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Melmark Breaks Ground on Adult Planned Community for Individuals with Autism, Intellectual, and Developmental Disabilities

Located in Tewksbury, MA, the pilot project will cost over \$15M to complete.



(Andover, MA February 20, 2025) – Melmark, a national leader in the human services field, recently broke ground on the development of an intentional adult planned community on a three-acre site in Tewksbury, Massachusetts. With an expected cost of over \$15M and an estimated timeline of one year to complete, the pilot project will focus on providing evidence-based and instructional adult services for individuals with autism, intellectual, and developmental disabilities.

Senator Barry Finegold attended the groundbreaking ceremony and presented Melmark President and CEO Rita M. Gardner with a State Senate Citation for Melmark’s commitment to providing necessary and innovative adult services for the ID/A community in Massachusetts.

“We are creating an innovative new adult services model, centered around full community integration and resource-sharing, which will allow individuals to age in place through their lifespan with access to public transportation, banking opportunities, retail and leisure, etc. with supportive resources to ensure continued best outcomes,” stated Melmark President and CEO Rita M. Gardner, M.P.H., LABA, BCBA, CDE®. “This model will also offer staffing efficiencies in light of the national human services workforce crisis post COVID-19 and will provide comprehensive public policy guidelines which can be replicated by other human service providers nationally.”

Melmark is partnering with Caveney Architectural Collaborative and Vantage Builders to design and build the facilities, including four residences housing a total of 20 adults, an instructional and vocational day program for 50+ individuals, a vocational coffee shop social enterprise, daily living activities, supports, community engagement, recreational opportunities, and affordable staff housing.

Construction of the adult planned community will rely on significant philanthropic donations, including contributions from Melmark families and friends, corporate partners, foundations, event proceeds, and other major gifts. For information about supporting the project, contact ekallman@melmarkne.org or visit <https://www.melmark.org/donate-mne/>.

To learn more about the pilot project, visit: www.melmark.org/planned-tewksbury-adult-community/

Photo caption (L-R): Senator Barry R. Finegold, Melmark Vice President and CFO Thomas Crofcheck, Vantage Builders Business Development Representative Eddie Silva, Melmark Vice President of Business Operations Bill Ahearn, Melmark President and CEO Rita M. Gardner, Melmark Chief Operating Officer Shawn Quigley, and Caveney Architectural Collaborative President and Founder John Caveney.

About Melmark

Melmark is a multi-state non-profit human service organization providing clinically sophisticated evidence-based special education, residential, vocational and therapeutic services for children and adults with autism spectrum disorders, developmental and intellectual disabilities, acquired brain injuries and other neurological and genetic disorders. All specialized special education services are based on the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) and are designed based on each student's individual needs.

Recognized as one of the leading providers in the country, Melmark has a combined staff of over 1,200 at its service divisions in Pennsylvania, New England, and the Carolinas and serves 700 individuals from across the country. www.melmark.org.