

Dear Editor,

The board and staff of the Maine Sea Coast Mission want to thank the many people who over the years have donated clothing for our Thrift Shop in Cherryfield serving Downeast Maine. We recently made a difficult decision to close the Thrift Shop effective December 3, 2008. One of the outcomes of this decision is that we will no longer be accepting donations of used clothing.

The Thrift Shop was closed for two reasons. First and foremost, our goal is to use our limited resources to serve those most needy. The Mission will now provide vouchers to people in need of clothing so they can purchase the clothing that they need most. Priority will be placed upon winter clothing for families with young children, the elderly, and those who need clothing for a job. Providing vouchers is a more cost effective way of meeting the clothing needs of those most in need of clothing.

Second, we plan on expanding our Downeast Food Pantry which will move into the space formerly used by the Thrift Shop. We have found that there is a greater need for food than clothing in Downeast Maine. Recent figures from the U.S. Department of Agriculture indicate that 13.3% of Maine households were having difficulty getting adequate food. The situation is worse in Washington County where 33.3% of children receive food stamps and 55.4% of children receive subsidized school lunches, over double the statewide number. For these reasons, we have decided that we need to do more to meet the growing need for food assistance in Downeast Maine.

We are grateful to everyone who supports the Maine Sea Coast Mission with their contributions of time, talent, and money. We could not do our work without your help.

Sincerely,

Gary A. DeLong
Executive Director
Maine Sea Coast Mission
Bar Harbor