



THE
BULLETIN
WINTER 2021

Resilience!



Maine Seacoast Mission
seacoastmission.org

OUR MISSION

Rooted in a history of compassionate service and mutual trust, the Mission seeks to strengthen coastal and island communities by educating youth, supporting families, and promoting good health.

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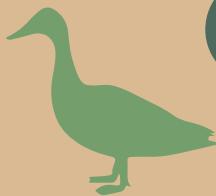
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POSITIVE IMPACT

ACCORDING TO PARENTS AND KIDS IN EdGE PROGRAMS



99%

EdGE staff are good
ROLE MODELS

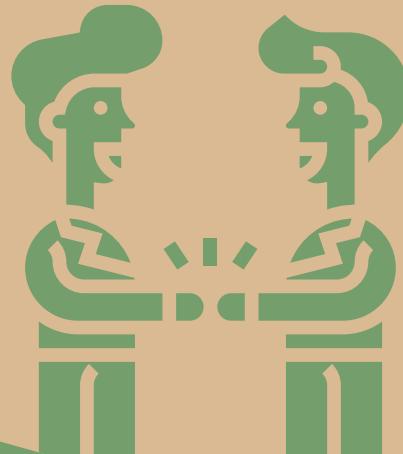


91%

make school more
WELCOMING

99%

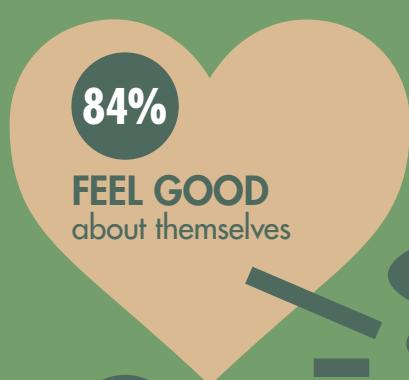
EdGE staff treat
children with
RESPECT



KIDS SAY

84%

FEEL GOOD
about themselves



91%

**SET A
GOOD
EXAMPLE**
for their peers



PARENTS SAY

Message from the President

Late in the first full week of January, the Mission received a direct message through our EdGE Facebook account. An EdGE mom living in Milbridge was worried about her son. The son would be turning nine in just a couple days and the family's resources were very low. Too low to give him the birthday that every kid deserves without compromising mom's ability to pay the electric bill. Over that weekend, Maine Seacoast Mission staff Wendy Harrington, Megan Smith, and Stephanie Moores rallied. By his birthday on Monday, our young friend had birthday presents and a lovingly baked cake (complete with his favorite Minecraft theme) and the family was in the pipeline for utility assistance through the Mission's Good Neighbor Fund. The work of the Mission matters in the lives of families.

In this issue of the Maine Seacoast Mission Bulletin, we explore Mission stories of showing how important it is for us to feel we matter to others. Researchers are learning more every day about how feeling valued builds confidence and resilience. It demonstrates that showing the people around us that they matter to us, to their families, and to their communities is not only the right



The Minecraft birthday cake

Cover: Erin, a picture of resilience, is in 7th grade, and an EdGE alum. Photo credits: cover, pp. 9 and 10, Rogier van Bakel, Eager Eye Photography; p. 14, Billy Black. NOTE: All photos of people without masks are either family cohorts or were taken before the pandemic.



thing to do, but it also helps them live longer, healthier, happier, and with more purpose.

We all know that showing our families we care is right and good. We know that helping a Mom show her little one he is loved makes the world a better place. We know the work of the Mission matters. Better understanding why the work of the Mission matters in the lives of those we serve helps us be more intentional about the impact we have.

Your support for the Maine Seacoast Mission matters. It matters to our staff who work hard every day to do right by our students, families, and communities. It absolutely matters to those we serve and to our ability to do our work.

For the Mission!


John Zavodny, President

Students Talk about Resilience

Christina Griffith, director of the Mission's Davis Maine Scholarship program, and Pathways Team colleagues Terri Rodick and Briana West recently explored the theme of resilience with students in the Mission's Journey, college exploration and engagement, and Mission Scholar programs. They were inspired by the ways the students find "the strength to rise" during these intensely challenging times, as the young Canadian poet Rupi Kaur puts it in the poem shared by one of Christina's students.

