

# Discovery



## Summer 2021

This summer was one we won't soon forget. I think we said the same thing just one year ago.... Though COVID-19 still consumed our lives, we were able to experience a more normal summer at Ferry Beach in 2021. The vaccine helped make that happen!

We are extremely grateful to everyone who came to Ferry Beach this summer. You exceeded our expectations and because of you we are in a much more comfortable place than we were just last year. Thank you so much.

So many people visiting Ferry Beach volunteered to help while they were here. We are so thankful to you for pitching in to fill the holes we couldn't. Our greatest challenge going into the summer season was not being able to guarantee we could financially support the size staff team we normally do. The staffing crisis across the nation also made it very challenging for us to hire crew in our local area in addition to not having access to J1 student staff – but our conference communities stepped up in ways we have never seen before!

We also had a dedicated group of volunteers from our board and our community who came in every day to help out in the kitchen and around campus with daily tasks that couldn't be done by our crew. Washing dishes, serving food, monitoring lines, cleaning tables, setting up rooms and running the sound booth!

The Ferry Beach community came together in ways no one could have imagined in 2021! We cannot begin to express how grateful we are to each person who helped make this summer a success. Thank you all so much!

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## AND MORE!



## 2022 Registration Open

Registration for our summer programs is open. If you are thinking of coming to Ferry Beach next summer, we encourage you to make your deposits now! See our summer schedule at [ferrybeach.org/schedule](https://ferrybeach.org/schedule) and sign up by calling **207-282-4489x1**.



## **“Board”walk** *by Meghan Chan, first-term board member*

I love the four seasons of New England. As the mom of 2 young kids, my “new year” kicks off in fall with back to school shopping, scheduling activities, and the cool evenings with waning humidity. Inevitably it all turns to winter before we have a chance to finish enjoying the changing leaves. After Easter, we start to look at summer. Reflecting back on the 40 years I have spent vacationing at Ferry Beach, I always have a moment in June when I realize that my time back at this sanctuary is approaching. My mind turns to the beach and sun, my life-long friends, and picturing that break from everyday reality. This year broke that cycle completely. After being part of the Nominating Committee for several years, I joined the Board of Directors in 2020.

As an organization, we have shared a lot about the year and its challenges, and I hope that this Boardwalk shares a glimpse into the summer of 2021 and what made it a special year filled with so many of the values we espouse.

As Ferry Beach entered summer of 2021 having reduced rates and made adaptations to food service, cleaning intensity, and with a significantly reduced staff, the goal was to ramp up on-site programming safely. Many Ferry Beachers had rolled their 2020 reservations over to 2021 in hopes of returning to a “normal” summer. People made their plans and as the summer picked up, the Canadian border didn’t reopen and many folks decided to stay home which resulted in a tremendous load on the registration office.

As a person with a hospitality and systems’ operations background, I saw an opportunity to jump in and help with registration and look for opportunities to streamline some of the technology processes. I headed to the Beach to celebrate my 45th birthday on the summer solstice. I wanted to offer my time and expertise to make things better for Ferry Beach, and (I realize how corny this sounds) instead I was being given the gift of seeing all the small things make the Beach run and be part of that structure. I was being given the chance to “be the love.”

As conferees, many of us pay our bill, head to campus, and enjoy our time on the beach and porches. Some lead workshops or have coordinated conferences and been more integrated with the programs and staff. As part of Family & Friends, I participated in these roles, but this summer’s experience was different. I was lucky enough to be present for youth camp, RE Week, GAYLA and ChoralFest.

So what’s it like behind the scenes in registration? Every day, the phone rings and the email box fills up. There are the familiar voices who want to know how the year is going - are people coming back? Are the weeks filling up? Conference leaders want to hear about their specific group, get head counts, and know if there will be lobster.... the person who heard about the chance to camp so close to the ocean but has never visited. *(Continued on Page 3)*

## **Sustaining Donations**

Because of the financial crisis caused by the pandemic and the devastating loss of income in during 2020, Ferry Beach has asked our donors to pitch in and contribute what they could to keep our lights on and doors open.

