



# THE BULLETIN

AUTUMN 2022



**Maine Seacoast Mission**  
[seacoastmission.org](http://seacoastmission.org)



**OUR MISSION**

Rooted in a history of compassionate service and mutual trust, the Mission seeks to strengthen coastal and island communities by educating youth, supporting families, and promoting good health.

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**Message from the President**

**A SEASON OF ENGAGEMENT**

As we learn to live with Covid and emerge from our hidey holes, this fall feels like a time of reengagement and, even though we’re still being careful, reengagement feels *good*.



In these pages you will find stories of engagement and reengagement. Engagement suggests promise and participation; clutches, gears, and engines; appointments and rendezvous. These are stories of good people engaging and reengaging with the Mission, their communities, and each other.

Mission students—from *Downeast* Exploration Fund recipients (page 7) to Davis Maine Scholars (page 6)—have an engagement, an appointment, with their own bright futures. Whether it’s graduating college or a summer at arts camp, we help students meet their future goals.

Sure, Santa makes his rounds in one night, but I’m still impressed by the map on page 13. It shows where Mission elves touch hearts at Christmas. From a rugged young fisherman to a senior citizen, the stories are the same: for generations of island and Downeast Mainers, Christmas will always be tied up with the red string of a Mission Christmas. Hold your finger just here while I tie this.

Engagement is even in the name of one of our programs. Our Community and Family Engagement program (page 3) is a clutch that creates powerful traction between the engine of Mission work and people in our communities. It helps families get where they want to be.

Engagement can also mean a promise, as in “engaged to be married.” Every day we renew our commitment to our Downeast and Island communities. Promise.

In this *Bulletin* I hope you see what I see: the promise of the Maine Seacoast Mission being kept every day. As we learn to live with Covid, reengaging that promise and our communities means more than ever.

For the Mission!

John Zavodny, President, Maine Seacoast Mission

*Cover: Carla, a Downeast community member, stands at her front door after chatting with Mission staff*



When Rachel moved from Southern Maine to Milbridge to escape an abusive relationship, she moved into a large house on the ocean with her father, disabled brother, and her two daughters. From the outside it looked like she was doing well, but secretly she was barely able to make ends meet supporting five people on a single income. Rachel soon learned about the Mission’s food pantry from a friend, “I was really struggling, and she told me about the food pantry,” she says, “but I pushed it off until I didn’t have a choice.” Before the move to Milbridge, Rachel had always been able to provide for her family but now she barely had any food to put on the table. When her cupboards were bare and she did not have many options for her next meal, she turned to the Mission for help. Rachel thought she would be able to get just a few items but was shocked when she learned she could get enough food to feed her whole family. “I was sobbing,” she recalls.

