



"The Night Sky" on Jasper Drive. Photo credit: Patrick Dowd

LIFESTYLE AT HIGHLAND GREEN

NEWS • PERSONALITIES • PERSPECTIVES
SUMMER 2024

Neighbors Helping Neighbors: HIGHLAND GREEN COMMUNITY PROVIDES MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO TEDFORD HOUSING CAMPAIGN

Highland Green residents and its founder John Wasileski have joined forces on a \$400,000 matching pledge to help fund the new Tedford Housing emergency housing building, a 17,000 square-foot facility on Thomas Point Road in Brunswick. The project will create emergency family housing opportunities as well as a separate adult housing wing and consolidate case management and administrative staff under the same roof as shelter guests.

As the only shelter facility between Portland and Rockland, Tedford Housing is tasked with a daunting responsibility. Serving Southern Midcoast Maine since the 1980s with humble yet ambitious beginnings, Tedford Housing began as just one shelter. Tedford Housing Executive Director Andrew Lardie, a 20-year non-profit administrator, educator and advocate, is excited by the possibilities that this capital campaign represents. "It has been the catalyst for Tedford's ability to increase its efficiency, expand overall shelter capacity by 60% and better equip us to provide the safety net our region needs so that when people fall on hard times, they can get back on their feet."

According to Highland Green resident Frank Strasburger, who was eager to join such a worthy cause, homelessness needs to be



Highland Green residents who helped spearhead the Tedford campaign include (from left to right) Linda Gillespie, Carrie Strasburger, Frank Strasburger, and John Gillespie.

addressed systemically and Tedford Housing does exactly that. Synonymous with the word "shelter" for years and never before the focus of a capital campaign, today Tedford's programs also include homelessness prevention – certainly helping people who are currently homeless, but also providing aid to people and families on the edge of homelessness to remain housed and helping to integrate the unhoused population back into the community.

When Frank was asked to join Tedford's capital campaign committee, he says the first thing that came to mind was the philanthropic nature of Highland Green residents. Highland Green residents have always embraced causes near and dear to their hearts such as Midcoast Hunger Prevention Program, Habitat for Humanity and quilts for the Hospice Center;

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Neighbors Helping Neighbors

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and this year they have added Tedford's new emergency housing building project to the list. "Those who become temporarily unhoused are people just like us. In this case, they are also our neighbors; and Highland Green is full of generous residents who are very engaged within the community – many of whom feel very drawn to this cause," says Frank.

Frank also shares that at the onset of his personal fundraising efforts for Tedford Housing, he was thinking that it might be realistic to raise \$75,000, while quietly hoping to raise \$100,000. Thanks to the generosity of Highland Green residents, the amount raised so far was \$200,000.

It gets even better! When Highland Green founder and CEO John Wasileski learned that the Highland Green residents had raised \$150,000 toward this project, he matched it and challenged them



The new 17,000 SF Tedford Housing emergency housing building will include both family shelter and adult shelter facilities and will serve approximately 40 towns in Maine

to raise \$50,000 more which he also matched. "There is no other combined gift quite like this one. Your gift will make our long-time dream a reality," said Andrew.

The entire Tedford Housing project is estimated to cost \$8.8 million and, at \$8.6 million, they are very close to reaching the final goal. Frank adds that he hopes Highland Green's involvement will inspire even more people to bring Tedford Housing's campaign to a successful close.

Innovative Housing Developers Join Forces in Support of Tedford Housing

John Wasileski was inspired to become a major contributor by Kevin Bunker, who sits on the Board of Tedford Housing and volunteers his development expertise.

"I try not to ask my friends for donations, but knowing how successful and generous John is and given the location of this project, I knew it would be a natural fit and something he would want to be a part of," said Kevin.

Kevin is founder of the Developers Collaborative, which strengthens Maine's economy through innovative design, smart growth and environmentally sustainable housing initiatives. He is also a recipient of Portland's very prestigious Economic Development Achievement Award. John Wasileski and Kevin's history is one of mutual respect and collaboration spanning over a decade and includes various housing projects throughout those years, including the acclaimed rehabilitation of the former Motherhouse of the Sisters of Mercy into 88 units for seniors in need while preserving its 15,000 sq. ft. chapel.

