

Independence House She-Shed Finds Home Thanks To Meaningful and Innovative New Collaboration

Independence House and The Cotuit Center for the Arts offers opportunity to positively impact many lives on Cape Cod

ARTICLE | NEWS | FEBRUARY 6, 2020 06:49 AM | BY CAPECODTODAY STAFF



The Independence House She-Shed, thanks to the continued generosity of Cape Associates. (IH photo)

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Hyannis, MA, February 4 2020 — Independence House Executive Director, Lysetta Hurge-Putnam states "A significant component of our role as change agents is engagement and public dialogue which serves to increase the visibility of domestic and sexual violence as serious public health issues worthy of focused attention. Our collaborations and partnerships help to effect systems and social change, and increases the capacity of Cape Cod residents to achieve significant progress in supporting survivors, to increase cycles of healthy relationships and reducing sexual and domestic violence. We are thankful that this collaboration provides a platform to elevate these issues which impacts the lives of so many."

Linking with that strategy, in 2019, Independence House, Inc. Board Member Debbie Lyman and employee of Cape Associates worked with her company to gift a She-Shed to Independence House as part of their philanthropic giving program and in honor of the domestic and sexual violence agency's 40th anniversary. Cape Associates, a custom builder, property management, services and painting company has a history dating back to 2001 of building and donating full-scale children's playhouses to nonprofits on Cape Cod for their fundraising efforts.

The idea behind the She Shed came from Cape Associates designer, Mike Bremneour. "We wanted to create something different than a playhouse this year for Independence House and I thought that a She Shed would be the perfect complement to their important mission", says Mike. Independence House supports, advocates and empowers survivors of domestic and sexual violence, the majority of whom are women. Popularity of She Sheds have risen thanks to shows and commercials depicting the swanky out buildings for women to call their own.

During an August 19th ribbon cutting ceremony hosted by Cape Associates, the She-Shed was officially handed to Independence House, Inc. with Lysetta Hurge-Putnam thanking the Cape Associates team and cutting the ceremonial ribbon. A Cape-wide tour of the She-Shed followed at over 12 locations including the Provincetown Carnival Parade, the Eastham Windmill Weekend, Cape Cod Young Professional's Back to Business Bash, Yarmouth's Seaside Festival, Cape Cod Media Group's Ladies Night Out, and stationary week-long exhibits at Seamen's Bank and Cape Associates in Eastham, Independence House in Hyannis, the West Yarmouth Library, the Mashpee Green and at the Mashpee Fire and Police stations. The tour ended at the Cape Codder Resort and Spa in Hyannis for the Independence House 40th Anniversary Gala on November 16th. Raffle tickets were sold to the general public throughout the tour.

During the 40th gala, the winner of the Independence House She-Shed was chosen; and the raffle raised over \$18,000 for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Raffle winner, Susan Littlefield of Cummaquid, a past volunteer of Independence House, generously donated the She-Shed back to Independence House. Independence House and Susan decided the She-Shed should find a home that would benefit the community which is inclusive of domestic and sexual violence which impacts 1 in 4 women, and 1 in 5 respectively.

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Andrea Baerenwald, Director of Marketing for Cape Associates added, "Independence House was able to achieve exactly what we wish for every recipient of our annual playhouse program. They were dedicated to their fundraising efforts and did a fantastic job getting the word out. The entire team at Cape Associates is proud to have partnered with them in their efforts to commemorate their 40th Anniversary and applaud their success."

Independence House reached out to the Cotuit Center for the Arts in search of the envisioned home for the She Shed. David Kuehn, Executive Director was thrilled to bring this gift to provide a space for artwork on sale created by their special needs artists who participate in Cape Cod Can, the Cape Cod Collaborative Arts Network that became a full program under the Cotuit Center for the Arts umbrella in 2016. Cape Cod Can offers opportunities for inclusion and active participation in the arts for people with disabilities on Cape Cod. The Independence House She-Shed at the Cotuit Center for the Arts will also feature some periods of time throughout the year to host Independence House domestic and sexual violence survivors who choose to exhibit artwork. Independence House offers an art-based survivor group for domestic and sexual violence survivors as a therapeutic modality for healing and recovery through art.

"The collaboration could not be more fitting", indicates Donna Giberti, Director of Development and Marketing and the Volunteer Coordinator for Independence House. "Because people with disabilities, are survivors of sexual assault at very high rates compared to the general public".

"The timing of this gift is perfect. We have been looking for a location on our campus to showcase some of the visual art produced through Cape Cod CAN's programs on our campus. We have the perfect location for the shed and look forward to sharing information about the important work by Independence House, and the important outreach we strive for on a daily basis. It's a win-win and we are all full of gratitude," said David Kuehn, Executive Director of Cotuit Center for the Arts.

The She-Shed will makes its final stop and permanent home at the Cotuit Center for the Arts this Spring 2020. Independence House and the Cotuit Center of the Arts hope to host future collaborative annual fundraisers with proceeds defraying any maintenance and costs involved in operating the She-Shed and the Cape Cod Can program survivors.

Independence House is Cape Cod's leading resource, counseling and advocacy center to address and prevent domestic and sexual violence. Independence House serves over 10,000 Cape Codder's annually at offices in Hyannis, Falmouth, Orleans and Provincetown, four court houses on Cape Cod and an emergency domestic violence shelter. To learn more about Independence House, visit www.independencehouse.org or our dedicated teen website at www.IndependencehouseTeens.org.

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