



*Inn Along the Way*

FOR RELEASE December 15, 2015

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Note: photograph follows the text

#### INN ALONG THE WAY PURCHASES ITS FIRST SITE, CHAPMAN FARM

A different model of elder community is coming to Maine. Thanks to many generous donations, on December 15<sup>th</sup> the nonprofit organization Inn Along the Way was able to purchase the historic Chapman farm on Main Street in Damariscotta from the family that has owned the land for nine generations. In the months and years to come, the property will become home to an interdependent community of elders and caregivers, as well as a destination point offering lodging, dining, and other activities to the general public.

The Chapman farm consists of 38 acres of rolling fields and a pond. Area residents may be most familiar with the farm's white farmhouse and huge red hay barn and milking shed, which are visible from Main Street. People will also remember the farm as the site of the Miles Memorial Hospital Rummage Sale for many years. When asked why the family decided to sell the farm to the nonprofit, family member John Gallagher said, "David Chapman had the opportunity to sell the property many times in the past for much greater sums, but David thought of his community as his home and could not see any outside commercial enterprise improving his community by developing his land. The family felt that Inn Along the Way will better this community, and that is what David and Madeline would have wanted were they still here."

Several clusters of cozy, environmentally friendly homes will be built on the property and rented on a long-term, "ability to pay" basis. Residents will be invited to share their gifts of time and wisdom through a collaborative support arrangement, creating a culture of interdependence and caring. In addition to the homes, several respite cottages are planned.

These will be made available to the public on a limited-time basis for caregivers or their loved ones who are moving through the end days of life.

An early goal is to create a public tea room in the farmhouse, with a small inn and café to follow. Some of the agricultural land will be available to local organic farmers, with potential for a seasonal farm stand. An art center and other meeting and classroom spaces will be created, all with the goal of drawing in the public. While these activities will generate income for the nonprofit, even more important will be the resulting intergenerational encounters between the Inn Along the Way's residents and the broader community. The aim is to banish the sense of isolation and loneliness sometimes suffered by elders and replace it with a sense of purpose and belonging.

At their November meeting, Inn Along the Way's board members held a visioning session to clarify and enumerate their hopes and dreams for the project. Now, with the purchase of the property, board members will begin working with architect Richard Burt and landscape architect Ray Cragin to create a master plan that reflects that vision. "Chapman Farm is a beautiful place," says board secretary, Sue Rockwood. "I'm thrilled we'll have the opportunity to create a community in such a perfect setting." Adds board member Tracy Verney, "When I think about the nine generations who farmed this land, I feel our strong sense of community is a great match."

Board president Sherry Flint looks forward to sharing information about Inn Along the Way at upcoming "Coffee and Conversation" gatherings, four of which were held in 2015. Contact her at [info@innalongtheway.com](mailto:info@innalongtheway.com) to be added to the mailing list, or watch the Inn Along the Way's Facebook page for more details.

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[Caption: Aerial view of the Chapman farm property purchased by nonprofit Inn Along the Way]