

Press Release from the Maine Sea Coast Mission

December 3, 2008

For Immediate Release

Contact: Wendy Harrington at 546-4466 or wharrington@seacoastmission.org

Maine Sea Coast Mission Refocuses its Work in Downeast Maine

Cherryfield - The Maine Sea Coast Mission announced today that it is changing the way it delivers services at its Downeast Campus located in Cherryfield. Effective December 3, 2008, the Mission's Thrift Shop will no longer be open. Instead, beginning January 5, 2009, people in need of clothing can contact the Downeast Campus at 546-7192. Based upon need, the Maine Sea Coast Mission will be providing vouchers to be used for the purchase of clothing. Wendy Harrington, Program Director at the Mission's Downeast Campus, stated "This is the most cost effective way to get the clothing to the people in our service area who really need it. Our goal is to serve those people who are most needy during these difficult economic times."

The Mission is also moving its Downeast Campus Food Pantry to the building previously occupied by the Thrift Shop. This will provide substantially more space for the Food Pantry which is becoming increasingly more important to people 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 substantially worse in Downeast Maine. In Washington County 33.3% of children receive food stamps compared to 23.7% statewide. In addition, 55.4% of school children in Washington County receive subsidized school lunches compared to 23.7% statewide. Both of these statistics reflect significant food insecurity in the area served by the Downeast Campus Food Pantry. Maine and Minnesota were the two states with the largest increases in households needing food assistance. Ms. Harrington observed "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 Downeast Maine. Our goal is to ensure that no one goes hungry in our communities,"

The Maine Sea Coast Mission regularly reviews its programs and determines if they are providing services to the neediest and in the most cost effective manner. Gary DeLong, Executive Director of the Maine Sea Coast Mission, stated "We have been providing services to the islands and coastal communities of Downeast Maine for 103 years. We want to ensure that our services remain relevant to the most pressing needs of our time so that we can allocate scarce resources to those needs. These adjustments to our clothing and food programs are being made so that our resources focus on the greatest needs."

###