

Cobscook Currents

Fall 2022





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Cobscook Currents
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Wake

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Fall 2022 Cobscook Currents, the bi-annual newsletter of Cobscook Institute. “Wake” is the theme of this edition. Its dual meanings: “remembrance” and “return to consciousness” can be traced in the lines of the articles that follow. In 2001, during a retreat dedicated to articulating the values of Cobscook, Wayne Newell, a co-founder, inspired the group to place “love” as the central hub of all other facets of our guiding values. We remember Wayne and other important friends recently departed in this edition.

Conditions in our natural and social systems serve as a wakeup call for us all. Outcomes at the national and global levels will ultimately be a reflection of what we are able to realize individually and at the community level. Cobscook Institute was created and is sustained by local folks as a place where the diverse people of our region can come together in an environment of respect, dignity, and honor in a way that yields transformation for the individual and the community.

At the level of local communities, especially rural communities, we often find ourselves in the wake of decisions made elsewhere and over which it can seem we have little control. However, the solutions to these problems – problems as enormous as loss of basic human rights, intolerance of diversity, economic stagnation, ecological devastation, or racism in all of its overt and insidious forms – cannot and should not be counted on to come from somewhere else. We hold the solutions to the problems we face. We can be successful in solving our problems by relying on the strength, resilience, and cooperative spirit that has been endemic to our place and people. Cobscook is a manifestation of those virtues and a place for us to exercise and amplify them.

In this issue of Cobscook Currents, we highlight programs, practices, issues, and developments within Cobscook that illustrate our ongoing commitment to addressing contemporary issues through innovation and collaboration. Our Access Fund removes barriers to participation in Cobscook programs. We highlight our ongoing partnership with the Traveling Rainbow Project and the important work they’re doing to provide youth and young adults in our community with a creative space for inclusive celebration. The shared and distributed leadership model our board and staff have adopted reflects Cobscook’s core values and distributing power within community. And, as we wake to a new decade of innovation and impact, we remember friends of Cobscook who have passed on recently and honor their contributions to Cobscook and to community. Time really is a river flowing. We are both honored and grateful to be sharing the journey today with you.

All together now,

Alan Furth

Co-Founder and Board Member



Our Team

Staff

Michelle Cousineau

*Executive Associate and
Programs Associate*

Ryan Cross

*Grounds and Maintenance
Associate*

Shaun Haskins

*Director of Development
and Co-Director*

Anne Shields Hopkins

Programs Coordinator

Daphne Loring

*Director of Partnerships &
Innovation and Cobscook
Institute Co-Director*

Bonnie Lyons

*Facilities Manager,
Custodial Coordinator and
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Kara McCrimmon

*Director, Cobscook
Experiential Programs and
Cobscook Institute Co-
Director*

Maria McMorrow

*Teacher, Cobscook
Experiential Programs*

Dylan Pardue

*IT Manager and
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*Teacher, Cobscook
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Colby Soctomah Lewey

Kevin Thompson

Spotlight:

The Power of Our Access Fund

Last year more than 70 of us came together to grow our Access Fund, from matching donors to individuals who care about access, to raise an additional \$22,000. The fund allows everyone in our community to participate in programming at Cobscook Institute regardless of their ability to pay.

This is what makes us strong. Our community knows we all win when there are more viewpoints, backgrounds and ways of engaging in the creative energy here. The Access Fund allows us to pay our world-class instructors fairly for our programming, and allows all students to pay what they can.

“I wish Cobscook existed when I was growing up in Calais. I imagine my younger self attending Cobscook Experiential Program, taking pottery and art classes, canoeing with other adventurous summer campers – each opportunity available to me regardless of my parents’ ability to pay. Now I get to support these programs for youth by giving to Cobscook’s Access Fund.”



Lyn Mikel Brown is an American academic, author, feminist, and community activist. She is Professor of Education at Colby College in Waterville, Maine. Her research interests include girls development, youth activism, and objectification of girls by the media and marketers. She was inducted into the Maine Women’s Hall of Fame in 2013.



Our Co-Directors: Kara McCrimmon, Daphne Loring & Shaun Haskins

Triad of Leadership

By Shaun Haskins

“Have you hired a new director yet?” A community member recently asked Kara McCrimmon.

“Well,” she said, “We did just hire a new co-director. We don’t have just one executive director anymore. We’re trying something different.”

