



# Cobscook Currents

June 2009

*News from the Cobscook Community Learning Center*

Dear Friends,

It is spring, a season of renewal and growth - a season of opportunity. Opportunity for us at Cobscook Community Learning Center is the privilege and work of building upon all that has gone into bringing us to this tenth year of our existence. With that comes the most important message to send out to you all, and that is one of deep thanks for all of your many contributions that have carried us to this point in our development. You have given time, ideas, talents, hope, heart, and you have given financially. All of these gifts make the Center what it is today and position it to flourish across the next decade and beyond. Thanks to you all.

As we imagine the work of the CCLC, we remember the conversations and questions put forth by the founding group back in January 1999. They came together in the spirit of bringing about positive change. They named what they loved about life here, and named the liabilities - the things that were missing or the challenges that were literally taking too many lives to senseless loss or constricting too many spirits - limiting the full bloom and potential of spirit. They imagined social, environmental, spiritual and economic health for this corner of the world.

Imagine health and fulfillment for yourself, your family and your neighbors - your environment - and the work that is necessary to bring that vision to life. You will know you are on the right track when a young person sits down to join the music circle and takes her turn to offer up a song, or when two older sisters celebrate time together by taking a pottery class - something they have never done, or when your forty year old neighbor decides it is time to vote in a national or state election for the first time. We're seeing it in the Cobscook Bay region - the change beginning to take hold. From our corner of the world, linked with friends and colleagues from around the world, we are part of a social change movement that has traction.



*Alan and our friend Sydney*

Most recently, in explaining the work of the CCLC to a newcomer, I suggested that the mission and vision of the Center could be understood as similar to environmental restoration work. It is a whole systems approach to tending the conditions that support and sustain true ecological health.

The CCLC works for *restorative social ecology*. New vitality is reflected in the work of CCLC's Association for World Education (AWE) Youth of the Dawn activities, including their weekly meetings, adventures and the fact that two young members of their group, with support from their schools and communities, participated in an international youth forum on climate change in Denmark for three weeks this past March. It is reflected in the new pathway to a high school diploma made possible to teen parents through the Passages Program, a powerful collaboration between The Community School of Camden, Washington County schools, and CCLC. And, it is reflected in the creation of the Cobscook Bay Company, LLC, a new business venture that, with success, will generate good jobs in this region, will support sustainable fisheries and organic agriculture, and will generate revenues to help keep community education initiatives like the CCLC thriving long into the future. All of these activities and initiatives reflect the broad restorative work we are striving to achieve.

By investing financially in programs that undertake restorative social ecology, we will create enduring, vibrant, respectful educational opportunities. This leads to engaged learners who are a part of a broader society - one which reflects congruent values at the institutional, political, ecological and economic realms.

This work needs your support now more than ever. Enjoy this edition of *Cobscook Currents*, and please stay with us for the next ten years. Thank you.

Alan Furth, Executive Director

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*The mission of the CCLC is to sustain an educational setting within which people can cultivate understanding and enrich life through experiences in the natural surroundings, with our cultures and traditions, and through access to the arts.*



*Kat Clement and Kelli Bailey*

Kelli says, “I didn't know that climate change was this serious and coming this fast. I'm going to try my best to teach my community more about it.” Kat and Kelli are part of a group of young people called The Youth of the Dawn, which operates as the only Association for World Education (AWE) youth group in North America. Youth of the Dawn is led by CCLC Board President Stephanie Bailey in her community of Metakhmikuk (Indian Township). The trip was supported by the Indian Township Tribal Government, the Pleasant Point School Committee at Maine Indian Education, Lois Ann Kuntz, and the Fish Family Foundation of Maine. Thanks to these donors, and welcome back Kat and Kelli!

