



Lubec Community Outreach Center *“Working together for each other.”*

Project Goal

The goals of the Lubec Community Outreach Center are to identify, develop and implement effective, sustainable programs that are responsive to the strengths, needs and desires of local families and their community.

Brief Description

The Lubec Community Outreach Center (LCOC), a non-profit founded in 2012, serves the community of Lubec, Maine and the surrounding area. Lubec, with a population of 1359, is the easternmost town in Maine. Since the beginning, LCOC works to enrich the community where residents live, learn, work and play. LCOC carries out its work through collaboration with local governments, schools, businesses, civic organizations, volunteers and non-profit institutions across Washington County and beyond.

Originally, in 2011, the core group that was to become LCOC revived two Lubec youth programs that had been closed for several years under another service provider: the Summer Recreation Program and After School Program. Bringing these programs “back to life” created a foundation for LCOC to build on. Both programs provide a wide array of enriching and educational activities. And growing the original programs helped build support for LCOC. In 2014 enrollment in the "Summer Rec" had grown from 56 children to 78.

In the summer of 2014, LCOC initiated two new programs, TEAMWork and GetGrowing. These programs are focused on increasing accessibility to healthy food, with an emphasis on local food production. In addition, the programs offer opportunities for youth skill development and employment. With the support of community volunteer gardeners, preteens and teens learn food gardening skills, including some food preparation and nutrition education. To help enable these programs to serve the community on a year-round basis, program-related activities are being incorporated into school curriculum.



LCOC also manages a school food pantry, called the "Hornet's Hearth." The pantry offers food on the weekend for families with children in the Lubec School, grades Pre-K through 8. Other LCOC programs include an annual holiday celebration and dinner for Seniors and Veterans, put on with broad community support.

Largely grant funded, LCOC has received funding through Maine Community Foundation, Agnes M. Lindsay Trust, USDA Summer Meals, Good Shepherd Food Bank, Healthy Acadia, C.F. Adams Charitable Trust, Elmina B. Sewall Foundation, and program grants from the John T. Gorman Foundation, Machias Savings Bank Community Development Grant, and the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation. Other funding comes from community donations from the Town of Lubec, Bar Harbor Bank & Trust, The Bank of Maine, and many individuals.

Lessons to Share

Initially, eager to get going with programming, LCOC learned that it would take time for the community to understand what the organization was about and what it was trying to do. Fear was a common attitude in the beginning – fear of the unknown and what it might cost taxpayers. Developing relationships and building trust were essential steps in the early days, and continue to be important to the organization’s work. In addition to purposeful meetings, it is the one-on-one conversations/meetings, often spontaneously during daily life in the community (e.g. grocery store), that have been pivotal for trust building.

Community involvement has been integral to LCOC’s work. Connecting with people and groups in the community, involving people in LCOC’s work, helps the organization demonstrate that LCOC is doing work the community wants them to do. In the beginning, only a few community members were involved helping the one full-time staff person and 2 part-time staff. In the third year, over 80 volunteers have put in more than 650 hours.

Flexibility and a willingness to adapt plans and programs has helped the organization be responsive to community interests and needs, ensuring that desired services are reaching the population. A lot of program changes have been made over time, to better serve the community. An openness to change means the organization is trying its best to be guided by what the community wants.

Although generational poverty is a challenge in the region, LCOC charges a fee for all programs to help communicate the value of its work. That said, recognizing the reality of many family situations, there is a sliding fee scale to make the programs affordable to all. And the organization has sought grant funds to provide scholarships for families that can’t pay the fees. Because LCOC is trying to help break the cycle of poverty in many cases, making sure their programs are available to all is important.

Collaboration with ALL other organizations has been a strategy for helping dollars go further. LCOC can provide more for less by working with other organizations, and the same is true for other organizations.

Similarly, reaching out to EVERYONE in the community for financial support has been a lesson learned. Initial fundraising efforts focused on the influx of the summer population – people coming to the area for “summer in Maine.” The summer population brings a lot of talent to the area; these people volunteer and get involved by sharing their talents with LCOC programs. Their involvement, volunteer-wise and financially, has helped LCOC tremendously. At the same time, LCOC has broadened their fundraising to include the whole community, with a desire to make EVERYONE feel a part of LCOC. Support now comes in all sizes/amounts, and more importantly, more people feel connected to LCOC and the community.

For More Information

Website:

<https://www.lubecoutreach.org>

Mailing Address:

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The Community Served: Lubec, Maine Role in the region: Summer tourism, arts, retirees

Total Population	1359 (2010 Census)		
Median Age	54		
	2000	2010	Difference
Total Households	755	682	
Family Households	427	356	
Nonfamily Households		326	
	1999 Median Household Income	2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates	Difference
Median Household Income	\$20,565	\$31,111	