



# Inland Seas Education Association Executive Director's Newsletter

October/November 2019

## Reaching a larger number of individuals, from greater distances, in more impactful ways



It's that time of year again when we send the monthly Executive Director's newsletter in print form. We typically utilize this published newsletter to share some of the bigger items on the horizon for Inland Seas. This year is no different, but in order to fully explain what is on the horizon, a little time should be spent on the groundwork that has been laid.

By now you probably know that Inland Seas recently completed a significant campus renovation. What might not be as easily recognized is all that coincided with the completion of this project. While I was focused on the building project and Inland Seas' sustainability for the next 30-years, our staff was busy developing marketing and recruitment strategies and organizational systems and procedures to ensure we were ready to take full advantage of this beautiful campus when it was completed. What a job they did!

Our occupancy in the dorm space this summer and fall far exceeded our expectations. Most groups we've hosted chose to stay more than one night. The campus and existing programming are helping ISEA accomplish our goals of reaching more people, influencing distant audiences, and having a deeper impact. In fact, Inland Seas will end this sailing season with over 8,000 participants, double our average of 4,000 participants per year.

As we look to the future, I feel it's important for us to transition from celebrating what has been built to focusing on the utilization of our resources in the most effective and impactful way possible. To that end, we will focus our attention on streamlining many of the organization's systems and processes to ensure that we can call 8,000 participants per year our new normal. I hope the work we focus on throughout this next year will allow us to not only deliver record numbers in the future, but more importantly, do so through the most impactful and meaningful programming possible.

All that we have accomplished this year and all that we are poised to accomplish in our next 30 years is possible because of your support. I hope you are as excited as we are about the future of ISEA.

~Fred Sitkins, Executive Director



### Ways to support ISEA as we grow our reach and offer impactful programs:

- Donate online at [bit.ly/2019Newsltr](http://bit.ly/2019Newsltr)
- Mail a check to ISEA, PO Box 218, Suttons Bay, MI 49682
- Complete matching gift paperwork from your employer or civic organization
- Purchase a dessert at FireFly in Traverse City (\$1 goes to ISEA)
- Shop at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) for all your Amazon purchases
- Purchase Mackinaw Breeze Tea from Great Lakes Tea and Spice
- Donate your boat or nautical items for our Flea Market and Boat Sales

The ISEA Executive Director's Newsletter is published monthly in digital format December-September and delivered through email (sign up at [schoolship.org](http://schoolship.org)). This printed mailing captures some of the biggest items on the horizon for ISEA.

## 2019 By the Numbers

We have travelled the Great Lakes this year which allowed us to reach over 8,000\* individuals with our message! Will this number be our new normal?

\*These are preliminary numbers; actual numbers will be reported in the Annual Report.



### Schoolship Programs

118 programs\*

2,867 participants\*

Traditional Schoolship, Next Gen Seamanship, Next Gen Microplastics, and Diving Deeper Programs

\*includes programs scheduled but not delivered at time of printing



### ROV Engineer and Explore Programs

33 programs\*

805 participants\*

Programs occurring at Discovery Pier and other Great Lakes ports.

\*includes programs scheduled but not delivered at time of printing



### Dorms

20 nights\*

129 participants\*

Since opening in June, most groups stayed more than one night, with one group staying five!

\*includes groups scheduled but not attended yet at time of printing



### Public Sails

24 sails\*

624 participants\*

Due to our Great Lakes travels, we had fewer sails, but our average participants remained around 25.

\*includes Fall Color Sails occurring after time of printing



### Charters

56 Charters\*

1,026 Participants\*

Plus 1,018 Tall Ship Festival Participants

\*includes charters scheduled but not delivered at time of printing



### Dockside Tours

We shared our mission with **thousands**\* of people on the schooner *Utopia* this year. These dockside tours occurred at the Harbor Springs Blessing of the Fleet, the Green Bay Tall Ship Festival, and the Duluth Tall Ship Festival.

\*waiting for final numbers from festival organizers

## On the Horizon

2019-2021

As we focus on making a deeper impact on a larger number of people, we look to our strategic priorities. Now through 2021, we will be intentional about these initiatives:

- Research, develop, and test a wide range of programs to meet a diverse audience that will lead to an increase in program demand
- Capitalize on our revenue streams
- Develop partnerships/relationships with colleges/universities, Great Lakes agencies, and researchers
- Streamline systems and processes to be more efficient in what we do
- Define data purpose, practices, and processes

Some things you will notice as we work on these initiatives:

- An updated education center that focuses on the Great Lakes food web
- New staff beginning with a Fund Development Coordinator
- Module programming to better serve participants and volunteers
- Increased demand for the dorms and the schooner *Utopia*



### 2020 Schedule-in-the-Making

- 72 Schoolship programs booked
- Five ROV Engineer and Explore programs booked
- 11 nights booked in the dorms
- Programs in Hessel will continue
- Working with 2019 partners, DTE Energy Foundation and the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, to bring our programs to Detroit again
- Loyal groups rebooking charters

And the 2019 season is just ending!

