

Mission reorganizes Route 1 campus

By Bill Trotter

BDN Staff

CHERRYFIELD, Maine — The Maine Sea Coast Mission has decided to reorganize its Down East campus on Route 1.

The nonprofit charitable organization closed its Route 1 clothing thrift shop Wednesday and will move its food pantry into that space, allowing the pantry to expand, the mission indicated in a prepared statement.

“This will provide substantially more space for the food pantry which is becoming increasingly more important to people in Down East Maine,” the organization said in a news release.

Mission officials indicated that though approximately one-quarter of children in Maine receive food stamps, about one-third of the children in Washington County receive the same assistance. Roughly one-quarter of children statewide receive subsidized school lunches, but in Washington County it is more than half, they said.

“By moving our food pantry to a larger, more visible location in Cherryfield, we are doing our best to meet the increasing need for food in Down East Maine,” Wendy Harrington, program director for the group’s Down East campus, indicated in the statement. “Our goal is to ensure that no one goes hungry in our communities.”

Maine Sea Coast Mission will continue to help provide clothing to those who need it. Beginning on Jan. 5, 2009, people can acquire vouchers for purchase of clothing by calling the group’s Down East campus at 546-7192.

Gary DeLong, the mission’s executive director, said in the release that the organization regularly reviews its services to make sure they are helping to address the more pressing, everyday issues in the area in a cost-effective manner.

“We’ve been providing services to the islands and coastal communities of Down East Maine for 103 years,” DeLong said. “These adjustments to our clothing and food programs are being made so that our resources focus on the greatest needs.”

Besides the food pantry, the group’s 60-acre Down East campus includes the Ed Greaves Educational Center and the Weald Bethel Center for Spirituality and Personal Growth.