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**GLOUCESTER MARITIME HERITAGE
CENTER WELCOMES AMERICORPS*NCCC**

May 16, 2002. A ten member AmeriCorps*NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) team arrived at the Gloucester Maritime Heritage Center (GMHC) last week to begin a six week service project. Modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s and the US military, AmeriCorps*NCCC is a national service program for young adults ages 18-24.

The major task the team will undertake is the construction of a large outdoor observation deck which will allow visitors to safely view the reconstruction of historic vessels on the oldest continuously operating marine railway in the country. Other tasks include painting the exterior of the former ice house and transforming the interior into a working boatshop where GMHC will offer classes in building wooden boats. The team is also converting the lower level of the GMHC office building into exhibit space which will house a marine display including a small aquarium.

Local cabinetmaker Dick Higgins is supervising the team's Gloucester assignment, with the assistance of several GMHC board members. Corps members on the team assigned to GMHC hail from California, Ohio, Minnesota,

Wisconsin, North Carolina, and Washington. In addition to working forty hours a week for the Heritage Center, team members are undertaking service projects for the Cape Ann Food Pantry, the North Shore AIDS Project, and other nonprofits. Please call 978-281- 0470 if your organization could use some help.

GMHC is a grassroots nonprofit organization which got its start in 2000 when 255 local people joined together to purchase the Gloucester Marine Railway, a 77,400 square foot parcel on the industrial harbor which includes the oldest continually operating marine railway in the United States. The plan, over the next five years, is to develop exhibit, research and classroom space on the site, with the goal of using the facility to enhance the teaching of local maritime history, environmental studies and vocational trades. The center will provide residents of Gloucester and the world beyond with insight into the symbiotic relationship between the health of the city's maritime industrial history and the health of the New England fisheries.