In 2018, Cobscook began the process of transitioning from a founding director to a new generation of leadership. It is a generation of equality of voice, shared vision and collective action. This transition has taken several forms, and by remaining focused on our mission and our values, we’ve settled on a model that fits who we are and who we want to be.

This shared governance model establishes three co-Director positions, all equally accountable to the Board, with distinct areas of responsibility. Kara McCrimmon oversees our high school and outdoor programs. Daphne Loring has responsibility to develop regional capacity through programming and partnerships with other organizations and individuals. Shaun Haskins, our newest hire, is responsible for our fundraising and communications work. This triad uses their collective wisdom to support our full staff in best fulfilling our mission. They share their authority over day-to-day and strategic operations broadly within the staff. The full staff has established circles which facilitate shared work areas, support collaboration, and promote consensus-based decision making.

This leadership model provides an empowering, clarifying structure for the conversations which inform daily work. This is because Cobscook is a place where you’re always invited to a conversation, to find creative solutions to challenging problems, to explore new ideas as an individual and as part of a community. Our mission says we offer “responsive educational opportunities”, and we can only create that kind of place, can only be truly responsive, if we are all in conversation as partners, and only if we commit to being here and doing this together, intentionally, with our eyes wide open.

Thanks for joining us.



Traveling Rainbow Facilitators: Juston Newcomb, Annie Hopkins & Ro Luuring

Supporting Each Other to Achieve our Greatest Potential

Our Partnership with The Traveling Rainbow Project

By Dylan Pardue

At Cobscook Institute, our vision has always been of a community that respects people and planet, and inspires, supports and sustains people to achieve their greatest potential. One of the ways we embody our vision is to hold a space that fosters respect for all people, because we can only achieve that goal when we are affirmed, loved, and seen for who we really are. That's why our ongoing partnership with the Traveling Rainbow Project, led by the Downeast Rainbow Alliance (DRA), is crucial for furthering our mission of strengthening personal, community and global well-being.

The Traveling Rainbow Project provides youth and young adults in our community

“My favorite thing about the Traveling Rainbow is being able to be myself and not be afraid. Most definitely.”

-Teen from The Traveling Rainbow's Youth Group

with a creative space for inclusive celebration, leading to positive health and wellness outcomes, increased social support networks, affirming experiences, and leadership experiences for teens and young adults.

The Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS)¹ shows that 29% of high school students in Maine, about 16,000 or 1 in 4, identify as LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay,

If you or someone you know needs support for mental health, suicidal thoughts or substance abuse call, text or chat:

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988 | 988lifeline.org

BlackLine: 1-800-604-5841 | callblackline.com

Trans Lifeline: 1-877-565-8860 | translifeline.org

Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386 | trevorproject.org.

Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning +). While the underlying causes of suicide attempts are complex and involve many factors, studies² have shown an increase in attempts among LGBTQ+ people, and MIYHS data shows a four fold increase in risk for LGBTQ+ youth in our community. They can face additional risk factors such as social isolation and low self-esteem that can be caused or worsened by discrimination in their community and family.

Studies² have also shown the vital importance of resilience for LGBTQ+ people, or the ability to adapt from stress and adversity, in protecting against suicide attempts. It should be a priority for our community to help each other develop emotional and psychological well being, especially among LGBTQ+ people. Crucial components include family acceptance and support, connections to people who care, physical and emotional safety, and a positive sense of identity as an LGBTQ+ person.

Drew is an 11th grader in Cobscook Experiential Program, and identifies within the transgender umbrella as genderfluid. When asked if he felt supported and affirmed at school, he said “Yes, definitely by my teachers, and some of my classmates don’t understand a lot of things but they’re always respectful. My teachers are always really cool with anything I might need. While I might get misgendered sometimes, my classmates always correct themselves and ask questions if they don’t understand something, so that’s really nice. I think everybody here is super supportive even when they don’t understand things and they’re always willing to learn.” He said that while he has friends who have faced discrimination for being who they are, he hasn’t, saying “I have a pretty loving and understanding community.”

“Sometimes people don’t understand everything, and the important thing is when they put in the effort to try.”