## Welcome from CCLC Board President Stephanie Bailey

Welcome, friends, to this issue of the Cobscook Currents. I hope you all have come through winter happy, healthy, and ready to move forward. I know I'm very excited about all the wonderful possibilities this year! I stepped into the role of board president about a year and a half ago, and I wanted to find a way to extend the CCLC's approach to meaningful education to my community. With the help of the Indian Township community and other bright minds, I am excited to be working toward bringing a sister site of the Cobscook Community Learning Center onto the reservation. I feel it would benefit this locale to begin sharing knowledge and experiences which are meaningful and catered to our needs. To date, Passamaquoddy community members have met to discuss possibilities of location and programming, and CCLC representatives have met with Community Caring Collaborative (CCC) representatives to team up in hopes to provide people with resources that promote healthy ways of living.

For the past couple of years, I have been focused on the indigenous portion of the CCLC's vision. I have organized our nation's first Association for World Education youth group, the Youth of the Dawn. We have seven to twelve members who meet regularly to engage in dialogue which focuses on Passamaquoddy identity and local/global issues. We engage in thoughtful and fun activities. This has opened the door for our youth -- two of our group members just attended a summit on climate change in Denmark. We expect that our efforts will open the doors to more of our youth participating in local and global exchanges.



*Stephanie and members of the youth group*

## A Trip to Denmark for Two Local Youth

In March of this year, two young members of the Passamaquoddy tribe were given a fantastic opportunity through their work with the CCLC. Kathleen Clement and Kelli Bailey traveled to Denmark and participated in a three-week conference about climate change. “Before I went to Denmark, I was aware of global warming, but did not realize how big of an issue this actually is,” says Kathleen. “We looked at the world's current attitude toward valuing our environment. If it doesn't improve or change, it will have dire consequences for all life on this planet.” The conference was held at Flakkebjerg Efterskole, which is a Danish folk school located in Copenhagen, and was attended by young people from around the world. Kat and Kelli were the only representatives from North America.



*Copenhagen architecture*

## Passages at the CCLC — A Growing Program by Charley Martin-Berry, Passages Coordinator and Teacher

Passages at the CCLC is an educational program for young parents ages 14-21 who are seeking their high school diploma. Passages is home-based and self-paced, meaning school travels to the parents and their children, and students themselves figure out how to balance work, parenting and education in the way that makes the most sense for them.



*A Passages baby*

The CCLC has been working to implement Passages in Washington County for several years. In late 2008, the CCLC hired a full time teacher and program coordinator, Charley Martin-Berry. Charley's early focus on spreading the word about Passages has paid off; enrollment is up to nearly ten students this spring. We have already hired a second Passages teacher, Cora Townsend of Dennysville. Welcome Cora!

Passages brings to Washington County a realistic educational alternative to a population of young people with complex needs and powerful potential. Students balance delight in a new baby with exhaustion, fear, and sometimes depression. They celebrate adorable first-tooth smiles while managing babies' fussiness from ear infections, bronchitis or allergies. Efforts to get a driver's license, a car, an apartment, or a job are all compounded by the challenges of young parenthood.

What does it mean to be a very young parent in Washington County with no high school diploma? While each family is unique, we have found there are some patterns that hold true for most young parents in our area. Based on experience with about fifteen students to date (including actively enrolled students and a number of applicants), here are some of the things we have found:

- \* Young parents care deeply about being good parents to their own children.
- \* They generally live with their parents. Affordable housing is hard to find.
- \* Issues with grades and attendance affect young parents' decision to leave school.
- \* Isolation is real. Networking through the internet, phone, and face-to-face contact is extremely valuable.
- \* Young parents are motivated. They want to finish high school and most want to go to college.
- \* Young parents rely on support from various public agencies. They don't plan to rely on it forever.
- \* They understand that their level of education is directly tied to their children's academic success.
- \* They feel a double-edged sword: it's hard to buy a car without a job, and hard to get a job with no car.
- \* The loss of the "typical" or "normal" teenage experience is painful for young parents
- \* Quiet time and relaxation are nearly impossible to find. Young parents are busy.
- \* It is challenging for young parents to articulate their own strengths, and they have much to offer.

It is with pleasure that we report Passages at the CCLC truly is on the map. One student, who came to us early this spring, reported hearing about us from family members, friends, health professionals, and educators. Everyone was telling her she should check out Passages. And she did! We thank those of you who have helped spread the word or who have made financial contributions to this program. You have supported young parents in their educational goals. You have made a difference.