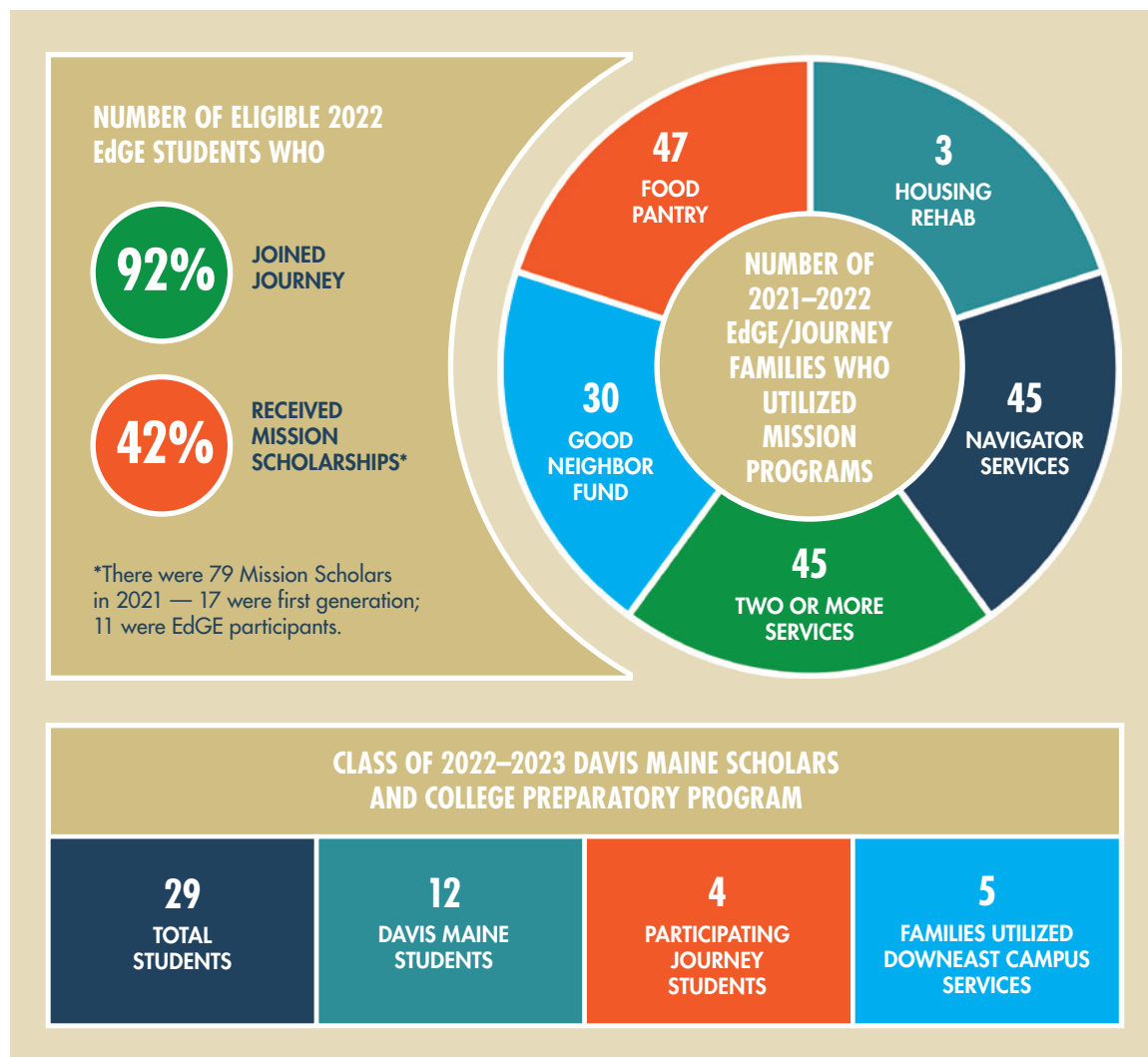


After a few visits, Stephanie Moores, the Family and Community Engagement Program Manager for the Mission, discovered Rachel was supporting a large family. Stephanie pulled Rachel aside at the pantry to let her know about other Mission services. With a variety of assistance and program information always available, Rachel never felt like she had to ask directly for anything. If there was a mention of a need, Stephanie would go out of her way to make sure Rachel knew her options.

When her ex-partner drained her bank account in the middle of the winter and her pipes froze, she called Megan Smith, Food Security and Sustainability Programs Coordinator. Within an hour, the Mission gave her emergency fuel assistance. “I utilized it two times,” Rachel says. “If I didn’t have that we wouldn’t have heat.” Luckily, Rachel lived in a well-insulated, newer house, but Stephanie also works with families who live in older homes that are often hard to heat. In those cases, Stephanie refers homeowners to the Mission’s Housing Rehabilitation program, which engages hundreds of volunteers every summer to make homes safe, energy-efficient, and functional for years to come.

Later that winter, Rachel signed up for the Christmas Program thinking she would be able to get a few stocking stuffers. Instead,





she found she could receive gifts for her whole family, from toothbrushes and winter coats to a bike for her daughter.

The Family and Community Engagement program, based at the Downeast campus in Cherryfield, is designed to help families like Rachel's. In 2021, over 45 families participated in more than one Mission program including the Mission's education programs EdGE and Journey. Rachel's daughter, Ava, attended EdGE's afterschool program at her school in Milbridge, one of the 693 students who attended EdGE programs at seven schools in Washington County. EdGE offers collaborative and innovative afterschool, summer, in-school, and leadership programs and provides students opportunities to expand their knowledge and experiences through academic and social support and peer mentoring.