-Drew, CEP Student

At Cobscook Institute, we believe that it is our collective responsibility as individuals, families and institutions to support LGBTQ+ people, and to promote a culture that welcomes, affirms and supports all people for who they are. For people who don’t identify as LGBTQ+, this is called allyship, and it is a crucial factor in improving mental health for our community members, and enabling all of us to achieve our greatest potential. At Cobscook Institute and Downeast Rainbow Alliance, this includes programs and practices that serve the unique needs of LGBTQ+ youth and promote allyship. DRA’s Traveling Rainbow Project is a free mobile and online community center that provides resources, programs and support to LGBTQ+ youth, and promotes allyship in schools and communities. The Cobscook campus hosts one of the Traveling Rainbow Project’s lending libraries, with books available to program participants, staff, and visitors alike.

“This is like my heaven, I need this in my life.”

-Washington Academy Student

Cobscook Institute strives to be a welcoming, respectful and affirming community learning center for all, and we’re proud to be part of The Traveling Rainbow Project to improve the mental health outcomes for LGBTQ2IA+ people in our region. To learn more about The Project, visit downeastrainbowalliance.com.

¹ Maine Department of Health and Human Services, and Maine Department of Education. 2021. “LGBT Student Health, High school-level data from the 2021 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey.” Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey. https://www.maine.gov/miyhs/sites/default/files/2021_Reports/Detailed_Reports/HS/Maine%20High%20School%20Detailed%20Tables.pdf (October 2022).

² Movement Advancement Project, Johnson Family Foundation, and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. August 2017. “Talking About Suicide & LGBT Populations.” 2nd edition. MAP’s Talking About LGBT Issues Series. <https://www.lgbtmap.org/talking-about-suicide-and-lgbt-populations> (August 2022).



Wayne Newell guided Cobscook's founding group to center "love" at the core of our values.



David Wilder was known for his finger-picking on the guitar and constructed The Wilder Wing.

In Memoriam

By Kara McCrimmon

Early on in Cobscook Institute's story, Mary Belenky, a beloved educator and author of the notable *"Women's Ways of Knowing"* and other works, gifted Cobscook with the tagline "your community home place." Mary, who taught at the first Cobscook Gatherings two decades ago, passed peacefully with her husband by her side in 2020. While she has passed on, her gift to us remains. As a "homeplace," Cobscook serves as a space to gather and learn together, make music, share meals, and celebrate the seasons. Increasingly, it's also a place where the community comes together to mourn and remember. With nearly 20 years of rooting in this place on the shores of East Stream, people have gathered many times to remember members of the Cobscook community who have made a mark on this place and in our hearts.

As we continue to remember those who have come and gone, this year we remember Wayne Newell, David Wilder, John Viselli and Mary Lemmon for their unique and lasting contributions to the community.

Wayne Newell was an accomplished educator, storyteller, singer, author, and scholar. A member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Motahkomikuk (Indian Township), Wayne worked throughout his life to sustain, retain, celebrate and live Passamaquoddy language and culture. His legacy extends far and wide. In 1971, he directed the first bilingual/bicultural education program for the Passamaquoddy Tribe. Wayne was active in his Tribe's continuing struggles for justice for Native people. He served on the Tribal Council, as Tribal Representative of the Maine Legislature, and on the Maine Human Rights Commission. He was the first Native American to serve on the Board of Trustees for University of Maine, and he helped create the Native Studies Program and the Wabanaki Center at the University. Wayne was also appointed by former President Jimmy Carter to serve on the National Indian Education Advisory Committee. He held degrees from Harvard Graduate Schools, Emerson College, Ricker College, and the University of Maine. Among these prestigious affiliations, in 1999, he accepted an invitation to become a co-founder of what was then Cobscook Community Learning Center, and even today Cobscook's mission, vision, and values reverberate with his wisdom. He guided Cobscook's founding group to center "love" at the core of our values and modeled the importance of listening to and learning from one



John Viselli was a gifted musician and mason adding his creative signature across the campus



Mary Lemmon empowered our trauma-informed educators and researchers at a critical time.

another’s stories. Wayne served as a board member and mentor to Cobscook Institute from its founding, and even though he has passed on, we continue to learn from and be guided by his words and his example.

David Wilder and John Viselli were both incredible musicians who volunteered their time and talent at the many fundraisers and community events at Cobscook over the years. David, a regular at Monday Night Music, was known for his gentle finger-picking on the guitar and original songs about the region. John was known for his ability to play nearly any string instrument and for being a veritable jukebox of tunes and songs. Both men were skilled craftsmen, and the work of their hands lives on across the Cobscook campus. In the summer of 2012, David worked with a group of our high school students to build a much-needed addition to Rice Hall. He served as the instructor for a two-week summer course in building trades, and the room he and those students constructed ten years ago is actively used today by our current high schoolers. We call that room the Wilder Wing in honor of David.

