



Brian Dyer Stewart's March 18 concert at H.D. Moore Library in Steuben was a hit with 40 or 50 people in attendance. Johanna S. Billings photo.

March Concert Attracts Crowd

By Johanna S. Billings
 Musician Brian Dyer Stewart played to a full house March 18 at the H.D. Moore Library and Community Center.

The concert was the third in the library's winter concert and art series. During the concert, Shelly Shapiro showed her pottery creations. About 40 or 50 people attended.

For nearly two hours, Stewart played guitar and keyboard to accompany his singing original songs about everyday life.

"What a treat to see you all here," he said before beginning his first solo performance. He has been performing locally for 35 years with a variety of musical groups including Solstice, Joyful Noise, the Jazz Collective, Cole Creek and in a songwriting duo with poet Leonore Hildebrandt.

Many of the songs were humorous. "Holding on for Dear Life" tells the story of being on a wild amusement park ride. "Kim Chi" has set to words and music a basic recipe for the traditional Korean side dish made of fermented vegetables.

Some songs, such as "With You" were more serious. This song talks about married life with a combination of seriousness and humor. "Heart in the Sky" is about Maine, which Stewart described as "the wonderful place we live." The song "Person of Means" was also a serious social commentary.

The library's final winter concert will take place 2 pm April 29 and will feature the show choir and chorus from RSU 24. For more information on the concerts, call the library at 207-546-7301 or visit moorelibrary.org.

AmeriCorps Serves in Milbridge and Cherryfield

By Rebecca Haydu

While many area residents are familiar with the work of the Maine Seacoast Mission and Mano en Mano, few are aware of how AmeriCorps VISTA helps these organizations provide their many services. AmeriCorps, a federally funded organization with the mission of alleviating poverty, provides volunteers to local organizations to support community programs. Both the Seacoast Mission and Mano en Mano have benefitted from the work of AmeriCorps volunteers. VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is just one part of the AmeriCorps program, with other volunteers serving in the areas of disaster relief and conservation.



Nancy Neu organizes boxes of food for the school backpack program at the Maine Seacoast Mission's food pantry in Cherryfield. Rebecca Haydu photo.

Nancy Neu, an AmeriCorps VISTA member, is focusing her work on growing the Maine Seacoast Mission's food access programs. Currently, she is spearheading a project to open a new food pantry at Cherryfield Elementary School. Set to open this May, the new pantry's structure helps overcome the stigma often associated with receiving food assistance. In partnership with the Good Shepherd Food Pantry of Auburn, the school pantry will function as a free drop-in grocery store open to the entire school community. Students, parents and teachers can grab a snack during the day or take groceries home as they please – no paperwork required and no questions asked.

During the school year, Neu coordinates a free backpack program which distributes backpacks filled with groceries each week to eligible students in local schools. In the summer, she manages the summer meals program at the EdGE center, which offers free meals to anyone under 18. These projects allow her to work in the community, where she can form relationships with local families and other organizations. "I really enjoy it," Neu said with a smile. "I'm hoping to do another year [of service] after this."

At Mano en Mano in Milbridge, VISTA member Leslie Monroy works with farmworkers and immigrants. Monroy is a part of the Maine Migrant Education Program (MEP),

which aims to reduce learning loss that occurs when families travel to work in different harvests.

Monroy works with families, schools and other organizations across Washington County to share information about the program and enroll eligible students. Once their application is approved by the Maine Department of Education, students in the MEP can participate in free educational activities for up to three years. Mano en Mano's other programming includes facilitating a community advocacy group and connecting community members with essential social services in the area.

VISTA was founded in 1965 by former President John F. Kennedy as part of what he called the War on Poverty. It was originally conceived as a domestic counterpart to the Peace

Corps, a program in which volunteers live abroad and work on projects related to social and economic development. Now VISTA is one of several programs administered under AmeriCorps, an organization founded in 1993 by former President Clinton. Volunteers serve 12-month terms in which they provide capacity-building support to community organizations across the country. Since its founding, more than 220,000 volunteers have served in the VISTA program.

For more information about VISTA or other AmeriCorps programs, visit nationalservice.gov.

Rebecca Haydu is a VISTA volunteer working at Mano en Mano in the areas of communications and development, including fundraising, marketing, and volunteerism.

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