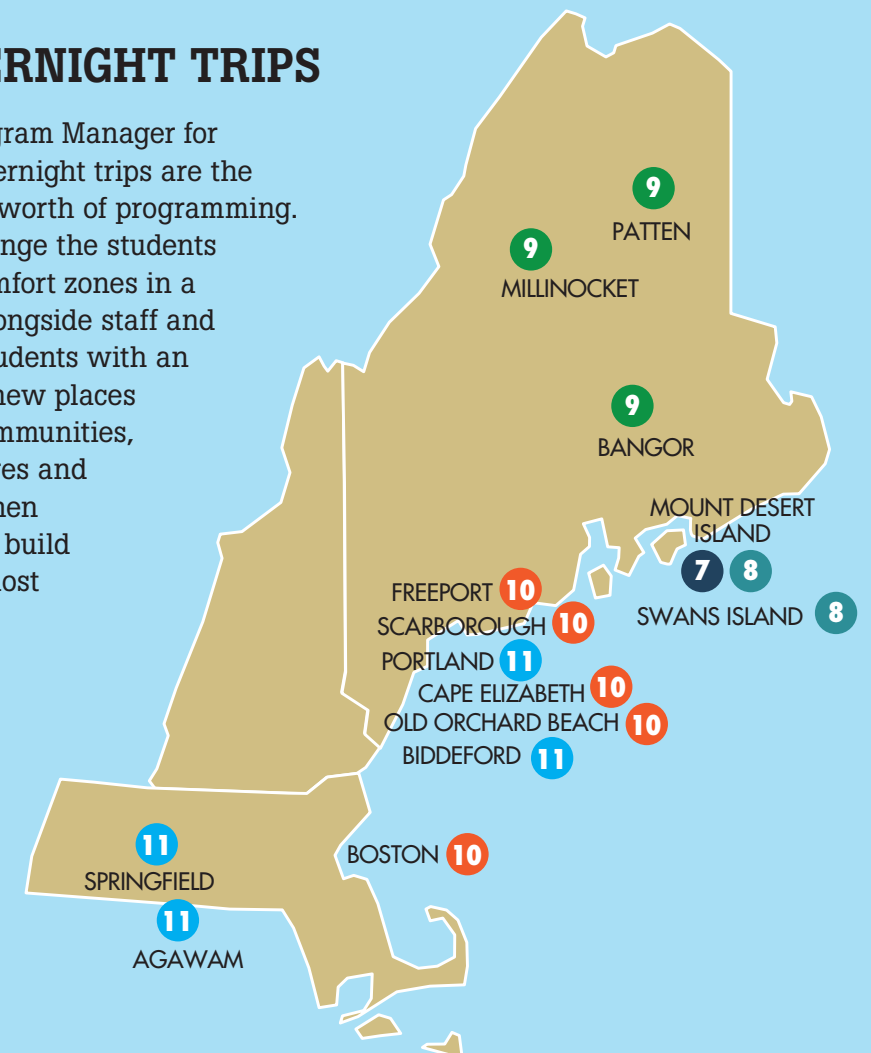
When Ava reaches 7th grade, she can apply to be in Journey which selects 15 students from Narraguagus Jr./Sr. High School and Cherryfield Elementary School to create a cohort that stays together through the end of high school. Of the two groups of students who joined Journey in 2021, 24 of the 26 had attended EdGE. The students who join Journey learn the skills they need to successfully transition to high school and through higher education or to a career. Currently, the first Journey cohort are now in their senior year of high school and are receiving support as they apply to college.

The strong connections built between students and mentors in the EdGE and Journey programs also support the work Stephanie does. If an EdGE Youth Development Coordinator or Journey mentor notices a family might need extra support, they let Stephanie know. Each month, she

## JOURNEY OVERNIGHT TRIPS

Dakin Hewlett, the Program Manager for Journey, shares that overnight trips are the culmination of a year's worth of programming. "Such excursions challenge the students to step outside their comfort zones in a safe, supportive way alongside staff and peers." Trips provide students with an opportunity to explore new places outside of their own communities, learn about other cultures and natural spaces, strengthen bonds with their peers, build leadership skills, and most importantly, have fun.

- 7** 7th graders
- 8** 8th graders
- 9** 9th graders
- 10** 10th graders
- 11** 11th graders



also sends a newsletter to all the families enrolled in EdGE letting them know about the services available through the Mission including the food pantry and the Good Neighbor Fund, which is specifically for families who have children participating in the Mission's education programs. The Fund can be used for unexpected expenses including housing, transportation, medical or dental care, safety items, and or work and education.

This level of support from so many different sources can help families that might otherwise slip through the cracks.

Rachel still uses the food pantry and is thankful for the help that the Mission has provided. She also lets everyone she knows that might need help that the Mission is here. "I can't stress enough that if someone is in need of anything the Mission will help them," she says. "When you walk in, there are domestic violence numbers, there are extra coats hanging up. They will find you the resources and if they don't have them there, they will connect you." And Rachel is forever grateful for how the Mission stepped in to help her, "I can't even put it into words what the Mission means to me. It literally meant keeping me from giving up," she says. "My children could be children and not worry about Christmas, or bills being paid, or food in the cupboard." 🌟





# Two cohorts of Davis Maine Scholars

"I am the luckiest person in the world. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Mali Smith says about receiving the Davis Maine Scholarship. The Davis Maine Scholarship, which is a collaboration between the Mission and the Shelby Collum Davis Charitable Fund, ensures Downeast, first-generation college bound students can complete a four-year undergraduate degree without financial burden at one of three partner colleges, Clark University, University of New England (UNE), or Wheaton College. As a Davis Maine Scholar, Mali just started her first year at the UNE. She recently joined Recreation Nation, one of UNE's first year living and learning communities, which is centered on outdoors and intramural sports.

