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Melmark partners with Vantage Builders and Caveney Architectural Collaborative on \$15 million project

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Tewksbury, MA Melmark, a national leader in the human services field, will break ground in early 2025 on the development of an intentional adult planned community on a three-acre site. The project will address an ever-growing need in the state of Massachusetts for adult services that are evidence-based and instructional for individuals with autism, intellectual, and developmental disabilities. Melmark is creating an innovative new adult services model based on the premise of continuing care retirement communities popular in elder services.

The pilot project will cost an estimated \$15 million to complete. Melmark collaborated with the Caveney Architectural Collaborative on the design, which will include four residences housing 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. Vantage Builders will manage the construction of the three-acre site over the projected two-year timeline to complete the project. Massachusetts-based law firm Dalton & Finegold is representing Melmark for all legal matters pertaining to this project.

“When we look at the individuals we serve who are turning 22, there’s a significant cliff and drop-off in terms of financial resources as well as the number of providers who will serve individuals with profound or severe challenging behaviors and what we’re seeing increasingly is that individuals who have these needs are not able to get access to those services once they turn 22,” said Melmark president and CEO Rita Gardner, M.P.H., LABA, BCBA, CDE. “Our goal is to develop an infrastructure and model that is campus-based and rooted in full community integration and resource-sharing, which will allow individuals to age in place through their whole lifespan with access to centralized medical services, retail, public transportation, banking opportunities, etc. with opportunities for continued best outcomes.”

The model will offer staffing efficiencies in light of the national human services workforce crisis and will provide comprehensive public policy guidelines which can be replicated by other human service providers.

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

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