

Martha's Vineyard Public Schools

Excellence and Equity For All Children

MATTHEW T. D'ANDREA, LP.D.
SUPERINTENDENT

Equal Opportunity Employer

HOPE T. MACLEOD, M.ED., BCBA
DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
(SECONDARY)

RICHARD M. SMITH, M.ED.
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NANCY W. DUGAN, M.ED., BCBA
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(ELEMENTARY)

AMELIA C. TIERNEY
SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

JANET L. SYLVIA
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

EDITH ROUSSEAU
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE
SUPERINTENDENT

March 29, 2022

Dear Martha's Vineyard Commission:

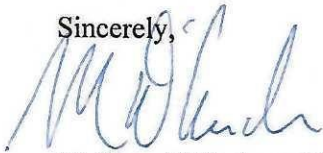
Please accept this as a letter of support for the Island Autism Group's grant application for the development of the Island Autism Center. The establishment of an Island Autism Center will provide families of autistic children and autistic adults access to essential resources and education on the Island. Currently many necessary supports are not provided locally, requiring families to seek assistance off island.

The Island Autism Center will create summer and after school programs for families and individuals. These classes will include instructional seminars, training sessions, guest speakers, and student educational and developmental courses. Teachers and caregivers will be afforded the opportunity to participate and/or facilitate these activities. Additionally, the Center will partner with the public schools along with many of our local organizations, such as Island Grown Schools and Ace MV, to create a variety of opportunities at the Center.

As our population of individuals with autism grows, it is incumbent upon us to support their families and create opportunities here on Martha's Vineyard for learning and growth. The Island Autism Group has a comprehensive plan to develop a Center where these families will be supported and individuals with autism can flourish here at home. I whole-heartedly support their efforts and their application for assistance.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Matthew D'Andrea, LP.D.

Ms. Joan Malkin
Chairwoman, MVC Commissioner
Martha's Vineyard Commission

Dear Chairwoman Malkin,

As abutting neighbors to the Island Autism Center, my wife, Tyrene, and I are writing to express our whole-hearted support for the Center's building plans off the Upper-End of Lambert's Cove Rd. in West Tisbury.

And, from our respective positions as Vice President of the Martha's Vineyard Garden Club for Ty and my position as the Director of Vineyard Futureworks, we welcome Island Autism and the role it will play toward a more vital and vibrant island community.

We have also spoken to other abutters in our neighborhood of Red Farm and we have only heard a level of enthusiasm, which matches our own, for the Island Autism Center.

We commend the Land Bank for its collaboration/partnership with Island Autism to enable the Center to obtain the land it needs to create its home in West Tisbury. The Island Autism Center will enrich our town and our island by expanding the opportunity for autistic Vineyarders to be contributing members of our island community with their extraordinary gifts.

Thanks to you and all the MVC Commissioners for your stewardship in preserving and growing what is special about the Vineyard.

Warm regards,
Bob and Ty Johnston
12 Bea Lane, West Tisbury
781 784-7841



Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

November 3, 2020

To whom it may concern:

Please register this letter as support for the Island Autism Group (IAG) in its efforts to secure funds for the farm-based program it is seeking to establish at the old Child Farm.

The land bank and AIG cooperatively arranged to purchase from the Child family its 17.5-acre property on the Lamberts Cove Road in West Tisbury, for each's respective mission; the land bank will own outright ten acres and will hold an agricultural preservation restriction on IAG's 7.5-acre property, less its 3.0-acre building envelope.

Farming — and especially its expansion — is one of the land bank's top goals. An agricultural preservation restriction *facilitates* farming, by setting aside areas where it and it alone is permitted to take place, but it does not *create* farming. Farming is created by farmers and we are enthusiastic about IAG's plan to establish a working enterprise at Child Farm.

We encourage you to act to support this important island initiative.

Very truly yours,


James Lengyel
Executive Director

April 22, 2022

To the Martha's Vineyard Commission,

I would like to voice my support for the Island Autism Center.

My brothers and I inherited the property at 515 Lambert's Cove Road from my parents. It is here where the proposed Autism Center will be built.

The Island Autism Group seeks to provide a home base for their organization as well as housing for 14 individuals with autism.

I believe my parents would be very proud to see their property being put to such a wonderful use, as am I and my brothers.

I ask that you approve the project for the Island Autism Group that is being presented to you.