Mya Abbott, a Davis Maine Scholar in her first year at Wheaton, echoes Mali's sentiments saying, "To be a Davis Maine Scholar means everything to me because without this opportunity I would not be able to go to such a prestigious college and maybe not one at all." Mya is enjoying a business class where she is working with a small group of peers to design and execute a business plan by the end of the semester.

Mya and Mali are two of the six students in the inaugural Davis Maine Scholar

cohort who started their college journeys this fall. Once they begin to attend college, Davis Maine Scholars continue to receive support and guidance from the program until their graduation.

This past summer, the program selected the second cohort from Class of 2023 seniors attending Downeast high schools. These six scholars are already receiving individual mentoring and guidance and they are also participating in college preparation and transition workshops. This fall, the cohort toured colleges, met with college students, engaged with professors, and learned from residential support staff on each campus. They discovered support services offered at each college like tutoring, academic advising, and transition support for first-generation students. They also met with the six inaugural Scholars and heard about their first few weeks of college.

About the visits, Antonio Vizcarrondo says, "College was something that scared me deep down. I didn't know how to navigate the whole process. After becoming a Scholar and taking this trip, I no longer feel that way. Instead, I feel hopeful for the future. This trip was amazing for everyone, and we now have the chance to do great things." 🌟

# Welcome NEW BOARD MEMBERS



## DEAN LUNT

Dean is an eighth-generation native of Frenchboro on Long Island, an island long served by the Sunbeam. Dean attended Frenchboro's one-room schoolhouse and remembers how the Mission made school trips to Boston and other expeditions possible. His book *Hauling by Hand* offers a first-hand look at life on a Maine island and the people who live it. His newest book, *Speakin' Maine*, is about the language and stories of Maine. A former newspaper journalist, Lunt founded Islandport Press, an award-winning publisher dedicated to stories rooted in the essence and sensibilities of New England. Dean lives in Yarmouth with his family.



## JAIME WEIR

Jaime is General Manager at John Williams Boat Company in Mt. Desert. Originally from Camden, he graduated from Maine Maritime Academy and has been chief mate on a tug and barge unit that sailed between Canada and the Caribbean as well as a captain of a 464-passenger vessel on Lake Champlain. In 2006, he returned to Maine and began his career at John Williams Boat Company. Jaime has served on the board of the Maine Marine Trades Association and is a member of Bar Harbor's Harbor

Committee. For 11 years, Jaime has led the Mission's EdGE tennis tournament. "I've always admired the Maine Seacoast Mission and the role they play in supporting the surrounding coastal communities," Jaime says. "I look forward to working with the organization."



# THE *DOWNEAST* EXPLORATION FUND

In the summer of 2021, President John Zavodny received a phone call from author Gigi Georges. She and her husband Jeff Oxman wanted to set up a fund to benefit rural Downeast youth. That spring, Gigi had published the non-fiction book, *Downeast: Five Maine Girls and the Unseen Story of Rural America*, with HarperCollins. It was important to Gigi and Jeff to celebrate the continued strength and resilience residing in the young people of the Downeast region of the state.

They named it the *Downeast* Exploration Fund. Gigi shares, "The Fund was created in honor of the book's five young women. They played a central role in developing the Fund's objective and defining its scope: to help expand opportunities beyond the classroom for other Downeast kids." Started this past spring, the Fund provides financial support to eligible applicants who wish to explore their passions and pursue experiences not otherwise available to them.