"When asked about resilience, students consistently responded with two distinct thoughts," Christina observed. "First they pointed to the invaluable role that caring adults play in their lives, and then they shared experiences that revealed how the gratitude they feel and express gives them strength through hard times."

Christina noted that the students' thoughts reflect current research on what helps youth persevere through tough times. She recently attended a virtual conference offered by the Maine Resilience Building Network that featured Dr. Christina Bethell, director of the Child

and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative and professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. After decades of research, Dr. Bethell is convinced that "feeling valued and adding value" is an essential public health strategy. She asked conference participants to consider what would happen if we made feeling valued and adding value a community priority and what a difference this would make for the emotional health and wellness of our students, their families, and communities as a whole.

The Mission has always prioritized helping people feel valued. As Christina Griffith observes, "Our middle school, high school, and college students matter. How do we demonstrate this value and foster their resilience particularly during this period of social isolation? We do it by showing up for them. We listen to their stories and their quiet. We ask questions. We take their struggles seriously. We honor their resilience and learn from it."

Here is some of what some Pathways students shared when asked about resilience:



I remember being super overwhelmed during my first year of college. During the spring my mom broke her foot and became unemployed for five months. My sisters and I had to step up and help bring income to our family of six. I picked up five house-cleaning jobs to help my mom in addition to my original part-time job. On top of all of that, I was still in school full time. I was overwhelmed but I was able to get through it one step at a time. I came to the realization that I was not the only one feeling the stress; it was my whole family. After that realization, I looked at my situation from a different perspective and was slowly able to slowly overcome the stress.

—Adriana Valencia Jungo, Husson University

I like to simply define resilience as one's ability to bounce back. When bent out of shape, stuck in the gutter, or lost on your way. Resilience is the ability to follow one's intuition in difficult times to do not what is easy, but what is right.

The Seacoast Mission and UMO's student outreach and support organizations have been huge during this pandemic time because they help me remember that even if I make mistakes or am feeling low, I have a support system. When you are at a low point, reach out to the people that you know have your back. When you're at a high point, establish relationships with people you trust so they're there for your lows! Having a support system is huge, and Seacoast Mission has been there for me through these trying times. For that, I'm grateful!

—Dylan Taplin, University of Maine, Orono



Resilience means being able to bounce back from hard situations when something bad happens. There are times that I have felt stuck, like when I'm not doing a good job in a class. What helps me through is my parents and my teachers. And then when I'm helping my friends or family get through a hard time, I tell them that they are strong.

—Skylar James, Narraguagus High School

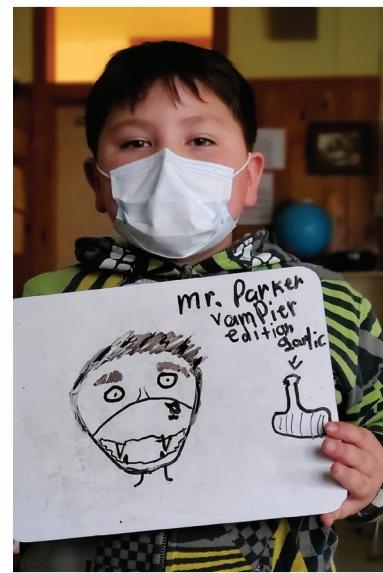


When I am down, I think to myself, "I have a roof over my head. I have food in my mouth." I try to focus on the good things. And I always think that it could be worse. I used to have less than I have now. Now I am able to wake up and turn the light on and have hot water. So, I find something to be grateful for. Always be grateful for what you do have. Take nothing for granted. It can only get better. Even if it is worse for a while, it will get better.

Before I joined the Mission's Pathways program, I didn't think I would go to college. It didn't matter to me. My high school guidance counselor, Ms. Null, talked to me. She said, "I really think you should do this." I am so grateful to her. Now I know I will go to college.