Kevin adds that John Wasileski expertly blends his business success and success within the community – which was an inspiration to Kevin early in his career. Kevin was a six-figure contributor early in the Tedford Housing Capital Campaign, and so, with John's gift, that inspiration has come full circle.



Developers Collaborative Founder Kevin Bunker

"I try not to ask my friends for donations, but knowing how successful and generous John is and given the location of this project, I knew it would be a natural fit and something he would want to be a part of."

A MESSAGE FROM HIGHLAND GREEN CEO JOHN WASILESKI

Although at this point I certainly shouldn't be, I find myself repeatedly astounded by the charitable kindness shown by our Highland Green residents.

Having long been a champion of innovative, safe, decent and sanitary housing, I applaud their inspirational contribution to such an admirable endeavor. Not only will their major contribution to the Tedford Housing Campaign lead toward more permanent, stable housing, it is an investment in this community which will have significant and lasting impact.

Tedford Housing empowers those less fortunate to overcome the odds stacked against them. They prevent evictions, assist with

security deposits and emergency fuel payments, secure alternative housing and work with individuals and families to help find solutions and ensure the perpetuation of stable housing.

This particular project will facilitate Tedford Housing's mission by considerably increasing its shelter capacity, service connections and other valuable supportive resources in a location which is convenient to employment opportunities, healthcare, educational opportunities, transportation and essentials such as groceries.

I am proud to join Highland Green residents and Tedford Housing to help our neighbors rekindle hope and rebuild their lives at a time when it is so critically needed.



Highland Green Residents Greg and Donna Barmore

Highland Green Residents in Support of the Tedford Housing Campaign: Greg and Donna Barmore

Highland Green residents Greg and Donna Barmore are no strangers to the plight of the unhoused. As an example of just a few of their contributions, Greg has worked with Chicago ministers to improve inner city affordable housing, and Greg and

Donna are currently helping a couple seeking asylum by supporting them through our country's legal process, which is costly and difficult to navigate.

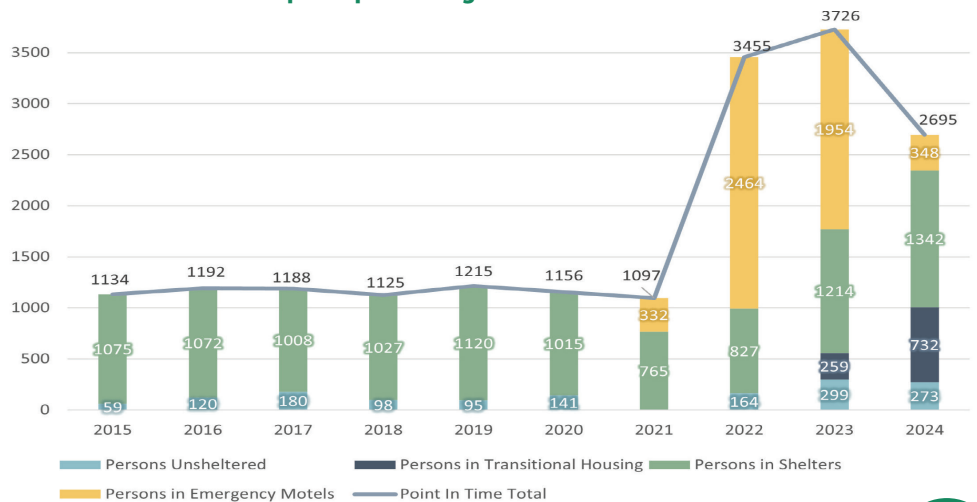
However, what they believe had the biggest impact on their understanding of homelessness was their participation in a church sponsored program in North Carolina. This program, called Families Together, paired the Barmores with two different homeless families to help get them back to stable housing and balanced finances. In both cases, the families were employed but had lost their housing due to large uninsured medical bills related to failed pregnancies. The Church provided transitional housing for several months to get them off the street while Greg and Donna helped get them back on their feet in their own apartments.