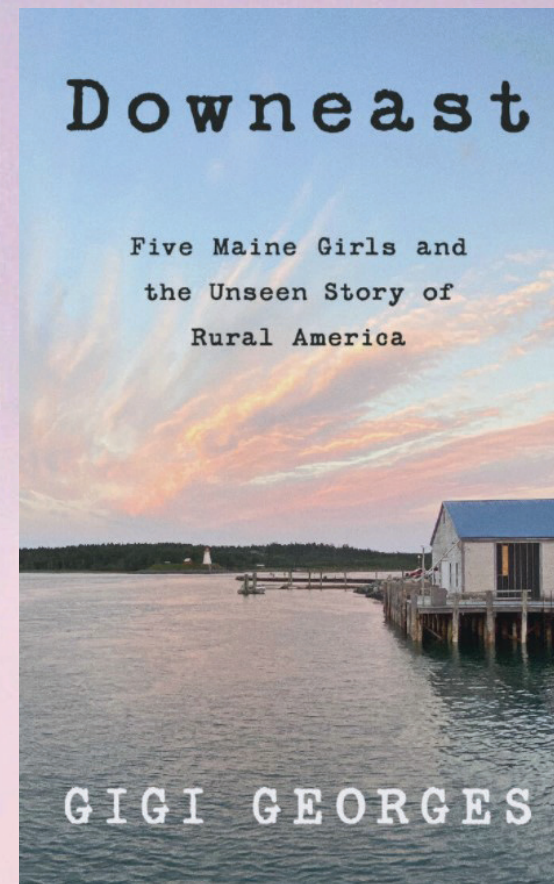
The author actively involved the five young women in developing the Fund. Lanie Perry, depicted under the pseudonym McKenna Holt in the book says, "We recognized that so many kids who want to pursue their dreams are set back by financial issues or by other issues. Through the Fund, we wanted to



Gigi Georges

see Downeast youth push for their dreams and start out on the right foot."

Gigi says, "By widening my lens and immersing myself in the Downeast community, I discovered a strong counternarrative to conventional stories about rural hopelessness, and to the notion that young people must flee to succeed. Yes, there are significant challenges, but there is also much to celebrate. The Fund honors the leadership, creativity, intellectual curiosity, and passion for a range of pursuits exemplified by the five remarkable young women portrayed in the book."



Depicted under the pseudonym of Josie Dekker, Sophia DeSchiffart, says about the Fund, "We considered whether the Fund should be for young women only, those at a certain high school, or for everyone. Should it be a college scholarship? If you make a scholarship for college readiness, then it excludes the many students who don't pursue that path."

Any student in grades 6 through 12, including rising 6th graders and just-

graduated seniors, within the Mission's service areas may apply for an award. The Fund pays for awardees' participation in camps, outdoor learning experiences, and lessons in music, art, sports, or equestrian pursuits. Additionally, the scholarship covers registration fees for enrichment activities or programs as well as materials, equipment, or supplies.

When asked what she hope the Fund will accomplish, Kelli Kennedy, depicted as Audry Barton in the book, says, "I guess it's no secret that there are children and teens and people Downeast who struggle with financial well-being. I was very fortunate in what I was able to do as a child. My family could support me to play basketball year-round and that set me up for so many things in life including life lessons. My hope is that others can experience the same. The Fund can provide that."

John explains, "The *Downeast* Exploration Fund is a result of Gigi's and Jeff's generosity of spirit and their recognition of the aspirations of Downeast young people. We're excited to hear about and help fuel their interests. The Mission's education work in Downeast Maine makes the Fund a perfect fit." 🌟

To make a donation to the Fund, please contact Director of Development Erica Hutchinson at [ehutchinson@seacoastmission.org](mailto:ehutchinson@seacoastmission.org) or call (207) 288-5097.



## Welcome ERICA HUTCHINSON, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Erica comes to the Mission with experience in fundraising and relationship management gained at respected Maine institutions, including EMCC Foundation, Unity College, and

the Charlotte White Center. Her in-depth experience of donor relations, grant management, and strategic planning will help meet the Mission's fundraising and organizational goals. "Understanding an individual, an organization, or even a community is key in supporting the work to be accomplished," she explains, "Listening to donors express the desire to create an impactful gift and how to provide that opportunity for them is purely a joyful experience and one I have

always treasured." Erica is community-minded in her hometown, too. She has offered her time and energy to multiple organizations including the Maine School Board Association, Rotary, and is an active member of her family's church. "I am thrilled to join a nonprofit organization where the mission is the guiding force," Erica says. "Humble service is the foundation of creating stronger families, stronger communities, and ultimately, a more joyful world." 🌟



## Healthcare Partner of the Year

In September, Mount Desert Island Hospital recognized the Mission as 2022 Healthcare Partner of the Year. The award recognizes the Mission's Covid vaccination clinics and telemedicine programs during the pandemic.

In 2021, the Mission administered 928 Covid vaccinations and boosters on seven unbridged islands in addition to its traditional Island Health work done via the *Sunbeam*. Mission President John Zavodny and Sharon Daley, RN, Director of Island Health, who spearheaded the Mission's vaccination program with Douglas Cornman, Director of Island Outreach and Chaplain, were on hand to accept the award during the Hospital's 125th Anniversary Community Celebration at the Bar Harbor Club.