—Maya Abbott, Sumner Memorial High School





Feeling Valued

A growing body of research confirms what we may know intuitively—people need to feel valued by those around them. People who feel they matter to their communities, who feel they are heard and taken seriously, are better prepared to meet life's challenges. They are resilient. As psychologist Gordon L. Flett writes, "People who believe they matter to others have a key protective resource that typically buffers them from life stressors and challenges throughout their lives."

Dr. Flett is a professor of psychology at York University in Toronto. He and other researchers are finding that feeling valued not only contributes to mental health, but also makes people better able to overcome setbacks. People who feel valued can better meet life's challenges and problems, learn from them, and move past them.

The 2019 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) shows that there is much work to be done to make youth feel valued and become resilient. The MIYHS quantifies health-related behaviors and attitudes of Maine's youth. The 2019 MIYHS asked, "Do you agree or disagree that in your community you feel like you matter to people?" Among middle school students, 59.4 percent answered that they "strongly agree" or "agree." For high school students, the percentage fell to 56.6. Even more concerning were high school students' responses about whether they have support from adults other than a parent. In 2019, only 51 percent responded that they did.

The Mission works hard to counteract these feelings of disconnection and low self-worth. "The Mission's staff has been showing Downeast Mainers that they matter for thirty years," says Wendy



Harrington, director of service programs. "It is the starting point of our work with people."

For example, building resiliency is the focus of the EdGE program offering afterschool, in-school, and summer programming in elementary schools. "So much begins with kids," explains Isaac Marnik, EdGE director. "Everything we do is designed for kids to grow up strong—socially, physically, intellectually, and emotionally." At EdGE, kids know someone will listen when they have something to say. They know they are respected and valued.

EdGE outdoor physical activities build self-confidence and cooperation. The Mission's high ropes course is intimidating at first, but with encouragement and teamwork, students find they can overcome their fears. Hiking, biking, kayaking, snowshoeing,

and ice skating all promote a spirit of exploration. Learning new skills requires perseverance and boosts self-confidence. The new physical and emotional skills result in greater resilience.

Other programs at the Downeast Campus provide the same advantages for adults and families. The food pantry, Downeast Table of Plenty, organic pantry garden, and meal deliveries to house-bound residents all serve up the clear message that people matter. The housing rehabilitation program, the Christmas program, emergency assistance, and referrals to other organizations for services the Mission does not provide all send the same message: you are valued. It is the message the Mission has carried since its first boat *Hope* sailed to island communities in 1905. ☀

Strong Downeast Communities

"The passion and heart of the Mission staff is to meet individuals where they are, and then help them move toward their goals with supportive programs," says Melvin Adams III, new director of the Mission's Downeast Campus in Cherryfield. The Mission builds people's resilience by showing them that they are valued, that they matter. This is what attracted Mel to the Mission.



Mel Adams III, Downeast Director

"At the Mission, people are seen and heard. We work with people as they are, focusing on their strengths," continues Mel. "We believe every person has a place in society, has an innate value to their community, and wants to be part of the community. The Mission helps people, and then those people often turn around and volunteer or contribute to the organization in some way. Everyone has something to give and when the right time comes, they will step forward."

Mel joined the Mission in December 2020 and knows a lot about resilience Downeast. Before coming to the Mission, he was Dean of Enrollment Management and Student Services at Washington County Community College in Calais and, before that, at the University of Maine at Machias. "I saw the deep connections

people have to their communities," Mel says. "They step up in times of need or trauma. The community rallies and its love is revealed. The people here are tough and hard-working. They have a heartfelt passion for community and are trying to do great work so the next generation will stay here and thrive."

"We have flourished in Cherryfield because of the way we work with the community," continues Mel. "The Mission didn't arrive and announce that we could solve their problems. We listened and we collaborated. We asked how we could support initiatives already underway."

"When we work collaboratively with people to remove barriers and build on their strengths, it shows them that they matter to us and to others. The research shows that people who believe they matter to others are more likely to build and retain resiliency."