With thanks,


Hal Child (Apr 23, 2022 09:56 EDT)

Hal Child



Community Preservation Committee
Town of Tisbury
P.O. Box 1239
51 Spring Street
Tisbury, MA 02568

April 15, 2022

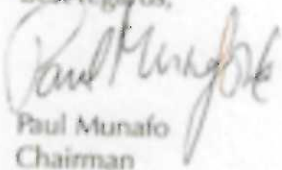
Ms. Kate DeVane
Executive Director
Island Autism Group
West Tisbury, MA 02575

Dear Ms. DeVane:

The Tisbury Community Preservation Committee is writing in support of the Island Autism Group Neighborhood Development and Open Space project.

Island Autism Group was awarded Community Preservation Act monies by the voters in the Town of Tisbury in 2021 in the amount of \$43,000.00 towards this project. At Tisbury Town meeting last night, \$100,000.00 was awarded to this project by the voters of the Town. The CPC is quite aware of the housing shortages on the Island—this organization, Island Autism Group, has a solid track record of successes and is now working to put together a successful housing project to provide autistic residents on Martha's Vineyard a viable option for housing. The apartments will have affordability restrictions in perpetuity which will protect this housing for those most in need for years to come. The Island needs these apartments, sooner than later.

Best regards,


Paul Munafò
Chairman

April 15, 2022

Dear Members of the Martha's Vineyard Commission,

I am writing this letter of support for the Island Autism Group (IAG) and their proposed plan to construct a community area consisting of housing, a farm and farm stand at 515 Lamberts Cove Road in West Tisbury. I am a resident of West Tisbury and currently serve on the board of Vineyard Independence Partnership (VIP), a partnership of individuals with disabilities, their families, and friends working to ensure that opportunities for a full life are available to all.

In my previous capacity as the director of the West Tisbury Free Public Library I worked with members of IAG for over 14 years. I have seen the work that Kate DeVane and her board have done to provide educational and social opportunities for Island children with ASD.

Through my work with other Island nonprofits, I have watch IAG work for years to strategically plan and fundraise for a project that would provide a residential setting for autistic adults over the age of 22 years old. This project would provide a place where children and adults with autism could enjoy social and therapeutic activities year round.

IAG's vision has focused on the goal of individuals living a full life, including the possibility of employment. Part of their mission is to help young adults with autism develop workplace skills and find employment. As you can imagine, this would benefit the entire Island.

I know many Island families who must send their children off island to meet their educational needs. I have seen first hand the economic and emotional costs of this separation and what the end of these supports at age 22 do to both the individuals and to their families.

I strongly endorse the work that Kate DeVane and the Island Autism Group have done and what they envision for the future.

Sincerely,

Beth Kramer

The Island Autism Group Inc.
c/o Kate DeVane
kate@islandautism.org
PO Box 2786
Edgartown MA 02539

April 2022

To the Martha's Vineyard Commission,

This letter is to voice our support for the Island Autism Center's project at Lambert's Cove, West Tisbury. Having a home base is desperately needed for this group of truly awesome folks and this property is the perfect fit. These kids/young adults, their families and the adults helping these kids are some of the finest, most caring and respectful people I have ever met. I have no doubt that this project will be a positive addition to the neighborhood. I am not an abutter but I do live less than a mile away. I would much prefer to have this group as our neighbors than any other. There is always a trusted adult (sometimes many) supervising the students, helping them learn to succeed, teaching them responsibilities and enjoying life to the fullest. These kids don't always "fit in". They strive to be accepted wherever they go. They are honest, hard-working, talented and over-looked. Their current after-school program and summer programs have been so successful due to the Island Autism Group and our wonderful MV Community but they truly need a place to call home. A place that belongs to them instead of a spot borrowed for them to enjoy for only a few hours.

This center will also provide much-needed housing for our autistic community (those with autism and those helping them). It will be a place that members can gather together to sort out travel to outside day jobs (farms, bakeries, other local businesses). A place where artwork can be put on the wall to stay, a garden can be tended to, a meal cooked for many and a gathering spot for families to be proud of. HOME, it's such a short word but it means a place where these special needs folks can call their own and truly feel like they belong there. I am positive that they will take great care of this property.

