INDEPENDENTWORKS

INTERDEPENDENT LIVING & LEARNING

FALL 2026 NEWSLETTER

MISSION STATEMENT

Independent Works will create a safe, supportive community that promotes interdependent living for adults with autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities.

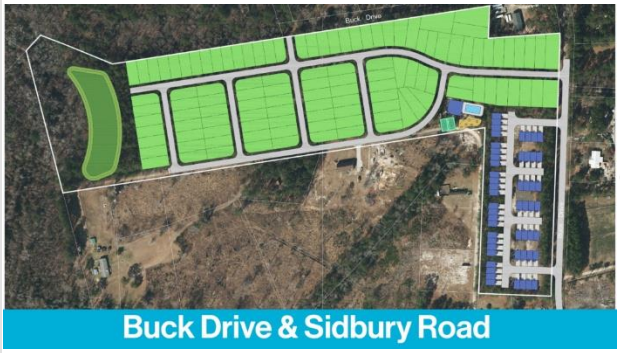
The Board of Directors and Advisors of IndependentWorks interprets our mission of creating a "safe, supportive community" to include not only a housing community, but also a circle of inclusive, enriching, educational, and joyous events that we host and promote every month. We hope that this newsletter informs you and motivates you to volunteer to help make our dreams become a reality!

HOUSING COMMUNITY PROGRESS

CityPlace

We are sorry to report that after years of work and expense, this project collapsed due to financial constraints. It is always important to learn from failures. These are some of the lessons learned:

- New Hanover County property is expensive and some areas such as downtown Wilmington are probably out of reach for affordable rental housing.
- Development costs are high and can squeeze a tight budget.
- A successful affordable rental housing project that supports itself sustainably with rent at around 30% of a disabled person's generally low income will only be possible with low-cost land, low development costs, and no loan obligations.
- Long-term subsidies such as housing vouchers cannot be counted on.



Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity

HOPE-NC is an organization that is very similar to IndependentWorks. They are currently welcoming new residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities to four two-bedroom townhomes at Weaver's Grove in Chapel Hill. This is a mixed-income neighborhood built by Habitat for Humanity of Orange County in cooperation with a number of commercial builders.

In early 2026, Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity purchased 30 acres at the corner of Buck Drive and Sidbury Road in northern New Hanover County. This large-scale project will be the first mixed-income development by our local Habitat and will take 5-7 years to complete with more than 100 homes of varying types.

We have met with their leadership team and proposed replicating the success of Weaver's Grove right here! They are considering this proposal, though it is very early in the planning stages. We are hoping to reach an understanding so that we may then begin the multi-year process of raising about one million dollars for the purchase of the homes while

also organizing volunteers to assist in their construction. **These four two-bedroom homes would then be owned by IndependentWorks and rented at affordable rates to residents with disabilities, while supporting them with life skills instruction plus social and educational programming.**

VOLUNTEERS

UNCW STUDENTS have been volunteering for Movie and Game Nights, along with Special Events such as Picnic-in-the-Park. During the last year, over 40 students have given over 100 hours, interacting with our folks and enjoying time together.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS are now being recruited using a new website called **ILM VOLUNTEER HUB**. You can go to this site and sign up as a volunteer for the community, and research non-profit organizations that are looking for help. IndependentWorks is listed and you can sign up for shifts for our regular events or indicate if you are interested in joining our Board of Advisors and Directors. Please sign up to give back to your community! It is very rewarding (and needed)!

MONTHLY EVENTS

OVER 1,000 PARTICIPANT CONTACTS IN LAST 12 MONTHS!



Parent Connect Group meets the first Tuesday of every month at 5 PM at Wilmington's Northeast Library and on Zoom. Some meetings consist of about 15 family members talking about issues and questions of concern or sometimes we host special guests discussing specific topics such as transportation, UNCW and Cape Fear Community College

programs for people with intellectual disabilities, and many others.



Movie Night is held the <u>second Tuesday</u> of every month at 4:30 at the First Baptist Church Activity Center. There is a projector and a large screen. Entrance is free and snacks and drinks are provided. Family movies are picked by the Special Advisory Board and audience participation is welcomed!



Special Events are generally held during the <u>third week</u> at varying times and locations. These have included Mini-Golf, Picnics, Craft Nights, and Line Dancing, to name a few.



Game Night is held the <u>fourth Tuesday</u> of every month at 4:30 - 6:30 at the First Baptist Church Activity Center. You can play arcade games, pool, ping-pong, air hockey, and foosball. We mix in other activities such as Trivia Games, UNO, Bingo, Board Games and Karaoke. About 35 people or more usually attend and have a really good time together. It's all free, including snacks and drinks. There are usually four or more UNCW students keeping everyone involved.



The Gardening Program meets <u>every Thursday at 10 AM</u> at Russel's Reach Farm - a beautiful spot on Sidbury Road shared with Coastal Therapeutic Riding Program, with horses and other farm animals that are very friendly! Under the leadership of volunteer Erin Gross, the group has been caring for a thriving garden since April, while enjoying the outdoors together.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ADVISORS

- Cheryl Powell joined our Board of Directors, while our Advisors include some really helpful individuals including Grelynn Bradley, Ellie Covan, Melany Hansen, Shelby King, Mary Jane Locke, Charlrean Mapson, Halima Moses, Nancy Simpson, Lisa Williams, and Shelby Vaccaro. **We are currently meeting on Zoom on the second Monday of each month at 6 PM and welcome new volunteers.**

SPECIAL ADVISORY BOARD



The Special Advisory Board - 10 individuals with disabilities meets the last Wednesday of every month at the Harrelson Center and on Zoom. This group helps to decide about all of our activities. **We met last week with Senator Lee** after one of the members, Ali Young, had participated in the Legislature's Disability Caucus in Raleigh. At the group's urging, we are trying to meet with as many of our elected officials as we can in order to advocate for adults with intellectual disabilities.

UPCOMING PARENT'S NIGHT OUT

Thursday, October 29th - 5 PM at the Wrightsville Beach Brewery

We are planning to meet at the outdoor picnic tables with **FREE PIZZA FOR ALL**! This will be an opportunity to meet other parents, board members and advisors to discuss issues and plan together. Please RSVP so that we have an idea of how many will be attending.

RSVP for Parent's Night Out

Fundraising in November

IndependentWorks is an all-volunteer organization with no salaries for anyone. All of our expenses are directly related to our events and activities, including rental fees, food and supplies. There is also support through membership at the Harrelson Center for Non-Profits, which gives us meeting space and other benefits, plus costs for our communications software that helps produce and distribute our newsletter and emails, along with our website and Zoom. Our financial records undergo annual review by a certified public accountant, and we have a Gold rating by Candid. We obtain some of our funding through grants, but the rest is thanks to you. **Please consider donating today!**

THANK YOU!!!

FOR BEING PART OF THIS EFFORT TO CREATE A BETTER INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY FOR OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

We hope to a new Text block ready for your content.

VOLUNTEER **DONATE**

Our Contact Information
IndependentWorks
20 North 4th Street, Suite 214
Wilmington, NC 28401

302-228-3039
http://www.independentworks.org

Unsubscribe | Manage email preferences