Mel's passion for this work is palpable. "We recognize that people are creative and capable," he says. "We have deep appreciation for their lived experiences. We do our best to ensure they have a fulfilling and meaningful life by easing challenges they face. When I was at Washington County Community College, a student needed food but felt she couldn't go a food pantry. That is the independence of people in Washington County, but I urged her to go. Two months later, she returned with a big box of food she wanted to donate. She said, 'You helped me with food and housing when I needed it. Now I'm back on my feet, and want to give back.'"

As Downeast Director, Mel also oversees most of the Mission's education programs. Those programs make sure kids know they matter from the very start. EdGE gets kids off to a good start. The Journey, Pathways, and Island Middle to High School Transition programs support



EdGE family snowball fight

students as they explore options for learning after graduation, whether that means earning a welding certificate, attending a liberal arts college, or becoming an astronaut.

**The research shows
that people who
believe they matter
to others are more
likely to build and
retain resiliency.**

"We tell kids to never let anyone tell them they can't do something," Mel says emphatically. "I was told not to go to college. I was told I wasn't smart enough. But a teacher helped me prepare so I could go to a community college. That set me on the path where I found my passion. We constantly reinforce the message to kids that they can reach their goals. We work with students to help them find their passions and then design a path to where that passion lies. We get to see their eyes

light up when they understand they have a way forward. So many people have been told 'no' again and again. It's as if lids were put on them. Here at the Mission, we're taking those lids off."

The Mission's work with kids builds trusting relationships with their entire families. If and when a family needs help, they know they can trust the Mission to do the right thing. "When I was interviewed for this job, I heard several Downeast Campus staff talk about the trust the Mission has earned," Mel recalled, "and I've heard it time after time since. Our commitment to the community is so strong. It's a message to everyone that we know how much they matter. We know how resilient they are. The Mission has deep roots watered by those we serve in the community.

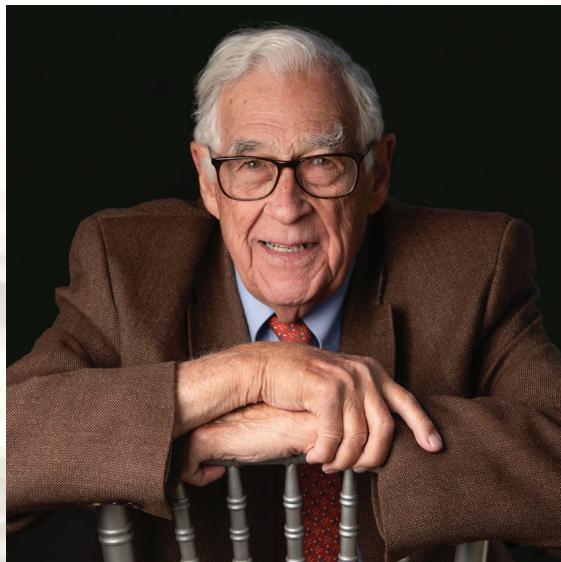
"So much of this work is about relationships, and relationships are complex," Mel concludes. "We want people to know that they matter, to us and to others. They have a voice at the Mission. We listen to what they tell us about how we can support the community. When it's all said and done, the Mission provides support that builds resilience and confidence. Resilient, confident people can dare to have dreams and pursue them." ☀



Hope Matters

Hope matters because hope makes change possible. It's why Connie Greaves Bates created a planned gift to the Mission. "It was important to me to provide permanent support for Mission education programs that spur hope and transformational change," she said.

Retired newspaperman Alan Baker said of his planned gift, "I wanted to make a lasting investment in young Mainers, so my gift is to the Mission Scholarship endowment. It will be a gift of hope and support for generations of students."



