and we had learned how technology can help people live independently,” said parent advocate and Task Force member, Susan Chaplin.

The purpose of the Task Force is to develop a plan based on best practices in other states to bring Technology First here. Technology First means gaining greater access to enabling technology and remote services for individuals with IDD. If the effort is successful, service organizations that write Individual Plans of Service (IPOSs) will have to offer technological solutions to individuals when such a solution makes sense. Services will continue to be person-centered; if individuals do not wish to use technology in their homes or for work or transportation support, they will not be required to do so. However, reports from other states that have adopted Tech First indicate that individuals using enabling technology experience greater autonomy, freedom, privacy and self-worth.

Medicaid funding will be important and we will propose waiver language to fund enabling technology and remote support,” Chaplin said. ““But we also know that it will be important to educate providers, support coordinators, families and individuals served about the



advantages of using enabling technology and remote support.”

The Task Force includes experts from throughout the state, including representatives from The Arc, The Autism Alliance, Michigan Assistive Technology, Community Mental Health, provider organizations and associations, other advocacy groups, as well as former Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) leaders, technology and business leaders, and self-advocates.

Speakers from organizations such as [SimplyHome](#), the states of Ohio, Tennessee and Oklahoma--which have all adopted Tech First--and a training company called [Tech First Shift](#) will help educate the Task Force members about best practices for implementation, as well as barriers and obstacles to expect.

“The bulk of the work occurs in our committees, which are Medicaid Waivers and Policies, Strategy, Technology, and Communications, Education and Training,” Chaplin said. “Our members are typically CEOs or Executive Directors of their organizations but they are rolling up their sleeves to complete this important work.”

The Task Force kicked off on February 25 in Lansing, met again on May 20 and will meet quarterly until the end of 2026. At the end of the two-year grant, the Task Force plans to present a blueprint for implementation to the governor, MDHHS and the Michigan State legislature.

**ACCESSIBILITY ISN'T A CHECKLIST**  
— SAM PROULX

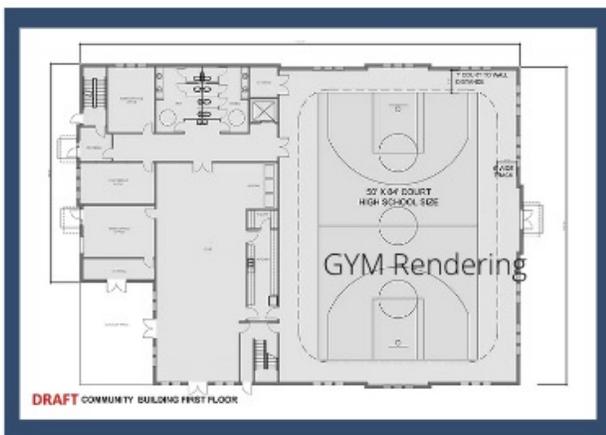
## Canton Oaks Campus Vision Nearing Reality

The Compass Community Collaborative (C3) Board has been hard at work making their vision for the Canton Oaks Campus Experience a reality. They are developing partnerships for on-site Skill, Vocational, and Employment programs, and even Special Olympics practice sessions in the Community Center Gym. They're also looking into Down Payment Assistance through MSHDA, researching the possibility of a Commercial Kitchen within the Community Center for onsite EBT eligible food purchases and exploring various IDD Housing models in New York.

Over the last month, they've been holding an Educational Series of presentations. These sessions cover the site and buildings, the Campus Experience, and ownership options, all in preparation for the Priority Waitlist, which **opens for applications on June 26th**. Demand is high, so all Condos are expected to be reserved very quickly!

Video of their vision: [Compass Vision of Canton Oaks Campus Experience](#)

Visit the website [C3LivingMI.org](http://C3LivingMI.org) or contact **Fiona Doskocz** at [info@C3LivingMI.org](mailto:info@C3LivingMI.org)



## Exciting Progress at Walton Oaks and Auburn Oaks



After a cold and rainy spring, construction is now back in full swing at Rochester Housing Solutions' Walton Oaks development. RHS anticipates completing the roadwork by mid-summer, with home construction beginning shortly thereafter. If everything stays on track, the first 10 families will move into their forever homes by mid-2026.

Meanwhile, their second community, Auburn Oaks, is moving steadily through the final stages of city approval. RHS expects to receive the green light within the next 60 days, which would allow for ground breaking later this summer. Stay tuned for details on a groundbreaking celebration, likely in September.

Only four IDD suites remain available for purchase at Auburn Oaks. Several families are actively seeking roommates to rent with or co-own a condo. To learn more, visit [www.rochesterhousingsolutionsmi.org](http://www.rochesterhousingsolutionsmi.org).

## Your SAIL Board Members

Susan Chaplin	Patricia McKenna
Don Courtright	Tom Mueller
Mindy Denton	Matthew Peters
Sara Fentress-Gannon	Kathy Remski
Fiona Doskocz	Joe Skornicka
Dan Israel	Mark Schmidt
Mary Jaye	Tim Weed