Christina Maguire, President/CEO of MDI Hospital, explains, "The Maine Seacoast Mission has been a dedicated, committed partner in providing healthcare to our outer island populations through telehealth and in-person visits. Their unique service model brings care to island residents who would otherwise not have access to care, and this is vital to their health and well-being. Throughout the pandemic, the Maine Seacoast Mission was a faithful partner to MDI Hospital, and we thank them for their dedication, commitment, and service."

John shares, "This is a great honor for the

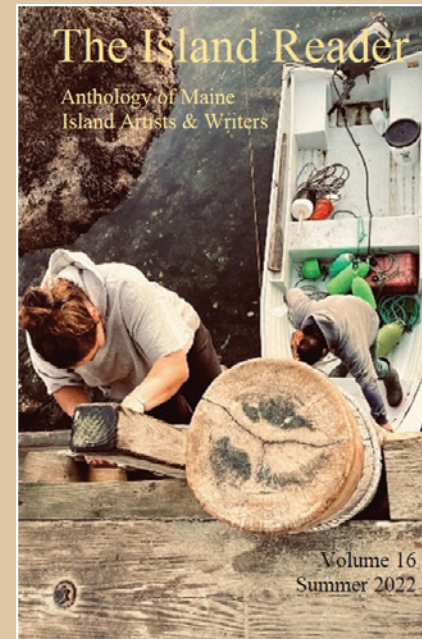


Maine Seacoast Mission and a celebration of our partnership with MDI Hospital, one of the really exceptional, independent healthcare organizations in our state. We are very grateful for their ongoing support of our Island Health efforts."

The Mission started working on a plan to vaccinate the island residents in early 2021. "When vaccinations first became available in January, people on the islands started calling and emailing, asking me if I could vaccinate them," Sharon recalls. Soon after, she and the Mission began working with the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to become an official vaccine provider.

Sharon says that MDI Hospital was invaluable in the Mission's vaccination efforts, "MDI Hospital made it possible for us to do Covid vaccines on seven islands. It was a huge undertaking and we could never have managed it without the support of MDI Hospital." She continues, "One islander recently told us how their island felt so cared for during the pandemic. Both the vaccine recipients and the Mission thank MDI Hospital for its contributions to our work."

The vaccination clinics were a team effort with John doing intake and processing, Sharon, assisted by nurses Maureen Giffin, RN and Peggy Akers, NP, administering



To order a hard copy of the 16th edition, call (207) 288-5097 or complete the form at [seacoastmission.org/sunbeam/island-outreach/the-island-reader](https://seacoastmission.org/sunbeam/island-outreach/the-island-reader). A digital copy is also available at [this link](#).

vaccines, and Douglas, recording vaccinations into the Maine CDC's database. Rounding out the group in their effort were the *Sunbeam* crew: Captain Mike Johnson, Engineer Storey King, and Steward Jillian. Sharon and Douglas handled planning for each island, coordinating transportation, finding a vaccination location, and bringing in all supplies needed.

In addition to the work vaccinating island residents, the Mission also partnered with Maine Mobile Health Program (MMHP) and Mano en Mano to vaccinate people living

## The Island Reader now archived with the Library of Congress

In 2006, *The Island Reader* began as a thin, black and white, saddle-stapled arts anthology showcasing the work of artists living on four of Maine's unbridged islands. Over the years, it evolved into a beautifully produced, perfect-bound publication and includes artists and writers from 16 unbridged islands. Today, *The Island Reader* serves as a conversation about islanders and their creative spirits. For the 16th edition, *The Island Reader* received submissions from 69 artists and writers. The publication's editors, who are also islanders, create the publication's layout aboard the *Sunbeam*. Printed in small print runs each year, the Mission receives requests from across the state and the U.S.

Now, *The Island Reader* has come to reside in Washington, D.C., too. As of this fall, all 16 editions are archived in the physical collection of the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress is the largest library in the world, with millions of books, films and video, audio recordings, photographs, newspapers, maps, and manuscripts in its collections. For any piece of American media to be preserved with this federal institution, the material must document American history and culture. The poems, stories, words, images, drawings, and paintings of Maine islanders will be archived for years to come not only in the *The Island Reader*, but also in this country's most important cultural institution. 🌊

in Washington County at the Downeast campus. The Mission continues to hold clinics and administer vaccines and boosters when needed to meet community need. Most recently, the Mission held another clinic in Cherryfield in July. This fall, Sharon and her dedicated team of volunteers conducted Covid and flu vaccinations across six islands in five short weeks. "Good health is a vital part of any community, on-island or along the coast," says Sharon, "and the Mission will continue to offer that as long as it exists." 🌊





# Christmas on the Islands

Outside the picturesque wooden church, the night air is cold, and winter winds are howling. Inside, the air is warmed by candlelight and the sounds of children, young and old, waiting, with anticipation, for Christmas to arrive. One of the ways islanders know that Christmas is not so far away is the *Sunbeam's* arrival on the island. The *Sunbeam*, and her crew, have been visiting Long Island, or Frenchboro as it is commonly known, for decades. Each year, the boat arrives just days before Christmas, and the Chaplain hands out packages wrapped in white parchment paper, tied with red butcher's string. This season's gift giving takes place during the island Christmas service.

