

Centennial effort enters final phase

By Anne Kozak

BAR HARBOR — The Maine Sea Coast Mission's Centennial Campaign has reached its final phase.

In July 2005, the mission launched a \$12 million fundraising drive. In the first 33 months of the campaign, donors had contributed \$10.5 million. In early May, the effort, which ends in December, entered its public phase. In less than a month, 113 donors have contributed another \$15,000.

"This campaign is focused on youth development and island outreach, two activities that have been a strength of the mission since its founding almost 103 years ago. While the methods through which the mission responds to the needs in each of these areas has evolved over the years, the commitment has remained steadfast," wrote executive director Gary DeLong in an appeal letter.

The youth development initiative, which totals \$7.7 million, includes \$500,000 to expand the EdGE program, the mission's after-school and summer program for students in Washington County, and \$500,000 for the EdGE multipurpose building, \$5 million for an endowment to support Edge operations and \$1.7 million for an endowment for scholarships. Each year the mission awards more than 60 scholarships to graduating seniors and matriculating college students, and also provides another layer of support for the students throughout their collegiate careers.

While prospective donors can elect to have their contributions go to where it is most needed,

donors also have the option of restricting their contributions to a specific initiative. Those who contribute to the EdGE endowment will have their gifts matched dollar for dollar up to \$450,000 as a result of an anonymous gift. So far, more than \$200,000 has been raised by this challenge gift, including approximately 10 gifts that have come in since the campaign entered its public phase.

The initiative to strengthen island communities, which totals \$4.3 million, includes a \$1 million endowment to increase the availability of the Sunbeam — the mission's boat — and \$2.5 million to endow the Sunbeam Island Health Services. This initiative also is raising money for other island activities: \$450,000 to expand health services on islands, \$50,000 for a comprehensive health and medical services plan, \$250,000 to maintain the bridge to sustainable fisheries, and \$50,000 to assist churches on Swans Island, Islesboro, Vinalhaven and North Haven.

The mission's service area extends over 300 miles from Monhegan and the islands of Penobscot Bay to the shores of Washington County northeast to Canada. "We have developed strong, innovative programs to address not only immediate concerns but also the root causes of long-term problems that threaten the survival of our island and rural coastal communities," said Mr. DeLong.

For more information about any aspect of the campaign or for information on how to contribute, call development director Steve Richards at 288-5097.

news@mdislander.com