*Passages students*

# Thanks to all those

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# who contributed in 2008.

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## Youth of the Dawn

Audubon Expedition Institute  
 Ecological Teachers and Learners

## Campus Development, Bandstand

Stanley Barnes  
 Wynne Furth and Don Brenneis  
 Stuart and Paula Shamberg

## Fiber Arts Studio

Maine Community Foundation  
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## Jimmy Soctomah Scholarship Fund

Alan Furth and Katie MacGregor  
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## Passages

Maine Community Foundation  
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## Scholarships

Machias Rotary Club  
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 Thelma Steffan  
 Washington County Association  
 of Congregational Churches  
 Lula Wieland

## Bequests

Alan Day

***Additional thanks go out to all of  
 those who tirelessly offer their time  
 and talents as CCLC volunteers.  
 Musicians, cooks, carpenters,  
 gardeners, artists, and other friends -  
 we need you all!***

***If you contributed in 2008, and  
 we missed you on this list, please  
 let us know.***

## Programs at the CCLC - The Invitation

by Kara McCrimmon, CCLC Program Director

Last Thursday evening, a group of us gathered at the CCLC for our monthly community meeting. Deb Shields was here representing the Master Gardeners. Terry Bell was here because of his interest in locally-produced fuel alternatives. Rachel Bell came to represent a group interested in organizing an annual music festival. CCLC Board members Don Sprangers, Stephanie Bailey and Gary Cook came to reflect on a recent fundraiser— a pizza and music night - and to plan the next one. And Kelly Bryand, who was here teaching guitar lessons, joined in as he heard the conversation about a music festival and was drawn in. The community meeting represents an invitation for folks to help create the next new thing through the learning center – the next class, the next piece of the campus, the next relationship, the next set of ties binding us together.

*Invitation* is one of the prime ways the CCLC operates; we offer it and accept it each day. Throughout the year we invite the community to step into classes or events. We invite skilled people to offer programs, and we accept their invitations to do so. Invitations abound when it comes to organizing an activity, or making decisions about programs and initiatives. It's all about invitation.

Two years ago the CCLC received an invitation from area school superintendents to create an alternative high school degree program that meets the needs and interests of some students whose needs are not being met currently. Since then, we have started a process to create The Community Year, which is a growing seedling and we expect it to blossom into an effective alternative program addressing the present call for engaged young people who are mindful and informed in their everyday choices and actions. Those with an interest in seeing this program come to life are invited to join with us in making it happen.

Today, a number of invitations have landed on my desk and I am issuing many more on behalf of the CCLC. Young people ages 11 – 15 are invited to apply for the 2009 Maine Expedition. Over 60 people so far have accepted the invitation to join with us in the 2009 Down East Spring Birding Festival, and we will be welcoming them here at the end of May. I accepted an invitation last week to participate in today's open house for the new CCLC Community Café, and enjoyed a meal there today put on by the staff of Meals for ME. I also received an invitation in the mail from Helen and Marty Saccone. They publish Nature Photographer magazine, and as a way to support the Center they organize a concert each summer at the CCLC. This year's concert will be on June 27 and features local artists, r.e.bell. The music starts at 8 pm, and you are invited too.

Whatever appeals to you – taking a class, teaching, organizing something that makes our community better and stronger, offering your expertise in a way that strengthens our collective capacity – we invite you in.

Lots of fun!

Seeking young people ages 11-15 who are looking for an  
adventure in Maine's north woods -

Call for more  
info!

## Maine Expedition

**This year's Expedition runs July 27 - August 7.**

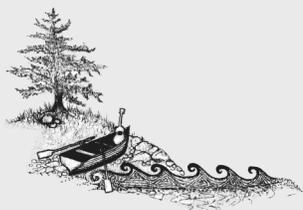
Climb a mountain. Canoe a twenty-mile long lake. Carry everything you need on your back. Feel tired and exhilarated after a full day on the trail.

Go somewhere you've never been before. And, do all this with a group of friends who are on the same adventure!

Space is limited and will fill up on a first-come, first-served basis. We encourage everyone to have their applications in by early June 2009.

