



Inland Seas Education Association

Executive Director's Newsletter

October/November 2017



It's All Coming Together

I love many things about sailing, but by far the thing I enjoy most is the thrill of a heavy down wind run. Playing the tiller, surfing the waves, and working the spinnaker all make for a wonderfully exciting experience. When sailing in these types of conditions the results of every decision made are amplified. If I'm too aggressive on the tiller, I may end up on the wrong side of the wave, significantly slowing my progress. Being too timid on the tiller will cause me to miss an opportunity to quickly accelerate. Over this last year, Inland Seas has sailed a virtually flawless down wind leg. Our team has trimmed the sails perfectly and we've managed to catch every puff and have timed all the steepest waves perfectly to our advantage. Our sights are set far on the horizon.

We have embarked on an incredible journey towards creating a larger Great Lakes focus for Inland Seas that will be sustainable long into the future. **We are off to such a great start that I am happy to announce we are a full year ahead of schedule!** I am extremely grateful that you are part of our team on this journey and I'm excited about using this, our annual 'print' newsletter, to update you on all the amazing things on our horizon. Whether you volunteer, donate, promote, or advise, your contributions are what have made Inland Seas so successful. Thank you for believing in and continuing to support our vision.

I hope you enjoy reading about how all the pieces in our journey are coming together so that Inland Seas can have a greater Great Lakes impact. ~Fred Sitkins, Executive Director

Financial Piece

The support you have provided, combined with a strong summer sailing season, and wonderful grant-funded projects have put Inland Seas in a strong financial position. **We anticipate paying off our mortgage this year!** This is an investment of over \$380,000 in less than three years. For me personally, this represents the greatest accomplishment of my tenure at Inland Seas. It's difficult to express how it feels to remove what was once Tom's greatest burden.

Paying off the mortgage is only part of the equation. Inland Seas has also been able to build a reserve fund of nearly 20% of our annual budget, maintain four endowments at the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, and create Tom Kelly scholarship and maintenance funds. Inland Seas has taken great strides in building the financial backbone needed to have a lasting and larger Great Lakes impact.

Unique ways to support us:

- Shop Your Community Day - Downtown Traverse City - November 11
- Matching gifts from your employer and/or civic organizations like Rotary
- Shop at smile.amazon.com for all your Amazon purchases
- Donate your boat or nautical items for our Flea Market and Boat Sales
- Purchase items to outfit the schooner *Utopia* (call 231.271.3077 for details)

Get Onboard Campaign Update

Our three-year Get Onboard Campaign began in 2015-16. The campaign's focus is to raise awareness about Inland Seas to generate the support we need to continue to grow our programs and reach more individuals with our important mission. In the first two and a half years of the campaign, we have added **487 new donors** and **past donors have re-engaged** with us. There have also been **112 new volunteers** helping to further our mission. Thank you for continuing to share ISEA with your friends, family, and co-workers through your social media, conversations, and hobbies.

The ISEA Executive Director's Newsletter is published monthly in digital format and delivered through email (sign up at schoolship.org), except October/November when this printed format is used. This mailing captures some of the biggest items on the horizon for ISEA.

Suttons Bay Campus Piece

Since announcing our plans for the Inland Seas Captain Thomas M. Kelly Biological Station last year, Inland Seas has been busy making some important long-term decisions about what would be included in this project. Student dorm rooms, the reduction of long-term liabilities, and maintenance free enhancements have always been key components of the project. I'm happy to state that we will be embarking on a project capable of accomplishing all of those things, and more, a year before our original projections. Along with beginning the project early, we are also excited to announce that we are going to be able to include some of our "dream" items including a solar power array capable of generating 90%-95% of our electrical needs. We have Herman Miller Cares to thank for this as they have graciously provided the funding necessary to install this wonderful solar demonstration project. That's one check in the sustainability column for Inland Seas.



We have also decided to shrink our physical footprint for this project both from an ecological and a long-term sustainability perspective. The architect has reworked the campus plans to include a smaller storage facility (instead of the large barn) and reduce the size of our parking lot, improving our wetland demonstration area. We are focused on creating more green space and reducing long-term maintenance costs. As an environmental education organization, we need to practice the stewardship behaviors we wish to inspire.

Inland Seas has begun the process of unveiling naming opportunities and have already obtained pledges for six of the nine current spaces. The incredible outpouring of support we have enjoyed is what has allowed us to accelerate our plans and begin the project a full year ahead of schedule. **Be on the lookout for many exciting changes to our campus next summer.** If you would like to know more about the remaining naming opportunities or be a part of leading this exciting initiative, please contact me at 231.271.3077 or fsitkins@schoolship.org. Additional naming opportunities will be announced soon.