The Barmores were also some of the first contributors to the Tedford Housing Campaign. When Highland Green resident Greg Barmore discusses homelessness and the Tedford Housing

Campaign, his passion is irrefutable. "It's a small drop in a big bucket, but one we wanted to make," says Greg, "Once you lose your housing, it is really hard to regain, making transitional support critical. They need help to get them to the point of self-sufficiency. The kind of services provided by Tedford make a huge difference for a family that needs help to get back on solid ground."

Greg adds, "The location of the Tedford Housing expansion project is ideal, and providing support where the clients are makes perfect sense. This project far better meets the needs of people in transition from homelessness into sustainable shelter. What Tedford Housing is doing is wonderful. They have always done a great job, but this is a big improvement, and it is absolutely amazing that they raised the amount of money they did in such a short amount of time."

People Experiencing Homelessness in Maine

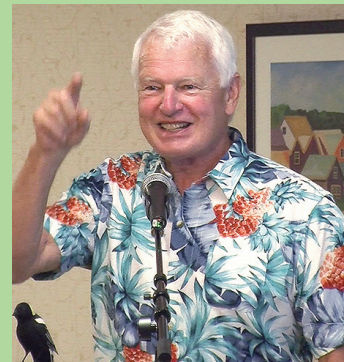


Source: Maine State Housing Authority

JOHN WASILESKI: CONVICTIONS AND

“The homeless are people who used to work, live and play with us. They are good people who have fallen on hard times. They need to know what can be accomplished with the help of others, and that they can go on to lead productive lives.”

“If we wait for government to fix our housing problem, it’s not going to happen. The private sector has to step up and working toward getting ahead of this crisis doesn’t just house the homeless, it is beneficial for the community and so many businesses,” says John Wasileski, founder of Highland Green in Topsham, OceanView at Falmouth and Cumberland Crossing by OceanView retirement communities.



Highland Green Founder John Wasileski

Partnering on More than Just Business

John served as one of the Maine Housing Authority commissioners, and his service has provided him with a forum to advocate for certain projects that are important to the senior population. An innovative entrepreneur who is passionately committed to economic sustainability, John has also begun to delve just as deeply into workforce housing solutions. An example of a workforce housing project of which John is very proud is a single-family home purchased and affordably rented to up to four employees – dramatically reducing drive times and setting rent at just 30% of incomes. Development of two more duplexes for the same purpose are in the planning stage.

Most recently, John’s philanthropy centered on Tedford housing, when he matched \$150,000 worth of donations his residents at Highland Green were able to raise for the Tedford Housing Campaign, and then challenged them to raise another \$50,000 which he would also match. Although John Wasileski has made a large contribution to the Tedford Housing Campaign, he prefers to applaud the efforts of other parties which also happen to be associates of his and who he says are largely responsible for the success of the Tedford Housing Campaign.

One such Tedford Housing supporter is Bath Savings Institution, which donated \$100,000; and Mid Coast Hospital Trust, which should not go without mention, has donated \$500,000. John hopes that businesses within the community “will follow their example to help eradicate homelessness as well as grow all of our businesses. We have great and enduring relationships with both Bath Savings and Mid Coast.”

He also commends Developers Collaborative Founder Kevin Bunker, who John describes as an outstanding individual who is both wise and empathetic. John shares that he has previously worked with Kevin to convert the Sisters of Mercy Convent into 86 low to moderate income senior housing apartments – saying that he was simply the concept man while Kevin was the mastermind.

Kevin’s impressive resume also includes Riverside Senior Housing in Topsham; securing a patchwork of funding from organizations, such as the Maine Housing Authority and HUD, for 60 asylum seeking families in Brunswick; and developing (as well as contributing a large portion of his fee toward) the new homeless shelter in Portland. “So when Kevin approached me about Tedford Housing – a project that was tailor-made for me, I didn’t hesitate,” said John.

“The homeless are people who used to work, live and play with us. They are good people who have fallen on hard times. They need to know what can be accomplished with the help of others, and that they can go on to lead productive lives.”



REFLECTIONS

The Journey

John Wasileski began his journey in sustainable economy and energy when he graduated from McGill University in Montreal with a degree in Sociology and a minor in Environmental Studies. He then joined the nonprofit world, developing quality, affordable housing for York Cumberland Housing, now Avesta.

