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STORY UPDATE

Inclusive community center to break ground

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THE BELLINGHAM HERALD**

Building permits in hand, the Arc of Whatcom County is launching into construction mode to transform a 100-year-old McLeod Road house into the Dan Godwin Community Center.

The center will offer space for recreational and educational activities for people with developmental disabilities and their families. The house at 2602 McLeod Road also will have meeting rooms and the offices of Arc of Whatcom County.

A volunteer work party is planned for Wednesday to install pavers in the center's environmentally friendly parking lot, and workers soon will pour concrete for the driveway, said Susan Jewell, executive director.

The Arc is in the midst of a \$500,000 capital campaign to build the center - selling pavers, applying for grants and seeking in-kind donations from the building community. Now, they need workers, supplies and equipment for plumbing, electrical, heating, security and air-conditioning systems, Jewell said.

WORK PARTY

The Arc of Whatcom County will hold a work party Wednesday to install "grassy pavers" in the parking lot of the Dan Godwin Community Center. For more information go to www.arcwhatcom.org or call 715-0170.

Arc officials want the center to be accessible to those with physical disabilities. They're looking for fixtures to make bathrooms wheelchair accessible and electronic door-opening systems.

"We want to be a model of inclusion," Jewell said.

The center is named after Dan Godwin, a Mount Baker School District resident who died in 2003 at age 20. His family had been worried there wouldn't be many places for him to participate in social, recreational and educational activities once he left school at age 21. After he died, they knew the same was true for other adults with developmental disabilities.

So Godwin's family gave the Arc of Whatcom County \$250,000 to buy the house for the center, which will be named in his memory.

Jewell thinks construction will take about six months, and that the center will be open by Jan. 1.

