Swimmers raise $110,000 to support LifeFlight in event’s sophomore year

Sixty open water swimmers braved the chilly Atlantic in August to swim the 3.1-mile channel from Lincolnville to Islesboro in the 2nd annual Islesboro Crossing for LifeFlight. Each swimmer had spent the weeks and months leading up to the event gathering pledges from friends and family to raise money for LifeFlight to purchase advanced medical equipment and aircraft. These dedicated athletes raised more than $110,000, quadrupling the amount from the event’s first year.

Some of the money raised will purchase mobile ultrasound technology for both of LifeFlight’s aircraft, with the remaining funds slated to go toward the campaign for a third helicopter. More information about the mobile ultrasound units can be found on page 4.

Every year, LifeFlight helps more and more critically ill and injured residents and visitors to Maine regardless of their ability to pay. Last year, the annual number...
Birch Harbor lobsterman lives to fish another day

On the coast of Maine, lobstering is a long-standing family tradition. Like loggers in the vast northern forests and potato farmers in Aroostook County, fishermen pass skills, secrets and local knowledge down to sons and daughters, preserving the tried and true practices. This tradition, along with other qualities like a strong work ethic, stewardship of nature and close-knit small towns, forms the unique tapestry of Maine.

One day this summer a thread of that tapestry was nearly lost. Birch Harbor native Roger Chipman, a multi-generational lobsterman and a lifelong volunteer firefighter, was in a motorcycle accident that nearly took his life. A motorcycle enthusiast in the past, he was just returning to riding and was headed back home from Ellsworth on his newly purchased bike. As he rounded a corner on a downhill, the bike malfunctioned, causing him to lose control. He hit the guardrail before flipping over it and tumbling 40 feet down a stump-strewn embankment.

A trained emergency rescue provider, Roger could see that he’d broken his leg, but what worried him more were the internal injuries he couldn’t see. When the driver behind him reached his side, Roger told him to call his wife. And then call LifeFlight.

Over the years, as a volunteer firefighter in rural Maine, Roger has seen many of his friends, family and neighbors seriously ill or injured. In some cases, the care they needed could only be found at a large medical center many miles away. LifeFlight’s helicopter and experienced crew are invaluable in those situations. Now, lying in a ditch nearly an hour away from the nearest trauma center, Roger feared that may be his fate as well.

Paramedics from County Ambulance were the first ones to respond to the 911 call. It took eight of them to carry Roger back up the long, steep embankment and into the back of the ambulance.

At the emergency department at Maine Coast Memorial Hospital in Ellsworth, physicians found Roger struggling to breathe. Both of his lungs had collapsed, his leg and ankle were broken, his hand was crushed, numerous ribs were broken and his spleen had ruptured. They placed a breathing tube and prepared him for a helicopter flight to Eastern Maine Medical Center in Bangor.

Just as the flight crew got ready to take him to the aircraft, Roger’s heart stopped. The crew and emergency room staff immediately began CPR and administered adrenaline to restart his heart. He also received blood infusions to maintain his circulation. During the short flight, the crew gave Roger additional rounds of adrenaline and blood to keep his circulatory system from collapsing. After suffering so many critical injuries, they weren’t hopeful that Roger would survive the night.

He underwent surgery the next day and, with a titanium rod in his femur, Roger spent nearly two weeks in the Intensive Care Unit. After several weeks of rehab, including a couple of discouraging setbacks, he was well on his way to a full recovery. Before summer was over, Roger was back on the water, hauling traps and teaching his grandson, Tyler (who’s also a junior firefighter), the finer points of being a lobsterman in the small town he’s called home for more than 60 years.

You can be part of LifeFlight’s lifesaving team, too. Visit www.lifeflightmaine.org and click on Support Our Mission to learn how.
Medical equipment purchased with donations makes a difference for patients

**Cardiac balloon pumps**
Several recent donations from Bangor Savings Bank, Chichester DuPont Foundation, Cianbro Charitable Foundation and the Ellsworth Rotary were combined to purchase a balloon pump for the Lewiston helicopter.

As medical technology becomes more advanced and complicated, providers need to be prepared to use that technology to better care for patients. A cardiac balloon pump allows the crew to care for patients with increasingly complex heart diseases, which are some of the most common reasons for transport.

**Video laryngoscopes**
When one Maine pre-teen suffered massive head injuries in a skiing accident, flight crew members were faced with the challenge of securing her airway. A tricky task in a stable environment, made more complicated by the youngster’s age and injuries. LifeFlight carries advanced airway tools including a video laryngoscope which help ensure crew members can provide the care our most critical patients need to survive.

These critical devices were purchased with a generous donation from Bagaduce Ambulance Service in Castine. When the organization closed its doors, LifeFlight was one of the beneficiaries of its liquidated assets.

**Compact ventilators**
With 36% of LifeFlight’s patients requiring a breathing tube, the ventilator on the other end of that tube is an absolutely essential piece of equipment. The newest ventilator models are small and light, making it easier and safer to transition patients from hospital vents, and allowing for more efficient movement to a waiting helicopter. They also have additional modes of ventilation, ensuring the flight crew can effectively treat patients that require advanced and non-invasive airway management.