Around that time, his mother lost her husband of 36 years and John and his siblings lost their father. It was also a time when John dealt firsthand with the limited retirement housing options of the 70s and realized the true value of long-term care insurance, as his mother lived to be 100 years of age! The policy he purchased on her behalf enabled her to live the remainder of her life at home the way she wished.

In 1978, John struck out on his own, handwriting a 20-page business plan requesting a \$20,000 loan for 14 housing projects. When Casco Bank and Trust agreed to provide John with \$1,000 a month on the condition that he provide monthly progress reports, Kennebunk Pond Housing Associates was born. After many trials and tribulations - one of which was a rehab after a devastating fire, which turned \$22,000 units into units that are worth \$122,000 today - John's debt was paid and his successful future within the private sector was well underway.

Then, when John was just 27 years old, he formed a partnership with Everett N. Dobson and Son and Eastern Electric Corporation. Originally initiated as a short-term agreement, the partnership lasted nine years and encompassed the OceanView project, which John owns today.

Of course John continues to contribute with housing projects such as the picturesque, 55+ Highland Green community, neighbor to the Cathance River Education Alliance, an environmental education organization he co-founded with fellow conservationist John Resenbrink.

Pictured here is an EV charging station at the Highland Green restaurant. About 50% of the new homes built at Highland Green include solar options.

Solar Sidebar: A Legacy in Sustainable Energy



Eliminating the Need for Traditional Fuels at Friends School of Portland

John Wasileski's commitment to environmental conservation runs just as deep as his dedication to the housing sustainability cause. His most recent efforts, focused on alternative fuel sources, include a solar panel project at Friends School of Portland.

OceanView at Falmouth, with residents who are also active donors, has partnered with Friends with the goal of transforming the school into a net zero entity. The project includes two phases, one with a financial commitment of \$380,000 toward solar panels and installation and the second for \$300,000 - both of which are repaid at 80% over seven years and then gifted to the school at the end.

As a result, Friends School of Portland has become the first school in Maine, the third school in the nation and the first commercial project in Maine to attain the highest international energy efficiency standard.

Smith Education Center at Wolfe Neck Park Goes Solar

John has also partnered with ReVision Energy to install solar panels on the Smith Education Center at Wolfe Neck Park - an interactive farm where children can participate in nature hikes and learn about dairy animals and farming.

A long-standing environmental advocate, John Wasileski has implemented multiple solar projects throughout his properties including Highland Green, one of ReVision Energy's largest customers, and OceanView, which is a community with solar powered buildings and vehicles.

A NEW NEIGHBORHOOD TAKES SHAPE



The new neighborhood in the Quarry Phase 1 at Highland Green is taking shape. Prime homes sites for new construction remain available on Jasper and Diamond Drive.



7 Finch Drive



The meticulously maintained home available for resale at 7 Finch Drive features many comfortable rooms for relaxing including the screened-in porch, which abuts the Heath Nature Preserve.

CREA Corner...

SHARING THE WONDERS OF NATURE

The Ecology Center is located on Highland Green's 230-acre nature preserve.



Cathance River Education Alliance (CREA) has been connecting people with nature for over 20 years by inspiring outdoor play for children, supporting teachers with outdoor learning and engaging the community in fun and interesting events and adventures,

such as the Nature and Forest Therapy Walk – a serene, beautiful, guided meditation walk designed to help participants rejuvenate while connecting with nature – which took place in early July.

Of course, CREA is already deeply immersed in summer camp including hands-on and feet wet activities such as river pool fishing, salamander searches and exploration of forest trails...all while attendees make friends, learn new skills and gain a strong sense of stewardship.

Or children can investigate nature virtually with online guidance for projects such as rock collecting, making a sundial, tracking rainfall and identifying leaves.

There are also “Wild Wonder” activities for all ages, including the recent spring bud tagging to observe growth, seasonal scavenger hunts and energy conservation events to deepen ecological awareness.

Self-guided Story Walks - with wooden storyboards posted along outdoor paths – and QR

Code Nature Trails – on which you keep an eye out for QR codes

you scan with your phone for interesting facts and history along the way - are also fun for all.





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*Highland Green Residents and
Founder Join Forces in Support of
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