Alan Baker

A recent gift from the Curtis and Patricia Blake Foundation embodies this kind of generous, far-sighted support. Lifelong New Englander Curtis Blake was the legendary co-founder, with his brother Prestley, of Friendly Ice Cream 85 years ago. Blake Foundation trustees recently announced the family foundation's final gifts to four Mount Desert Island nonprofits—Maine Seacoast Mission, Land and Garden

Preserve, The Neighborhood House, and Mount Desert Nursing Association—as well as the Boys & Girls Club of Martin County, Fla. These gifts were made as part of the Blakes' estate plan, given in recognition of the contributions these organizations made to communities the family cared about.

In announcing the gifts, daughter Susan Blake said, "The Blake family had many happy times on the Island of Mount Desert in the summertime and in Hobe Sound during the winter months. These final gifts represent an opportunity to give back once more to those communities, and to the year-round residents and groups who make those communities such special places." Mission president John Zavodny noted that the timing of the gift is meaningful. "This wonderful gift arrived just as the *Sunbeam* was returning to the sea after an extensive refit. The Blakes were honorary chairs of the 2018 campaign that raised the funds necessary for the work. Their gift will support the Mission for years to come and was given in honor of Scott McFarland, a longtime Blake family friend."

We invite you to join the Maine Seacoast Mission Hope Society and become part of this exceptional group of men and women who have demonstrated their commitment to our island and coastal communities. Including the Mission in your estate plans will provide critical support—and hope—for generations to come. For additional information, please contact Chris Stelling, Director of Development at 207-801-6009 or cstelling@seacoastmission.org, or visit seacoastmission.planmygift.org. ☀

Resilience on the Islands

Building resilience by making islanders feel valued has been at the heart of the Mission's work since its founding in 1905. According to Douglas Cornman, the *Sunbeam*'s chaplain, after Alexander and Angus MacDonald urged Bar Harbor Congregational Church to start a ministry to Downeast island residents, "they soon recognized the additional needs of the islanders. They saw the lack of health care, job training, and education. They saw the isolation that created the despair of feeling unloved. In response, the Mission hired workers to tackle these problems. Our work with island residents remains much the same today."

Kathie Fiveash, a year-round resident of Isle au Haut, now living there half the year, agrees whole-heartedly.

Kathie is a naturalist and former island schoolteacher. "I have always felt cared for by the visits of the *Sunbeam* and its wonderful crew," Kathie says. "When you live in a remote place and access to care of all kinds is limited, the care that comes to you is especially meaningful. In all seasons the *Sunbeam* offers delicious food, community gatherings, medical care, workshops, and lectures. But most important is the friendship and counsel of wise and trustworthy people. I can't tell you how many times the *Sunbeam* crew has reached out to me in times of need to offer a dinner, a walk, a cookie, or a gift of some kind that clearly says, 'You matter. We care about you. We see you.' I know the *Sunbeam* does for others what it does



Douglas sent valentines to fifty-one island kids.



Douglas with students who will leave their islands to attend high schools on the mainland

for me, multiplying kindness and support on all the islands."

For Douglas, the work is simple but profound. He'll notice when someone needs a bag of cookies or a plate of food from steward Jillian. Or he may take the time to walk to someone's house, knock on the door, and spend twenty minutes sitting and listening. Islanders understand the effort it took to make that visit. The Mission crew leaves their families to be out at sea for several days at a time. When they arrive at an island, there are few cars, and they'll walk a couple miles to a house for a visit. Islanders know what it takes to do this work, and they understand that the Mission cares enough to invest the resources to let island residents know they are cared about. It makes them feel they matter and from those feelings grow the strength and resilience to make it through tough times.

"The *Sunbeam* and her crew make islanders feel valued," says Douglas. "They are always willing to set aside any personal differences long enough to share a meal together. Aboard the *Sunbeam* people act differently. They can come aboard just as they are and it's okay. They feel accepted and know that they matter." ☀

Financial Report for the year ending June 30, 2020

OPERATING FUND

OPERATING FUND INCOME

Annual Giving and Special Events	\$1,065,899
Foundation and Other Grants	385,007
Trust Income	256,470
Program and Other Income	45,393
Subtotal	1,752,769
Draws Transferred from Endowment Funds (below)	1,764,731
TOTAL OPERATING FUND INCOME	3,517,500