"Handing out Christmas presents is one of the many meaningful things I get to do for the Mission," says Douglas Cornman, the Mission's Director of Island Outreach and Chaplain. "Not only do I witness the excitement on each child's face as I hand them a gift (and often receive a huge hug in return), I have the privilege of listening to stories from parents, grandparents, and sometimes even great grandparents who also received gifts from the Mission and delivered by the *Sunbeam*. These gifts are the most poignant example of the Mission's legacy on the outer islands." The Mission has been handing out gifts to island residents and the families of lighthouse

keepers since 1905. "I have watched the eyes of the saltiest of fishermen fill with tears as they tell me about the gifts they received as kids," recounts Douglas. "Some islanders relate that the gifts from the Mission were the only gifts they received during years when fishing was poor and their families struggled."

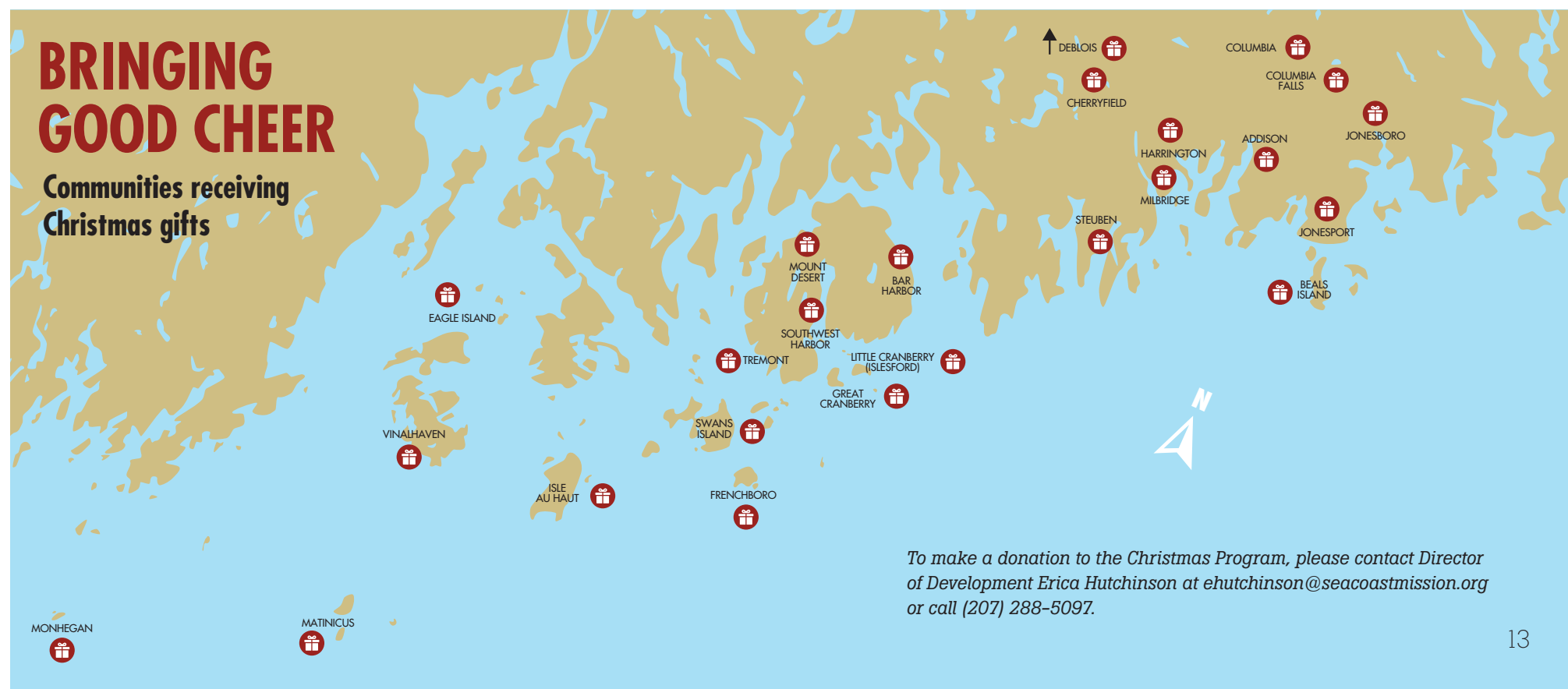
Douglas is the liaison between the Mission's Christmas Program, which is housed at the Mission's Downeast campus in Cherryfield, and the islands' Christmas elves (volunteers