A significant grant from The Bingham Trust, whose founder worked to bring up-to-date medical care to rural Maine, was used to purchase these innovative, compact and mobile ventilators for both aircraft.

**Mobile ultrasound**
Advances in this technology over the last decade have allowed ultrasound units to become smaller and more mobile, which is good news for critically injured patients. With this new equipment, the LifeFlight crew can more accurately assess and diagnose patients with internal bleeding or damaged lungs. Internal injuries from trauma are often hidden and nearly always time sensitive. Ultrasound helps providers find the injuries and treat them before it’s too late.

Funds raised at this summer’s golf tournament and Islesboro Crossing will be used to purchase this cutting edge mobile technology.

Maine’s ethos of doing of doing for each other is alive and well in the EMS community

Here at LifeFlight, we’re quick to recognize that we’re just one part of a much larger emergency medical system made up of dispatchers, first responders, fire departments, paramedics, nurses, physicians and specialists, to name a few. Because we answer calls for help anywhere in the state, we work closely with every fire department, ambulance service, dispatch center and hospital in Maine. We rely on each other to work efficiently and effectively within the system to provide the best care possible for every patient we treat.

More and more, we’re seeing local EMS supporting our statewide mission in a variety of creative ways. Over the last year, there have been several examples of this growing teamwork.

North Haven EMS spent last summer hosting a handful of fundraising events, culminating in a celebratory donor reception. By year’s end, the small island community had raised more than $300,000 to kick off LifeFlight’s third helicopter campaign.

In Steuben, the volunteer Fire Department sponsored a petition for LifeFlight to receive a donation from the town. Residents came out in support of the petition and a $1,000 donation was allocated.

The St. George Volunteer Firefighters and Ambulance Association partnered with the Monhegan Boat Line to host a community, end-of-summer lobster bake and fundraiser and then donated half of the proceeds (nearly $9,000!) to LifeFlight.

These compelling examples of support illustrate those distinctly Maine characteristics of helping our friends and neighbors and doing the right thing.
Last summer, the small, oceanside community of Port Clyde suffered a tragedy after an accident on the Monhegan Boat Line dock, the base of operations for the Monhegan Island ferry. A young boy was killed, and his mother and younger brother were seriously injured when a car lost control, sped onto the dock and ran into the family.

St. George Volunteer Ambulance Association and LifeFlight of Maine both responded to the call, caring for the victims and transporting them via helicopter to Maine Medical Center. However, employees at MBL were first on the scene. Without advanced training and tools, they were left feeling helpless and ill-equipped.

The owners and staff at MBL have always felt a strong commitment to their community. This tragedy inspired MBL to learn more about how to be better prepared for a life-threatening emergency.

When Thomas Judge, Executive Director at LifeFlight of Maine, heard that MBL wanted to improve the community’s emergency preparedness, the first thing he thought of was an AED (automated external defibrillator). AEDs are designed for non-medically trained people to help someone suffering from sudden cardiac arrest.

Judge persuaded Zoll, a Massachusetts-based manufacturer of medical equipment, to donate a brand new, state-of-the-art AED to St. George Ambulance. The lifesaving device, valued at $2,300, will be on the dock in Port Clyde and will serve as an important tool for this rural community in cardiac emergencies.

“The St. George Ambulance Association, like many other rural areas in Maine, has lots of ground to cover in our widespread community,” explains Candice Davis, Paramedic at St. George Ambulance. “Anything we can do to better prepare first responders really does make a difference to patient survival.”

Earlier this summer, Davis and Judge held a training for MBL employees, teaching them how to use the new AED, as well as the American Heart Association’s basic CPR course.

“Last summer was the first time someone was seriously injured on the dock,” said Amy Barstow, owner of MBL. “Although it was only a few minutes, it felt like it took a long time for help to arrive. We’re so grateful to St. George Ambulance not only for the service they provide to the community, but for working to better prepare us for the next emergency.”
LIFEFLIGHT FOUNDATION

DISPATCHES is a publication of The LifeFlight Foundation, which provides fundraising and public relations support to LifeFlight of Maine, the state’s only medical helicopter service.

The LifeFlight Foundation is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service Tax Code. It is governed by an elected board of trustees who represent medical, business, legal and educational fields throughout the state.

LifeFlight also aids the development, training and funding of Maine’s major air medical needs, such as trauma training statewide, construction of hospital helipads, and installation of weather reporting, navigational and communications systems across the state.

The Foundation’s office is located in the town of Camden at 13 Main Street, 2nd floor. You can reach us at 207-230-7092 or info@lifeflightmaine.org.

Donations are tax-deductible.

LIFEFLIGHT OF MAINE

LifeFlight of Maine is a nonprofit statewide critical care medical helicopter service jointly owned by Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems and Central Maine Healthcare Corporation. LifeFlight’s two helicopters, based in Bangor and Lewiston and operated by Era Helicopters, cover the entire state and offshore islands. LifeFlight complements and supports the work of local EMS and hospital personnel in caring for the critically ill or injured. Each base is staffed by a highly qualified team of pilots, mechanics, flight nurses and paramedics. More than 17,000 patients have been safely transported since LifeFlight’s founding in 1998.

LifeFlight was fully re-accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems in 2014.

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