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THE LIGHTHOUSE KIDS OF HAMPTON, N. H.

The Lighthouse Kids, a group of elementary school students from Hampton, N. H., received a $250,000 *Save America's Treasures* grant in 2003 to preserve the deteriorating and endangered White Island Lighthouse at the Isles of Shoals (1859), one of the most evocative and storied sentinels of the New England coast. By 2008, the Kids had raised $275,000 to match that grant.

Guided by recommendations made by preservation architects and lighthouse experts, the Lighthouse Kids have partnered with the New Hampshire Division of Parks & Recreation of the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development, a state agency that is administratively responsible for the



White Island Light Station (1859), Isles of Shoals, Rye, N. H.
(Photograph by James L. Garvin)

lighthouse, to conserve the damaged tower under difficult logistical conditions and under conservation constraints posed by the presence of the roseate tern, an endangered species. Undeterred by further damage caused by a severe coastal storm, the Lighthouse Kids have continued to raise funds to repair the tower a second time, to assist in the rehabilitation of the light keeper's cottage, and to build a marine landing on the island.

The Lighthouse Kids came into being in 2000-2001 as a community service group of seventh graders in North Hampton. The Kids were motivated by the fact that the cylindrical brick light tower, unmanned since 1986 and the property of the State of New Hampshire since 1992, had begun to deteriorate visibly. The tower displayed vertical cracks caused by the impact of storm waves that sometimes break against the lantern of the tower, 85 feet above mean high water.

Under the guidance of their teacher, Sue Reynolds, a licensed whale-watch boat operator, the Kids established a web site and began a persuasive program of fundraising for

their project, receiving widespread media coverage.

In October 2002, the Lighthouse Kids became a chapter of the American Lighthouse Foundation, thereby availing themselves of the tax-exempt status of the Foundation and of the Foundation's media contacts.

The initial phase of the Kids' campaign culminated in April 2003, when U. S. Senator Judd Gregg presented the grant of $250,000 to representatives of the Kids who were in Washington for their spring field trip.

In September 2003, Governor and Council executed a memorandum of agreement with the Lighthouse Kids, making the Kids official partners in raising the funds needed to match the *Save America's Treasures* grant. With grant funding available, the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development commissioned Portland preservation architects Turk, Tracey and Larry to undertake a study of the condition, needs, and recommended treatment of the tower. That report was submitted in November 2003, and has guided subsequent efforts.

The light tower was repaired during the summer of 2005, with work organized and staged to avoid interfering with the nesting of protected terns. New bricks replaced cracked bricks, the tower was protected by fresh parging, and window sashes were restored to replace glass block infill. The asphalt shingle roof of the keeper's house was replaced.

Then, in April 2007, the Isles of Shoals were battered by one of the terrific storms that frequently lash these vulnerable outposts. The storm scoured some of the parging from the tower, and swept away a unique wooden tunnel (dating from 1842, before the present tower was built) that connected tower and dwelling. Undeterred, the Lighthouse Kids donated $100,000 toward the project of constructing a marine railway to permit safe landing on White Island, and have maintained a commitment to assist with further rehabilitation of the light keeper's dwelling. They plan to establish a financial endowment to support future care of the light station.

Extending over eight years thus far, the White Island project has given the Lighthouse Kids a unique opportunity to interact with professional adults in conserving one of the landmarks of the East Coast. The project has taught the Kids responsibility and patience, and has shown them that they possess the ability to exert a powerful and protective influence over a landmark that they see on their horizon every day. The Lighthouse Kids continue to grow as preservationists and stewards of the history of the New Hampshire seacoast.

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