

Step 1. Integrate into the Community

"After serving 27 months in the Peace Corps and now being on Long Island as a Fellow, I have learned that integration isn't an abstract theory but more of a feeling. Once the fear and the safety concerns subside, it becomes easier for me to maneuver within this new space. Soon, I begin to make friends. As time passes, the community and I will embrace each other on a deeper level."

Angelique Williams, Long Island Fellow Alumna

Step 2. Get to know islanders

"What has consistently surprised me has been how much simply being on the island matters. Being seen and seeing people, even without speaking with those people, makes it that much easier to have a casual chat the next time. Even on my most solitary days, that I can see a car drive by my house and know who is driving creates a feeling of community that transcends myself. And because of the power of this feeling, I'm always surprised by how happy small things make me. Things like someone coming over just to chat, or someone helping me out, or asking me for help – how nice it is to feel like you have been invited into the community."

Gideon Davidson, Swan's Island Fellow Alumnus

Step 3. Get to know the project

"In my wildest imagination, I would never have thought that I would end up on an island doing the sorts of things that I am doing; running events, implementing programs, coordinating trash pickup and staffing, but I am so glad that I find myself doing these things now. I have learned an incredible amount in my time as a Fellow, from the basics of how to coordinate boat schedules and meet personal and professional expectations to more advanced skills like manage a Transfer Station and develop policies for a town government. I have learned how to 'do' not just to learn, how to be asked to handle an issue and see it through to completion."

Erin Crowley, Long Island Fellow Alumna

Interested in becoming a Fellow?

The application period is open until March 27, 2020. More information on being a fellow and a link to apply is available at:

www.islandinstitute.org/fellows

Contact Andy Theriault:

atheriault@islandinstitute.org

Step 4. Marvel at your surroundings

"Eastport surprises me with its familiarity on days when the fog is hanging low over the bay and the streets are quiet. I am pulling in new experiences as I meet people of the city (it is a city, lest anyone forget). I've gone urchining with Butchie Harris, butchered turkeys at Tide Mill Farm, read poetry at the Calais library, tap danced at the EAC during their traditional music hours, played music with friends, and eaten cranberry duff for the first time. It's a lovely world where going over to someone's house for dinner helps build a rapport that one can draw on for our next project."

Naphtali Fields, Eastport Fellow Alumna

Step 5. Cultivate your sense of humor

"In small communities, you run into people with long memories. They know how certain things came to be—or can at least make up pretty convincing reasons. A lot of people who live here have been around each other since birth. How do you live with so much accumulated history? How do you distinguish the person giving you tax advice from the kid who threw up in your parents' backseat 40 years ago? All of those stories and connections layer up and form the backdrop of daily life. You look at a new store and remember the school that was there. The vacant lot still reminds you of the playground where you broke your wrist in a game of tag. Maybe that's the origin of the wonderful sense of humor I've found out here. When your ex-girlfriend of fifty years hands you the original copy of your breakup letter, what can you do but laugh? It might be the only cure for history."

Kate Webber Swan's Island Fellow Alumna

And Finally, after two years realize that you can leave the fellowship and you can leave the island but the ripples of your experience will remain with you forever.

"Of Course, my one-year Island Institute fellowship became two and, after I left Frenchboro, the island was all I ever thought about. It seeped into my relationships with people, the stories I wrote, even the way I talked. But most of all, it was the kids, the students in the school who I spent most of my days with. They helped shape my creativity, my responsibility, and my sense of humor and taught me that learning—if it's to be meaningful—has to work both ways."

Scott Sell, Frenchboro Fellow Alumnus