

Increased Need Drives Repeat Pantry Visits

During the month of February, 21 new families signed up to use the Mission's food pantry. That is almost twice as many as had signed up in January and four times as many new households that signed up in December. The number of new families accessing the pantry has not been this high since the beginning of the pandemic according to Megan Smith, [Food Security Program Coordinator](#).

Megan chats with every new visitor and many have told her they came to the pantry because their benefits were cut. The pandemic-era increase Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that supported many families ended...

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Sunbeam Nurse Comes Aboard!

Simone Babineaux has worked in public health in Los Angeles, was a staff nurse at a medical clinic in Moscow, Russia, and was a first responder during Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. Now, she has joined the Mission as the Sunbeam nurse to provide care on Maine's outer islands and help connect island residents with doctors and specialists.

"Simone is a welcome addition to the Mission and the Sunbeam," says Mission President John Zavodny. "I am confident that Simone's unique personal and professional history has prepared her well to work within our island communities."

As a member of the Island Services team, Simone will...

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Middle and High School Students Can Apply for *Downeast* Exploration Fund

Starting on April 1, young adults living in Washington and Hancock counties, and on Maine's outer islands, can apply for the Downeast Exploration Fund. The fund, started by [Gigi Georges](#), author of *Downeast: Five Maine Girls and the Unseen Story of Rural America*, and her husband, Jeff Oxman, provides scholarships for students to explore their own passions and pursue experiences not otherwise available to them. The first fund awardees, who received scholarships last year, went to immersive summer camps, developed their artistic skills, took piano lessons, and more.

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 Downeast Exploration Fund provides up to \$1,500 for awardees' participation in camps...

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Ace Barrera Takes the Helm of the Davis Maine Scholarship

The Mission welcomed Silverio (Ace) Barrera as the new Davis Maine Scholarship program Director earlier this winter. Ace comes to the Mission with 18 years of experience in college admissions, transition and orientation programs, and student advising.

In his role, Ace will provide support for Davis Maine Scholars to ensure a smooth transition to and success in college. The Davis Maine Scholarship is a partnership between Maine Seacoast Mission and the Shelby Cullom Davis Charitable Fund.

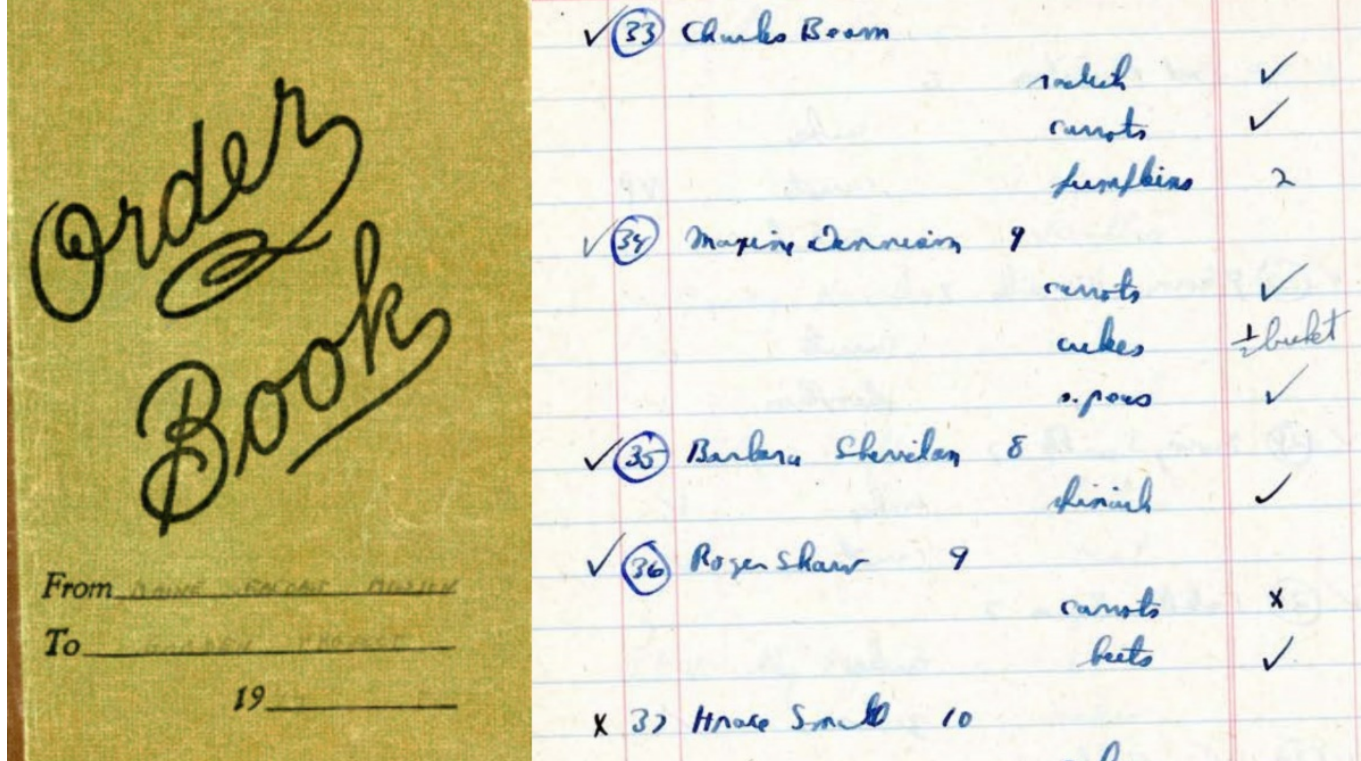
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Volunteering for the Mission

Helping sort donations and stock shelves at the pantry. Scanning and organizing documents to add to the archives. These are just some of the things volunteers at the Mission can do. The Mission is currently seeking volunteers to support its education, community, and food security programs on the DOWNEAST campus in Cherryfield as well as at the headquarters in Northeast Harbor. Integral to the Mission's work, volunteers can assist on a recurring or as-needed basis that works for their schedules.

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Planting Seeds of Hope from the *Sunbeam*

In 1949, Edith Drury traveled up and down the Maine coast visiting 40 schools with a small notebook in hand. As part of her job as a staff member of the Maine Seacoast Mission, Edith was tasked with teaching children about creating gardens and growing vegetables. In her notebook, she kept track of the seeds she distributed, from radishes to nasturtiums. Each school had its own page on which she wrote each child's name, age, and the kind of seeds they received. Later, she made another note in the margins of each page about how well the plants grew. While most have check marks, she also comments on bad soil, and a dog that dug up a family's garden.

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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.