I urge you to please vote yes on this project because it is the kind of development that helps solve some issues for our island community. It will put a small dent in our current housing crisis, it will be the first intensive needs housing on the Vineyard and it will help the autistic families stay close together (a dream started by 2, nurtured by many). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Janet Sylvia and family,
West Tisbury resident

PO Box 164
West Tisbury MA

Dear Neighbors,

When our daughter Chloe was born in 1976 we didn't know anyone with autism. As Chloe grew into a little girl, we still didn't know anyone with autism and we had a poor understanding of the disability. In fact the Cambridge doctor who finally diagnosed her, after more than a dozen off-island trips, announced, at last, that Chloe is 'Atypical.' Yes we know, but what is wrong with her? We had a hard time finding someone who would say the word, 'autistic.'

It was a lonely beginning. We also had a hard time finding another child of any sort for Chloe to play with. It just happened that our neighborhood was devoid of three-year-olds. We finally found another girl Chloe's age in another corner of West Tisbury. We arranged a playdate with adults in attendance. The other child's mother and grandmother were dismayed, I'm sure, at Chloe's lack of playtime skills -- no interest in dolls or tiny kitchens. Her lack of meaningful speech. Her odd outbursts of words that seemed bizarre and out of context. Her lack of imagination. I was shaken myself at seeing the other child's achievements, her ability to have a conversation, her affectionate doll care and imitation of household tasks. Her ability to pretend.

We sought help on the island. There was none. The Massachusetts law, Chapter 766, had been enacted in 1973 and we knew Chloe was eligible for education services at age three. We informally

asked one of the Island teachers about programs here for special needs students The teacher responded 'there aren't any.' Well there were. The least severe adults struggled in the world of work. The most severe had been sent off-island to languish in institutions. Some of the lucky ones were home in front of the TV set.

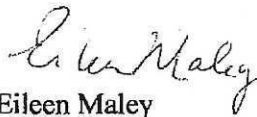
Things have changed a great deal on the island, in education, in acceptance, in attitude, and in population. As you probably know, the numbers of children born with autism has exploded everywhere. Of all the disabilities this group often has the most trouble mastering life skills and social behavior. The Island Autism Group has identified 56 school-aged children on the autism spectrum, and around 200 year-round people of all ages.

Their needs don't stop when school ends at age 22. As the IAG parents point out, when schooling ends, it's like falling off a cliff. With an activities center operated by skilled advocates, a job training program using the available farm land, and housing for autistic adults, the program aims to serve this population with meaningful jobs and satisfying lives. Once dependents, now tax-payers.

The collaboration and cooperation the Island Autism Center has already achieved with the Land Bank and the Island Housing Trust in acquiring land for the center has been nothing short of miraculous. But the project is a bold idea; it needs help from more community resources, including the towns themselves, through the Community Preservation Act funding.

I am urging you to support the group's request to fund homes for autistic adults, an activities center for all ages, and a farm for growing organic food for sale to restaurants and, down the road, their own farm stand.

Thank you for your consideration.


Eileen Maley
West Tisbury
September 25, 2020



AQUINNAH HOUSING COMMITTEE

955 STATE ROAD AQUINNAH, MASS 02535 TEL: 508-645-2300

Re: CPC Funding Request - Island Autism Center & Neighborhood
Date: October 1, 2020

Dear Friends:

This letter is to express our strong support of the Island Autism Group & Island Housing Trust's current applications to all six Island Towns for Community Preservation Act funding totaling \$600,000 as part of their island-wide CPA funding application for the purchase of a 7.5 acre property off Lamberts Cove Road in West Tisbury that will serve as the home of the Island Autism Center and a neighborhood of homes for adults with autism and autism related disorders.

We recognize that affordable options for disability-related Islanders is an important part of the affordable housing needs on whole of the Island, and should be served in an Island-wide approach. We will strongly advocate with our Aquinnah CPC to fully support this proposal, and wholeheartedly wish to encourage our 5 sister Towns on the Island to do the same.

Please contact me with any questions.

On behalf of the Aquinnah Housing Committee

Mike Hebert, Chair



TOWN OF EDGARTOWN
AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE

70 MAIN STREET P.O. BOX 1065
EDGARTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS 02539-1065

TELEPHONE
(508) 627-6178

FAX
(508) 627-6123

September 23, 2020

Community Preservation Committee
Edgartown Town Hall

Re: CPC Funding Request - Island Autism Center & Neighborhood

Honorable Committee Members:

This letter is to express our strong support of the Island Autism Group & Island Housing Trust's applications for Community Preservation Act funding for \$140,000 as part of an island-wide CPA funding application to all six towns for the purchase of a 7.5 acre property off Lamberts Cove Road in West Tisbury that will serve as the home of the Island Autism Center and a neighborhood of homes for adults with autism and autism related disorders.

