

Mission honors Sabah-Maren, DeLong

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BAR HARBOR — At the 7th Sunbeam Awards Gala, the Maine Sea Coast Mission honored philanthropist Emily Sabah-Maren and the mission's executive director, Gary DeLong.

In accepting their awards, both Ms. Sabah Maren and Rev. DeLong acknowledged the help and support others have given them that allowed them to achieve many of the goals for which they were being honored.

A seasonal resident of Salisbury Cove, Ms. Sabah-Maren not only contributes dollars but also her time. She volunteers regularly at the Jesup Memorial Library, and early on Saturday morning she was at work in Jesup's children's room preparing for the library's book sale. Her comment on Saturday was typical: "that [the honor] was last night; today I am working."

In addition to volunteering at the library, Ms. Sabah-Maren with four others manages the Maren Foundation which has a mission to give where it will make a difference. Funding from the foundation has made a substantial difference to a number of local groups, including the Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory, Jesup Memorial Library, MDIYMCA, Island Connections, the Bar Harbor Food Pantry, Beth C. Wright Cancer Center, Willow Wind Therapeutic Riding, Friends of Acadia, particularly the Acadia Gateway Center, and the Mission's EdGE program.

Because of her concern that those working on Mount Desert Island cannot afford to live here, Ms. Sabah-Maren recently began a new philanthropic venture: subdividing land she owns into four 1.5-acre lots and constructing affordable housing for families qualified by the Island Housing Trust.

On Friday night, Ms. Sabah-Maren thanked her parents, family and friends and her late husband, Tom Maren, for their example and their generosity of spirit. These qualities, she said, have guided her in her philanthropic endeavors. The philanthropy ramped up after Dr. Maren's research on glaucoma resulted in the couple's receiving substantial income and will endure thanks not only to Ms. Sabah-Maren's interest in the wellbeing of the island community, but also to the example she has set for her son and two daughters.

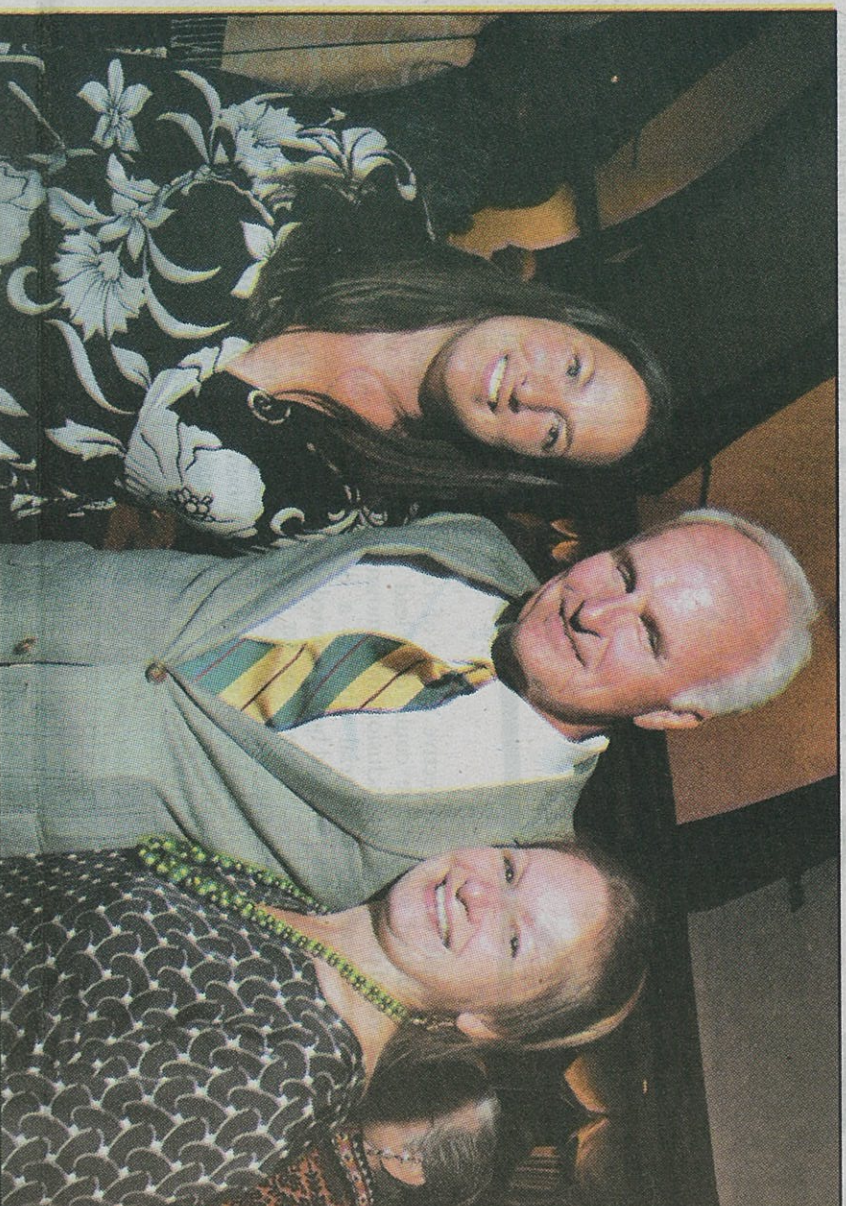
In accepting his award, Rev. DeLong began his remarks in typical fashion: He thanked Ms. Sabah-Maren and her family and friends for coming and said their gifts and generosity reflect the heart of the mission.

He also credited his parents for instilling in him the importance of



ISLANDER PHOTOS BY EARL BRECHLIN

Above, Emily Sabah-Maren, center, accepts her Sunbeam Award during the Maine Sea Coast Mission's annual awards gala at the Bar Harbor Club on Aug. 20. She is flanked by Mission board chairman Lee Judd, left, and state Sen. Dennis Dannon. Below, Sunbeam Award-winner Rev. Gary DeLong, center, retiring director of the organization, stands with coworkers Terri Roadick, left, and Julie Patton.



community service. That service is reflected in Rev. DeLong's many accomplishments as executive director. During his tenure, the mission's budget has grown from \$827,000 in 1998 to \$3,116,000 in 2010, a 276 percent increase. And with the increase in funding came new programs and initiatives: EdGE, initiated in 2002, serves 500

children in 17 communities in Washington and Hancock counties. Island Health Services provides access to health care to residents of Maine's outer islands through a nurse and telemedicine equipment on board the Sunbeam V and in island clinics. The number of mission scholarships has increased by 200 percent; food pantries serve islands as well as Down East communities. The housing repair and weatherization program has grown from 30 volunteers from two churches to 249 volunteers from 14 churches, and the number of local volunteers has also increased. "Life is often harsh along this coast, and these programs bring a ray of hope, a glimmer of caring," said Rev. DeLong.

He also thanked his wife Judy for all her love and support. In 2005, the mission launched a

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Sunbeam Award-winner Emily Sabah-Maren, right, with Maine Sea Coast Mission board member Jill Goldthwait.