## Impact Beyond Our Numbers

Dave Murduck's passion for engaging students in environmental education is inspiring. From raising trout in his 8th grade classroom to developing a stormwater basin, he provides his students with opportunities to be real scientists solving real problems.

Coming from Champion Middle School in Ohio, Dave participated in ISEA's Great Lakes Watershed Field Course (GLWFC) in 2017. He and 27 other teachers were engrossed in place-based stewardship education for four days. They toured successful conservation projects, conversed with experts in environmental fields, and acquired tools for planning and implementing student stewardship action projects in their home communities. "Everything I learned in 2017 I've been able to apply back at school," stated Dave, referring to the stewardship-action mindset, getting grants for stewardship action projects, and collaborating with organizations outside of school.



PC: Dave Murduck



PC: Dave Murduck

Dave heard about ISEA's GLWFC from the staff of the R/V *Lake Guardian*, a US EPA research vessel. In 2014, while on that ship, he and other teachers learned the scientific process from real scientists doing actual research. He was pretty excited to see much of the same research being done on the schooner *Inland Seas*. "I learned more about teaching [science] through these programs than I did from formal education." In 2019, Dave returned to ISEA as a teacher-mentor for the GLWFC to share his experience in place-based stewardship education. His advice to teachers who want to begin, "start small and do a little at a time."

Teachers who participate in the GLWFC have the opportunity to take their students on an ISEA Schoolship experience. "The self-confidence the students displayed when sharing the science with each other was my favorite part of the Next Gen program," Dave reminisced. Back at school, his students are raising trout, have created a stormwater basin surrounded by 3,000 native plants and seeds, erected nest boxes for birds, helped build a pavilion and handicap access trail, and worked with Cuyahoga Valley National Park staff to cut invasive species privet along the Cuyahoga River. With support from various grants, he has been able to purchase water monitoring equipment, digital stereoscopes, and a class set of stereoscopes for all K-12 classes to use in the pavilion. In 2019, he brought 57 students to northern Michigan for a 4-day, 3-night trip. "This was the most difficult organizational responsibility I have ever undertaken, but was also the most rewarding," he shared.



PC: Dave Murduck

Dave received the 2017 Ohio Environmental Council Award, the 2019 North America Association of Environmental Educators K-12 Teacher Award, and is a finalist for the 2020 Ohio State Teacher of the Year. "I can attribute my current success to my experiences on both the *Lake Guardian* and the *Inland Seas*." Even though we cannot count the number of students impacted by the GLWFC, ISEA is honored to inspire teachers like Dave to teach students, year-after-year, about stewarding the Great Lakes.

Juliana Lisuk, ISEA Volunteer Coordinator, nominated Catherine "Cat" Harris for a Michigan Alliance for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE) Appreciation Award for her work as an educator at Belle Isle Aquarium. She won and sent this thank you after attending the MAEOE Conference to receive her award.

***"I met so many great people through this event. I made so many great connections. I talked up Inland Seas and your program every chance I got, not because of politeness but because I cannot shut up about that last week in June [theGLWFC]. I am so grateful and appreciative of the experience that I would have never known about if it wasn't for you and your acknowledgement."***

Educators like Dave and Cat impact hundreds of youth every year and we appreciate their hard work. Inland Seas Education Association is committed to extending our stewardship reach through educators. The Grand Traverse Stewardship Initiative along with programs like the Great Lakes Watershed Field Course guide and support teachers as they implement place-based stewardship education practices.



# Inland Seas

EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

100 Dame Street #218  
Suttons Bay, MI 49682

Inspiring Great Lakes Curiosity, Stewardship, and Passion

## Inland Seas Education Association Executive Director's Newsletter

### What's Inside:

#### Did you know?

- ISEA completed a \$1.5 million renovation project in 2019
- Over 8,000 people were impacted by ISEA programs this year
- Our impact goes beyond our reported numbers
- 2019 expanded our larger Great Lakes reach
- There are many ways you can support Inland Seas

### Ways to connect with us:



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