The community shined by coming together and increasing their donations in record amounts. One-time donations went up, but our sustaining donations are at the core of our giving at Ferry Beach. This group of people makes sure that Ferry Beach will remain open and be able to welcome guests each year by ensuring all of our fixed expenses are covered. Our bills which include utilities, mortgages, insurance, and accounting cost us around \$11,000 per month. This figure does NOT include staff salaries or benefits.

Our goal is to raise our monthly sustaining donor income to \$11,000 to cover bills so our revenue can be applied to capital improvement projects that will truly make Ferry Beach a world class destination. We hope to someday be able to welcome new guests all year long to this beautiful place by the sea.

To become a sustaining donor, visit [ferrybeach.org/sustaining](https://ferrybeach.org/sustaining) or call the office at **207-282-4489**

(Continued from Page 2) Or the “ghosts from Christmas past” who came to Ferry Beach long ago and want to come back. Maybe their grandmother was the nurse for a summer or they were on crew but they are calling with a bit of longing in their voice, searching for a connection to their memories. In any other year, I would be one of those callers, but this summer I picked up the phone and helped get people answers, fielded issues to the right staff members, and learned to fix some things myself! These aren’t questions you can send to a call center - every request was different and heartfelt. **Community...**

Then it was time for the youth camp to come to campus. The year before, because so many young spirits had to put their hopes on hold because of COVID, they were anxious to return. In preparation, the camp leadership was trying to get enough people to help make that happen. I saw the work that went into helping the young Ferry Beachers, our future leaders, have a rewarding experience while balancing the area becoming a hotspot for Covid again. It felt a little scary, to be honest. But the camp leadership rallied and jumped in to keep the campus safe. Tough conversations, real feelings, and so much heart went into every decision. **Truth....**

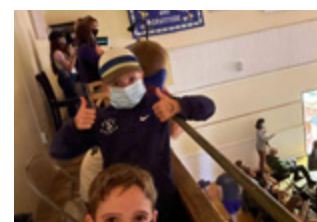
RE Week christened the campus as the first summer conference. With a skeleton staff, the head of housekeeping, Donna Burnham, was balancing making sure rooms had a buffer to be sanitized between visitors. Jason Gregoire, the Director of Food and Beverage was balancing supply chain issues where items became unavailable without warning and would run to Hannaford to fill in the holes. Brian Johnson, the Marketing Coordinator, ensured the coordinators setup and technology needs would be met, daily schedules were updated on the app and screens, tidings and chapel programs were online and that the Beach was communicating the COVID policies accurately. And Cathy Stackpole, the Executive Director, was the catcher in the rye. She fielded all the nervous questions, called people personally, and kept things moving forward. In addition to these four full timers, there were a number of seasonal staff members and new people who joined and made things happen. And they did all of this together as a team despite the challenges. **Respect and Acceptance...**

When GAYLA and ChoralFest came to campus, the staff found its rhythm, but also stumbled on the pitfalls that were left from the rocky previous year. With the insight gained from RE Week, Ron Willett wrote a letter to his GAYLA brothers and reminded them that Ferry Beach was operating without enough resources and to find their own ways to help. And they did. Brothers of all ages helped clean rooms, swept walks, and moved linens. **Stewardship...**

I wrapped up a lot of my behind the scenes work during Family & Friends, which was the biggest group to be on campus over the summer. We knew that our size was stretching the system, and inherently we had a lot of diverse needs. Like GAYLA, we asked the community to accept that Ferry Beach this summer was going to be a little different and to step in where they could. Groups of 3-5 people helped clean dishes every meal and serve from the buffet, refill water jugs, and wipe down bathrooms. **Compassion and Worth...**

In the past, Ferry Beach’s pulse was in tune with New England’s seasons. It quickened as the flowers bloomed and burst through summer only to soften into a bit more of a quiet space in fall and winter. As fall settles over Saco, know that Ferry Beach is open with its quiet, constant pulse. The staff who pushed through this crazy year are making sure we are ready to go next summer and offering up new experiences through the non-summer months. Call up the office and hear that friendly voice or come visit for a long weekend when the leaves are peaking. It takes all of us to make this place successful and I am forever grateful that I had the opportunity to be such a big part of this year.