who gather information and create lists on the islands). The Mission provides gifts for nine unbridged islands who maintain year-round communities. This year, Douglas will collaborate with elves from Little Cranberry (Islesford), Great Cranberry Island, Frenchboro, Isle au Haut, Matinicus, Monhegan, Islesboro, Vinalhaven, and off the coast of Deer Isle, Eagle Island. Children under the age of 18 and island elders, 75 years and older receive gifts. Most gifts for kids contain a handmade hat and mittens, a book, and a wooden toy or puzzle. Gifts

for seniors often contain a lap blanket and books to help ease the physical and emotional chill of long winter evenings in front of the woodstove.

"More frequently than not, toys are set aside when the kids open their gifts, and they go straight to the hat and mittens," says Douglas. "It amazes me when they do this. They love their new hat and mittens and want to know how Santa knew their favorite color. Their wonder and amazement keeps the magic of Christmas alive." ❄️



To make a donation to the Christmas Program, please contact Director of Development Erica Hutchinson at [ehutchinson@seacoastmission.org](mailto:ehutchinson@seacoastmission.org) or call (207) 288-5097.





# Mission's archives a treasure trove of Maine coastal history

By Zach Lanning, reporter for *The Ellsworth American* (in which this article published)

An entire corner of Terri Rodick's office at the new Maine Seacoast Mission headquarters on Old Firehouse Lane is packed with boxes and binders. And in those boxes and binders are thousands and thousands of photos and documents chronicling everything that happened at the Mission since its inception in 1905.

Astonishingly, the pile in Terri's office represents only a fraction of the Mission's archive that once commanded a much larger space at its former headquarters on West Street in Bar Harbor.

"Coming from that giant mansion, we had the whole third floor where we had saved every financial record, every record of anything that ever happened since 1905. And of course, that's not realistic," says Terri, the Mission's Marketing and Events Coordinator. "So, when we moved, we had to make some hard choices about what to take and what to leave behind. What to donate and what to dispose of."

Terri estimates they held onto about 30 percent of the original collection, things that were directly related to Maine Seacoast Mission and its work. But that's still thousands of photos and letters spanning over a century. And Terri has been tasked with digitizing all of them.

"It's very helpful to know our past to market our future," she says, offering an explanation as to how the fate of these old files came to rest in her hands. Not that she needed much of an excuse to take on this project in the first place.

"I have a little flair for it, and certainly I'm very passionate and interested in keeping the Mission archives," she says. "I see their value. When you look at these pictures you just get lost in time."

Some of Terri's favorite items are letters from people in need, requesting aid or thanking the Mission for providing it, because of what it says about how people viewed the Mission even back then.

"People reached out and trusted the Mission to ask for help and not be ostracized because of it," Terri shares. "I think that says a lot about the Mission and the way it goes about handling things in times of need." While the times may be different the need has remained, if not increased.

"I mean, we've given people cows. Sheep and cows," she says. "We certainly aren't buying cows for people anymore, but we do offer a range of services to meet community needs, so that hasn't changed."

There are also plenty of light-hearted stories to be told from the items that were saved. There are old joke books and books of limericks and riddles. There are beautifully illustrated children's books and a record from 1946 that Terri had burned onto a CD. They even have a dental chair from the 1950s when the Mission used to offer dental care to island residents aboard the *Sunbeam*.

It's stories and items like these that Terri and the rest of the team at Maine Seacoast Mission hope to be able to share with the world by organizing all these pieces of the past and making them available to the public however they can.



"We will digitize our existing archive and create a traveling exhibition," explains Marketing Director Kierie Piccininni, when asked about long-term plans for the collection. "We would love to work with a museum or two that may be interested in the archive."

The process will take time as Terri and her high-quality scanner work through the piles of archival material. It's a labor of love she won't give up.

"To me, it's priceless," Terri says. "Because it tells the story of the Mission, whether in 1938 or 2022; it's so similar, the needs are still so real. And you can't just leave it in boxes. You just can't. As we all get older, we appreciate history a little bit more." ☼

To volunteer with the archives, please contact Director of Marketing Kierie Piccininni at [kpccininni@seacoastmission.org](mailto:kpccininni@seacoastmission.org) or call (207) 288-5097.







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