The Island Autism Group is committed to serving autistic children and adults on Martha's Vineyard and the Island Housing Trust is committed to expanding affordable housing opportunities and we are excited to join them in making both projects a success.

Please contact me with any questions.

On behalf of the
Edgartown Affordable Housing
Committee

Mark Hess, Chair



**ISLAND DISABILITY
COALITION**
JOIN THE CONVERSATION

October 1, 2020

CPC Funding Request- Letter of Support

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Island Disability Coalition (IDC), to express our full support for the proposed Island Autism Center. The vision of the IDC is that of an inclusive Martha's Vineyard, and it is our mission to build the capacity of our community to truly include individuals with disabilities. The Island Autism Center will move our Island closer to this vision; by creating an organized and collaborative process for ensuring individuals with Autism have opportunities to live full, active, and valued lives within our community.

The IDC was created in 2017 to both identify and address the unmet needs of individuals with disabilities on Martha's Vineyard. Our 2018 Disability Needs Assessment identified major gaps in supports and services across the lifespan for individuals with disabilities, and their families. In the areas of transition and employment, there is limited programming available on the Island, and eligibility criteria for existing programs may result in individuals not receiving necessary services and supports. The IDC is working to create community solutions to identified gaps. The proposed Island Autism Center will work to fill many of these gaps, while collaborating with existing service providers to ensure access to resources is seamless for individuals and families.

Membership of the IDC consists of both Organizational Members and Friends of the IDC. Our Organizational Members include MV Hospital, YMCA, Island Grown Initiative, The Trustees, Felix Neck, Boys and Girls Club, all the Island Libraries and schools, and many more. By signing on as an Organizational Member, these key players are committing to doing what it takes to move towards an Inclusive MV. The IDC and its membership stand behind Island Autism, in recognition of all they have accomplished, the incredible impact they have already had on families, and what is to come with the Island Autism Center.

Thank you for your consideration,

Beth Wike
Coordinator, Island Disability Coalition
Director, Disability Services MVCS

**Vineyard Independence Partnership
Box Box 2751
Vineyard Haven MA 02568**



Working to assure everyone has access to a full life on Martha's Vineyard

September 29, 2020

To whom it may concern:

The Vineyard Independence Partnership is delighted to provide support for the Island Autism Group in their application for Community Preservation Act Funding to create the autism center and neighborhood on Lambert's Cove Road.

The Vineyard Independence Partnership, (VIP) is a partnership of individuals with disabilities, their family members, and friends working to promote social activities, support independent living situations, encourage accessibility in the community, and advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The organization was founded in 1983 as the Martha's Vineyard Special Parents Association. The name was changed in 2007 to reflect our broad membership. VIP provides social activities open to the whole community, and advocates for improved accessibility in the Island and for efforts to fill the gaps in supports for all our Islanders with disabilities.

VIP has had a long and strong relationship with the Island Autism Group over the years and share and support each other's activities and concerns for members with disabilities. We have followed and supported their long efforts to create educational, recreational, employment, social and housing opportunities for Islanders on the autism spectrum. We were very excited to learn about the proposed plans for the center on the wonderful Child property. The center has the opportunity to fill so many unmet needs for this population in a really creative way. But more importantly, we feel it would become a resource for the entire Island, making inclusion a reality as we participate in the center's activities.

We would welcome any questions and look forward to being part of making this important plan a reality.

Sincerely,

Julie Schmidt, Co-President
Vineyard Independence Partnership

Martha's Vineyard Public Schools
Excellence and Equity For All Children

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SUPERINTENDENT

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Re: CPC Funding Request

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The Island Autism Group (IAG) has been committed to serving the needs of children with Autism who live on Martha's Vineyard. Over the years, the MV Public Schools and IAG have worked in partnership to serve the needs of this population. The MV Public schools unequivocally support the proposal of IAG to create housing for adults with Autism. This housing would fill a need that has long been identified by our special education community here on Martha's Vineyard.

You may contact us at any time.

MV Directors of Student Support Services,

Nancy W. Dugan
ndugan@mvyps.org
c) 508-560-6221

Hope T. MacLeod
hmacleod@mvyps.org
c) 774-310-0033