**Tuition:** \$1,515. Scholarships available.





## Celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the CCLC!!

September 28 — October 4

In 1999, a group of community members came together to craft something beautiful. Join us as we celebrate the start of the CCLC.

Six days of music, artists, demonstrations, food, fun, field trips, classes, workshops, hikes, and much, much more. Watch our website for more information. Save the dates. We'll see you there!



## Youth Art Camp Offerings Grow

Anne Grant of Trescott created two new offerings this winter for youth interested in artistic explorations—a weekly art exploration class for home-schoolers and an after school comic book class. “Since my kids have been taking Anne’s art class, they are doing much more art on their own,” says parent Carly DelSignore. “And, I notice more detail and diversity in what they are doing.”

Anne will offer another summer art program for kids beginning July 7. The class will focus on sculpture made from found objects, as well as painting and drawing, with lots of



games and time outside. The class will run for six Tuesdays from 10 am—3 pm. Course fees range from \$30—\$225 based on a sliding scale that invites people to pay what they can afford. To register for this course or others, people can call the CCLC or visit the website.



### Spiritual Autobiography — A Successful Course by Barbara Fox

*The CCLC just concluded a class called Reading and Writing Spiritual Autobiography. Led by Judy Pratt, the class originally met one Saturday a month for four months. At the course’s conclusion, seven of the eight participants asked for the course to continue, which it did – with enough additional people to create a second group which met on Sundays. One course participant, Barbara Fox, offers her reflections on the experience below:*

Curious spirits we are, this group of eight who adventurously spent one Saturday a month for eight months exploring the meaning of our life’s journey through the writing of spiritual autobiography. We created a supportive community where each of us felt safe to put pen to paper (or fingers to laptop) and to share what was in our hearts and minds. Month to month, we prowled around the question of how to define “spiritual autobiography” from our particular place and time in history.

Drawing from the riches of Judy’s vast collection of books, we learned what authors of diverse ages and ethnicities chose to tell us of their lives, what they selected as meaningful, and where their experiences connected with something much larger than their individual stories. Then, using prompts such as art-making or walking in a labyrinth during sessions, or with ideas and metaphors while at home, we wrote...and thereby practiced touching what is both mundane and sacred in our daily lives. We laughed gently at ourselves and our persistent inclinations to devalue the importance and power of our authentic voices. We watched, as what we dared to offer up brought others to appreciative attention—or knowing laughter -- the camaraderie of “I’ve been there!” We learned from our shared stories that “spiritual” moments may float into our day serenely, with the rising of a full moon over Passamaquoddy Bay, or they may come crashing in during overwhelming grief. They punctuate relationship squabbles as easily as they inhabit old, challenging memories. To be able to explore this territory with trustworthy companions was a true gift, and for this I am most grateful.



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## CCLC Receives Major Support for Dormitory Project

The CCLC's plans to construct a fifty-bed dormitory on campus are on track, and construction will start in 2010. This exciting capital campaign got a critical boost just last week, when Jane's Trust stepped in with \$200,000 in support of the dorm. This funding, in addition to a generous \$300,000 lead gift from a longtime supporter, moves the CCLC halfway towards this million-dollar project. "The Jane's Trust grant is very exciting on several levels," says CCLC Executive Director Alan Furth. "The bulk of it is a challenge grant. In order for the CCLC to receive \$125,000 of that support, we have to raise that amount again from other sources. This is a great way for us to invite people into this process at whatever financial level is comfortable. Further, this grant is a major endorsement from an important foundation, and it speaks to our organizational maturity and readiness." The dormitory itself will be constructed from local materials by local people and will utilize green technology throughout. Anyone interested in participating in the planning and design process for the dorm should contact Alan at the CCLC.



*The CCLC is preparing to build again.*

### ***Jane's Trust Challenge***

*We have eighteen months to raise \$125,000 to meet the challenge from Jane's Trust. One thousand people pledging just \$7 per month for the next eighteen months meets that goal. Please give generously.*

*The CCLC dorm is an important piece of economic and social development in Washington County.*

*More information will be available on the CCLC's website as it becomes available.*

*We need everyone to help.  
 Thanks!*