



Inland Seas Education Association Executive Director's Newsletter

October/November 2023



The ISEA of Tomorrow

When ISEA looks back on the year 2023, I'm confident it will mark a key defining moment in the storied history of this amazing organization. We are in the midst of an organizational transformation made possible by 34 years of steady growth, expansion, and partnership-building. In many respects, Tom Kelly and the volunteers, partners, and financial supporters who worked alongside him, created an extremely strong foundation for us to build upon today.

We are using this position of strength and the continued generosity of you, our supporters, to take our programs, ships, and waterfront campus to heights never before imagined.

Alliance is certainly an important component of this organizational transformation, but in reality, it's only a small part of the story. The addition of *Alliance* takes place simultaneously with an expansion of offering our programs year-round, as our programmatic reach routinely extends across the Great Lakes region, and as our amazing waterfront campus continues to grow and develop. Together we are accomplishing a great deal and as a result, our status as a key leader in experiential Great Lakes education is strengthened each year.

Just as Tom Kelly and those who originally supported his vision could never have imagined all that the 34-year-old ISEA would accomplish, it is difficult to imagine how the transformation we are in the midst of today will impact ISEA 30 years from now. However, one thing is certain, none of this would be possible without your time, talents, and financial support. You have made ISEA what it is today and, with appreciation and admiration, I'm excited about building the ISEA of tomorrow with you.

~ Fred Sitkins, Executive Director



ISEA Interns in Detroit on *Inland Seas*



2023 Watershed Exploration Program



ISEA Online Store Open Through October 31st

Check out our fall store and order some cold weather gear before the winter sets in. Items include t-shirts, sweatshirts, and hats that make great gifts! Our newest item is an old school varsity style design perfect for everyone. The store is open now through October 31st and items will be delivered by Christmas.

Shop the ISEA store at: [schoolship.org /isea-online-store](https://schoolship.org/isea-online-store)

The ISEA Executive Director's Newsletter is published monthly in digital format December-September and delivered through email (Sign up at schoolship.org). This printed mailing is published each fall to update a broader ISEA audience.

ISEA On Distant Shores



Building upon the achievements of the 2022 season, ISEA embarked on a continuation of our partnerships in Detroit, undertaking two different trips: a two-week stay in August, followed by a one-week trip in September.

Additionally, in July, ISEA built upon a significant partnership with the Chicago Yacht Club Foundation. During the transits for both the Chicago and Detroit trips, ISEA demonstrated our commitment to nurturing maritime expertise among students by facilitating training for participants to acquire micro-credentials in ship safety and mariner skills level 1. These credentials, endorsed by Tall Ships America, can serve as a foundation for any students aspiring to pursue a career within the maritime industry. Simultaneously, these young learners were afforded the opportunity to engage in scientific explorations, conducting activities such as fish trawling, plankton sampling, and microplastics analysis, thereby enriching their maritime education. While in Detroit, ISEA and the Detroit River Story Lab welcomed more than 650 students. The programming in Detroit was designed to immerse participants in the cultural, historical, and environmental significance of the Detroit River region. Meanwhile, in Chicago, ISEA's dedicated staff and guest instructors provided 248 students with an insightful ecological perspective of the area, shedding light on the pressing environmental challenges facing the Great Lakes.

Meet Liam

Liam Fries joined the Inland Seas team in response to the growth that we have been experiencing. Liam's role is Great Lakes Educator and he spends much of his time leading programs on ship and shore. He is a graduate of Kalamazoo College and previously worked with Grass River Natural Area. His contagious personality will engage you in a quick owl fact or in a long conversation about the Great Lakes and our local watersheds. Liam fits in perfectly with the ISEA team and we are fortunate to have him, and his enthusiasm, with us.



Alliance Winter Renovations

During the winter of 2023/24 the ISEA staff and crew along with local shipwrights will be working to renovate the main cabin space of the schooner *Alliance*. Once complete, this space will more closely resemble the open concept style of Schooner *Inland Seas*. The renovated space will have capacity to sleep up to 16 students with two additional bunks for group leaders. Stay tuned for updates on renovations throughout this winter!



2023 by The Numbers

2023 has been truly remarkable! On top of the usual full schedule of spring and fall Schoolship, ROV, and Watershed Exploration programs, we also managed the delivery of schooner *Alliance*. This included, a 34-day 3,000 mile journey, and immediately starting into service. Through it all the crew, staff, and volunteers delivered a high level of programming while managing the complexities of a new vessel.

This season we welcomed 5,520* participants to our campus and on board our ships to start their journey towards Great Lakes stewardship. From this group, 2,572* participated in either a spring or fall Schoolship program. Another 439 participated in our ROV Engineer and Explore Program. Inland Seas continues to expand our Watershed Exploration programs that connect our actions on land to the Great Lakes. With 385 participants engaged in these programs in 2023. Additionally Inland Seas conducted a four-day Day Camp for the first time, hosting five students from Suttons Bay. During our single-day charter programs, we had 1,359 people aboard the schooner *Inland Seas* and schooner *Alliance*. Throughout the sailing season, 709 people joined us to enjoy the beauty of Grand Traverse Bay on our public sails. In August, we welcomed a cohort of 19 teachers to participate in our Great Lakes Watershed Field Course (GLWFC). This course puts watershed education into action with practical teaching methods through a multi-day program. Lastly, 33 individuals participated in overnight sailing programs.

*Up to date numbers as of print date

Schoolship Blog

Have you read the latest ISEA Schoolship Blog (schoolship.org/schoolship-blog)? Staff, interns, volunteers, donors, and guest bloggers share their experiences and insights from around the Great Lakes. Read this excerpt from our latest blog written by 2023 ISEA Summer Intern Meghan Wysocki.

“After a month and a half of getting paid to scoop up mud with kids, I found comfort in the non-routine routines of day sails. Different kids every day meant learning to be adaptable in the face of all types of weather, group dynamics, and learning styles. I loved the challenge, taking bits and pieces of my best experiences and molding them into a teaching style. Above all, I realized how much I valued sharing conversations with the students about the material. I found particular gratification in learning their names at the beginning of each rotation and fostering those brief but vibrant connections with them.”

-Meghan Wysocki, *Learning the ropes (or shall I say lines)*



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What's Inside: The ISEA of Tomorrow

- Letter from the Executive Director
- ISEA Online Store is Open Through Oct. 31st
- ISEA On Distant Shores
- 2023 by the Numbers
- *Alliance Renovations*



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