All of the stone masonry work on campus is the result of courses John taught over the years. The fire ring in the center of the campus, the cob oven, the benches and waterfall in the reflective Jimmy Soctomah Memorial Park, and the orange concrete dance surface in the Don and Sue Furth Memorial Amphitheater are all the result of John's masonry skill and his fluency as a teacher. While we miss both David and John, their legacy of music and skilled craftsmanship lives on.

Mary Lemmon, Cobscook’s friend and supporter, was a compassionate mental health professional who dedicated herself to helping people process their grief and trauma. She was a keen judge of character who instinctively understood the importance of trust, listening, and responding to people’s needs. Mary’s commitment to generously supporting community programs including her time and her talents stemmed from a long family tradition of philanthropy. She knew that she could make a difference in people’s lives, and she was always open to new ideas and new people. A team from Cobscook was introduced to Mary in 2018, as we were beginning to pilot a multi-year research and practice work in Washington County elementary schools with TREE: Transforming Rural Experience in Education. TREE was a major undertaking – doubling the budget and staff team for Cobscook, and it was made possible through the generous philanthropic support of individuals and foundations. Mary agreed to join our circle of support and remained engaged in helping sustain our programs and impacts right through 2022. Mary’s support for our TREE program empowered a dedicated group of psychologists, trauma-informed educators, and researchers at a critical time. Her generosity and caring were instrumental in helping generate a model of school transformation detailed in the newly released book, “*Trauma-Responsive Schooling*.” Mary’s legacy at Cobscook will continue as we work to envision and bring to life a new round of trauma-responsive training, research, and programming.

Community Awakens

"The music circle has been a part of my life off and on for at least 15 years. I started going when I was a kid, and I've received a lot of encouragement from the folks in the circle over the years. I'm so glad it's back in person. It's a joy to see everyone face to face and share music." -Kris Paprocki

As we awaken from the isolation of the pandemic we are investing in our community programming. Building programming is human-centered work – cultivating instructors, conducting social outreach, and building bridges. It feels like watering mint plants on our campus patio and welcoming a new visitor. It is walking down one of our many trails with a community member who has ideas they want to bring to life - and taking the time to listen and share and make plans for the next step. It is spreadsheets, web designs and phone calls and more visits. It is how the people of this place actualize our mission.

Expanding our programming means looking at the past 22 years to inform our process. We find that the intertwining of pillar programs with new initiatives is where progress lies. The success of our Open Pottery Studio Program inspires us and demonstrates what is possible as we explore the strengths of having a community maker's space. The combination of creative classes combined with the opening of our campus to provide vital space for creative voices to shine. It is the work of empowerment.

Community programming is like dear Monday Night Music Circle (MNM) friends finding themselves together once again after years of zooming. It is the smiles, laughter, and melodies of that circle. It is also weeding a garden bed with a parent while their homeschooled teenager uses the pottery studio with a new friend. This programming is the work of connection, which helps our community to flourish. For that we are grateful.

Please connect with our Programs Coordinator Annie Hopkins with inquiries or possibilities for upcoming community programs: annie@cobscookinstitute.org or (207) 255-7319.

Facing Page Photos, clockwise from top left:

- *Herbalism Saturdays with Bianca Mase begins imagining monthly meet-ups.*
- *Ceramic artist Michelle Cousineau prepares greenware with a dark slip before firing.*
- *Alan Furth, Diane Getchell & Ed Brine at the first in-person MNM since 2020.*
- *Monday Night Music Circle meets with gusto in our conference room.*
- *Daphne Loring, Annie Hopkins & Arlene Wren pose at our Community Art Exhibit.*



*Creating responsive educational opportunities that
strengthen personal, community, and global well-being.*



Pizza Night & Artist Market

A Fundraiser for Cobscook Experiential Program Students, featuring live music. Ceramic & 2D Art will also be for sale.

Friday, December 9th, 5:00 - 8:00 pm



Community Conversations

An opportunity to deepen our understanding of current issues, by coming together in intentional dialogue.

3rd Thursday of each Month, 6:00 - 7:30 pm



Maple Syrup Sunday

Join us for a pancake breakfast with live music and maple candy making to celebrate the end of the winter season.

Sunday, March 26th, 9:00 am - Noon