OPERATING FUND EXPENDITURES

Program Services

Youth Development Programs (EdGE, Scholarships)	1,151,107
Direct Service Programs (Food Security, Housing Repair, Christmas, Outreach)	743,076
Island Service Programs (Island Outreach, Health, Sunbeam)	619,806
Total Program Services	2,513,989

Supporting Services

Management and General	419,029
Development, Fundraising, and Marketing	318,357
Budgeted Additions Expensed, net	11,943
Total Supporting Services	749,329

TOTAL OPERATING FUND EXPENDITURES

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS—OPERATING FUND

RESTRICTED FUNDS, NET OF OPERATING USES

RESTRICTED INCOME, NET OF OPERATING USES

Special Gift and Capital Campaigns	104,154
Foundation and Other Grants	624,591
Bequest Income	1,005,000
Trust Income	(28,173)
Program Income	83
Gains on Sale of Property and Equipment	20,022
Subtotal	1,725,677

Investment Income

Less: Endowment Draws Transferred to Operating Fund (above)	(1,764,731)
Investment Income, net	(522,559)

TOTAL RESTRICTED INCOME, NET OF OPERATING USES

RESTRICTED EXPENDITURES

Special Project Expenditures	512,702
Depreciation	158,373

TOTAL RESTRICTED EXPENDITURES

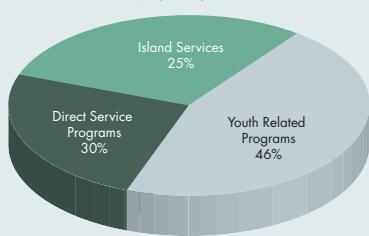
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS—RESTRICTED FUNDS, NET OF OPERATING USES

TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

ENDOWMENT INVESTMENT FUNDS VALUE ON JUNE 30, 2020

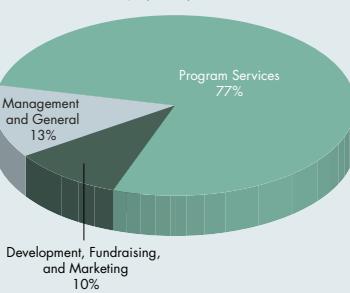
TOTAL PROGRAM EXPENSES

\$2,513,989



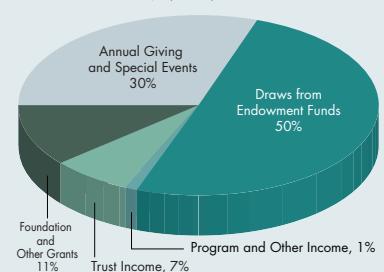
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES

\$3,263,318



TOTAL REVENUE*

\$3,517,500



An independent auditor's report is available upon request. Maine Seacoast Mission is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, a publicly supported organization as defined by Section 170(b) A-6. Contributions are deductible to the extent provided by law.

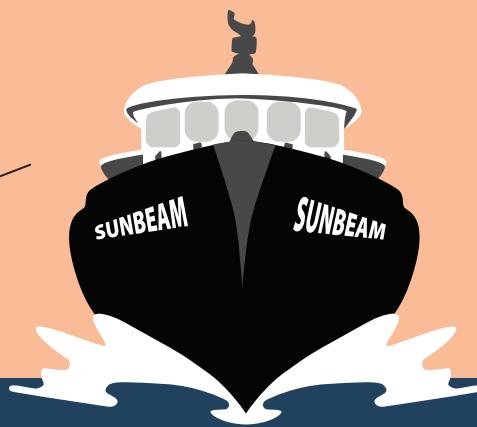


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seacoastmission.org



*Save the date!
August 12*



THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 2021
Sunbeam Award Gala



2021 SUNBEAM AWARD RECIPIENTS
ACADIA SENIOR COLLEGE and SIGMA KAPPA SORORITY

Check the Events page on our website seacoastmission.org and the Mission's social media pages for Gala details. You can also contact Anna Silver at asilver@seacoastmission.org or 207-801-6011 with questions.