With a grateful heart,  
Meghan Chan, Lifelong Ferry Beacher and Board Member.





## Welcome to our New Staff

Our year-round staff team has changed some over the last few months. This spring we welcomed Dave Daigle as our new full-time Maintenance Coordinator. Dave jumped right in and hasn't stopped moving since he got here. If you came to Ferry Beach this year you probably met Dave or at least saw him all over campus keeping this place running and making sure everything is in working order!

A few weeks before the summer season began, we welcomed our new chef, Jason Gregoire. Jason only has a few weeks to prepare his menus and plan for summer food service. Jason has done an amazing job in the kitchen this summer and has provided our visitors, staff and volunteers with excellent meals all summer long!

We hired our new Registration Coordinator, Maryella Blundo, who had to jump in feet first amidst one of our craziest summers. We have never had a registration staff have to come into their role during a summer season, but Maryella welcomed the challenge and has handled everything exceedingly well!

Most recently we have hired Mary Ann Latter who will be working in the area of development and fundraising. Mary Ann is very knowledgeable in Salesforce, our CRM system, and will be helping us by streamlining our processes and taking on some development and administrative tasks that have been adopted by other year round staff members over the years.

We are thrilled to welcome the newest team members to the full-time staff team and look forward to working with them!



### Seeking Auction Donations!

We are seeking Donations for our online auction taking place on November 13th from 6:30-8:00! Do you have an idea for a donation or have something you would like to contribute? Email our planning committee at [auction@ferrybeach.org](mailto:auction@ferrybeach.org) or fill out the form located at [ferrybeach.org/auction](https://www.ferrybeach.org/auction). We need to have all items planned for by November 6th.

## Wi-Fi Challenges

We hear you. We understand our WiFi at Ferry Beach is less than reliable. Over the years, our staff has patched together a system with different WiFi networks across campus. Each building has its own network and subsequently its own internet account. That means we are paying for 8 commercial cable accounts and our guests have to inconveniently switch between networks while going through campus.

Our staff have tried to address our challenges over the years but with no one being an expert in IT networking, we have the patchy network that exists today. Slowly over the years we have made improvements and upgrades, but we understand that what's in place is not quite right. We are also frustrated! We don't want you to have challenges connecting to the internet when you visit. We also don't want to be spending so much on our cable bills.

Our location in a residential area also has some downsides. The cable infrastructure in this part of Saco is not up to commercial standards as it was built for a residential area a long time ago. Our bandwidth is maxed out!

This fall we are taking our first step at addressing the problem here at Ferry Beach. We have partnered with a local IT Networking company to begin a phased project in upgrading and streamlining our campus WiFi. This fall we will be installing an Omni Directional antenna on top of the DeWolfe Dining hall and placing receivers on each building. These receivers will connect to the systems that are already in place which will cut our cable accounts from 8 to 1 and save us over \$1000 / month. Additionally, it will create a single, uniform, network across campus. No more switching between networks at each building. Your device will remain connected to the same network and won't bounce between various ones it picks up.

We will also be installing a directional antenna that will transmit a concentrated signal from the dining hall to the chapel where a new outdoor access point will be installed to provide coverage in that area.

The new network will be able to be remotely managed and controlled so problems can be troubleshooted a lot quicker.

Even though many issues will be addressed during this phase we will still have some spotty coverage areas. Quillen and Underwood will likely need some additional work in the second phase as there are currently not enough access points to cover the sleeping spaces. Rowland was wired with ethernet in August and now has additional WiFi access points which covers the dorm rooms with fast internet. The campground is another trouble area that will likely need additional coverage, though earlier this spring we did install a wide range access point which did seem to help quite a bit! We will address these additional issues as we can but are looking forward to an overall much better experience online at Ferry Beach!