Vessels Piece

Our flagship, the schooner *Inland Seas*, is in great shape. She was hauled out of the water last winter and received minor underwater repairs/updates and a new coat of paint. Captain Ben and our incredible volunteer force has replaced most of the cabin tops over the last few years and have now embarked on replacing the flooring in our cabin spaces down below. She will stay in the water this winter at Discovery Pier in Traverse City. This year's big task will be to pull the lower masts out for a thorough inspection and a little retrofitting. You may be surprised to know that the lower portion of her masts are aluminum which means they don't have the same types of maintenance needs as a more "traditional" vessel.



Our newest schooner, *Utopia*, will have a busy off-season as well. *Utopia* will be hauled out of the water this year. We plan on making a few bottom repairs and will likely take part in a thorough inspection from the Coast Guard in preparation for an eventual license to carry passengers. ISEA is a finalist in the Impact 100 TC grant which, if awarded, would provide the financial resources needed to complete the work necessary to acquire the same licensing as the schooner *Inland Seas* has. If awarded, it will be an extremely busy year ahead for *Utopia*.

Thank you for your support!

Here are just some of the students you impact with the important message of protecting the Great Lakes.



The Team Piece

While Inland Seas has been growing at a very rapid pace, we have been giving a good deal of thought to our staffing needs. We have immediate needs to simply manage the number of projects we have going, and some more significant long-term needs as we focus on the larger Great Lakes region. Along with hiring additional office and shipboard education support, Inland Seas is reconfiguring some of our current professional positions and will be expanding our internship opportunities. If you haven't been by our office lately, you may be surprised at what a bustling place it has become.

You, also, are an important part of our team. You provide the resources that allow us to expand and reach so many individuals. Whether your role is financial giving, volunteer work, ISEA PR, or Great Lakes stewardship, you encourage us to keep on protecting the Great Lakes through education. These supporting roles allow those sailing the ship to focus on the journey and what lies ahead. Thank you for being part of our team.



Jillian Votava
2017 Summer Intern

Discovery Center and Pier Expansion Piece

While focusing on our campus in Suttons Bay is a critical foundational step, achieving a larger Great Lakes impact requires organizational expansion. Inland Seas is thrilled to be playing a role in the incredible things happening at Discovery Pier in Traverse City. The support of Rotary Charities of Traverse City, a wonderful new ship, and a perfect location all provide perfect opportunities for impactful organizational expansion.

Programs Piece

Our preliminary total program participation number for 2017 is 4,695! This includes participants from:

- 126 Schoolship and/or ROV programs (86 Spring and 40 Fall Schoolship programs)
- 5 Young People in STEM programs (2 young men and 3 young women trips)
- 41 public sails
- 31 charters

The total number also includes a Chicago Yacht Club Young Women in STEM trip and the Great Lakes Watershed Field Course professional development. The number does not include GTSI participants or all the 21st Century Community Learning Center programs. All programs and total participants will be in the 2017 annual report.



Programs that are expanding our reach:

- Twenty-nine teachers from Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana participated in the Great Lakes Watershed Field Course and will be directing meaningful watershed education experiences with their students around the Great Lakes.
- *Utopia's* ROV program in Bay Harbor was the first of many ROV programs that will be delivered around the Great Lakes.
- This was the second year the Chicago Yacht Club has booked a Young Women in STEM charter for their area youth.
- Jillian, our summer intern, came to us from Wisconsin. We will continue to seek interns from around the Great Lakes who bring a variety of skills and experiences.
- Our marketing efforts brought many summer public sail participants from Indiana and Ohio this year. We will continue to use the internet to reach more people through digital advertising and active social media (please join us in this endeavor).
- As we expand our Beyond Schoolship programs (e.g., ROV, bike the TART, Leo Creek Preserve, etc.) to offer a full-day Great Lakes experience, we are hopeful that schools outside northwest Michigan will begin to come more often. The addition of dorm space will give them an affordable lodging option.

We will continue to explore and develop programs that reach a greater audience around the Great Lakes.



Inland Seas

EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

100 Dame Street, PO Box 218

Suttons Bay, MI 49682

Inspiring Great Lakes Curiosity, Stewardship, and Passion

Inland Seas Education Association Executive Director's Newsletter



Ways to connect with us:



231.271.3077



isea@schoolship.org



[facebook.com/
iseaschoolship](https://facebook.com/iseaschoolship)

What's Inside:

It's All Coming Together

- The pieces to a larger Great Lakes focus
- Campus renovation update
- 2017 preliminary programs summary
- Unique ways to support Inland Seas

Subscribe to our monthly digital newsletter at schoolship.org. Scroll to the bottom of the home page and click on the Subscribe button.