



Bridging the Digital Divide

In the furthest reaches of Washington County and on many unbridged islands, cell service can be spotty and connection to the internet can be costly and slow. This digital divide leaves many people in the Mission's service area unable to connect to basic services. Islanders struggle to attend telehealth appointments that are key to their treatment and low-income residents of Washington County face high internet costs with lagging speeds...

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Healthy Water, Healthy Aging on Maine's Unbridged Islands

Few of us give a second thought to the water that comes from our taps, but some Mainers have water that may be contaminated. Unsafe levels of heavy metals, arsenic or PFAS are often in our drinking water because of our reliance on wells. According to the Maine Geological Survey, around 40% of Mainers rely on private wells and unlike public drinking water, these wells do not need to be tested for chemicals. Because of this, some communities are unsure if the water they are drinking is safe and how to fix the problem. Now, the Mission is collaborating with the MDI Biological Laboratory and an Island Institute Fellow to empower island residents...

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Former Mrs. Christmas Continues to Spread Christmas Cheer

Every September, Marilyn Nickson gets out her list and starts checking it twice. Marilyn, and a handful of other volunteers and Mission staff, spend months planning and preparing for Christmas before the first gift goes out the door. Marilyn, a former “Mrs. Christmas,” worked for the Mission for 37 years and retired in 2018. However, you would not know that during Christmas time, as hardly a day goes by without her presence at the “North Pole” on the Mission’s Downeast campus.

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The Mission needs help fulfilling its Christmas wish list and to bring joy to thousands this holiday season. The [2023 Christmas Program wish list](#) and [Amazon wish list](#) are now available.

[See the Wish List](#)



Mission Welcomes Two Staff Members

The Mission has welcomed two new staff members to its leadership team since this summer, Christy Oliveri, Ed.D. and Sally Clinton.

Christy joined the Mission in June as EdGE Secondary and Post-Secondary Program Director. This position manages high school and college programming, which includes Journey, Davis Maine Scholarship, and Mission Scholarships.

As the new Chief People Officer, Sally oversees the Mission's human resources department focusing on professional development, planning, assessment, and volunteer and community relations.

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Talking Island Life with Penobscot Theatre

Walk into any Penobscot Theatre production and prepare to be floored. Mission staff were in mid-October when invited to be the Theatre's community partner for an upcoming production called *Dirty Deeds Downeast*. Written by playwright Brent Askari, the play a comedic murder-mystery set on an unbridged island in Maine. At its heart, the play explores the depths of relationships that exist in a small community.

In August, the Theatre's Executive Director Jen Shepard reached out to the Mission with the request...

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The Mission in the News

Here are a few of our favorite pieces!

- [*The Working Waterfront*](#) touts the 17th volume of *The Island Reader*, an arts anthology featuring prose, poetry, and art by island residents.
- [*The Mount Desert Islander*](#) covered the Great Harbor Maritime Museum's 2023-2024 exhibition about the Mission's maritime history, vessels, and programming.
- [*MDI Biological Laboratory*](#) highlights the Mission's participation in its "Healthy Water, Health Aging" initiative.
- [*Island Institute*](#) joined the Teaching & Learning Collaborative for the Inter-Island Event on Frenchboro.
- [*The Maine Monitor*](#) quoted Mission President John Zavodny about the Mission's 2023 listening sessions. The article discusses challenges facing Washington County's young residents.

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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.

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