2023 ANNUAL REPORT

A Street on

GIG HARBOR JUNIOR SAILING

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Gig Harbor Junior Sailing is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to providing a safe, fun, and educational environment for the healthy development of youth through sailing. Our programs develop local sailors at all skill levels and challenge them to achieve confidence and independence on the water.



Teen Camp sailors learn advanced rigging from Instructor Anna Sherry.







677 SAIL CAMP PARTICIPANTS

Learn More on page 6

Varsity sailors celebrating their teammates' series podium finishes.









2023 GOALS PROGRESS

In 2023, Gig Harbor Junior Sailing reached all of our programming goals. We operated the programs we have been building toward since our start in 2010. As we enter 2024, our focus as an organization will be to ensure long-term stability in order to serve the youth in our community for decades to come. We are proud to see our program participants grow and thrive with the support of a robust board, countless volunteers, and with the community behind us. Thank you for continuing to create opportunities for kids.

Increase skill and performance of race team programs

2023 brought record regatta participation and performance.

Hire and develop new staff members

Seven new staff members joined our instructional team, with six new staff poised to certify in 2024. We are always looking for new staff to join our team, and appreciate any community support with housing out of area coaches.

Pursue the development of a long term waterfront facility

In 2023, we established teams dedicated to finding and funding a permanent home for Gig Harbor Junior Sailing. Expect to hear more about this in 2024!

Expand scholarship programs to reach more underserved youth

Cover: c420 sailors Hannah Welch and Genevieve Davis compete at Johnny Adams Memorial Regatta (photo by Dave Shemwell). Below: Instructor Nex Noland introduces a group of Jellyfish sailors (ages 6-8) to sailing on Wollochet Bay.

FOR THE KIDS

Gig Harbor Junior Sailing is wrapping up its 14th year of providing a safe, fun, and educational environment for the healthy development of youth through sailing. From our humble beginnings, we are now on a even keel both financially and in programming —so our eyes are on the future!

2023 was a banner year with over 600 students in Sail Camp, and 40 racers on Narrows Race Team. We are grateful to the tremendous group of instructors, coaches, 14 member board and community partners who are increasingly attracted to the outstanding reputation of Gig Harbor Junior Sailing. We are fortunate to have 2 full-time staff (Sailing Director, Ashley Nelson, and Assistant Sailing Director, Niko Twilla) who provide strong, positive experiences for youth, families, and staff.

We are most proud of an unprecedented \$38,000 in scholarships provided for underserved youth in 2023, thanks to generous grants and donations. This allowed so many youth to learn water safety and the joy and confidence of being in control of their own boat—from rigging to launching and sailing!

This year we took some huge leaps into the future of GHJS:

- We took "Yacht Club" out of our name (in collaboration with GHYC) to reflect our separate organization with no financial or legal relationship to GHYC. So we are now: Gig Harbor Junior Sailing!
- We partnered with Boys and Girls Club of South Puget Sound to provide a week of Sail Camp for 20 kids from Tacoma!
- We began a Capital Campaign bringing in new volunteers with expertise and enthusiasm to pursue financing for a permanent on-the-water location.

The 2023 annual Dinner Auction, our only fundraiser, provided vital boats and equipment for the program. An amazing group of adult and Narrows Race Team racers – an all-volunteer effort – once again put on a tremendous celebration of GHJS and raised \$109,000! As one Auction volunteer stated, "I support Junior Sail because all the hard work and community donations are used exclusively to give kids the opportunity to get out on the water!"

GH Junior Sailing would not exist were it not for the amazing support we receive from so many:

- Stan Stearns family provides Gig Harbor Junior Sailing space to operate at West Shore Marina
- Tacoma Yacht Club partners with us, providing space and equipment for use in programming managed and staffed by GHJS
- Pen Met Parks provides storage of boats and equipment at the old Peninsula Gardens.
- Gig Harbor Yacht Club allows us to use their facility for meetings and at a discount for the Auction.

A HUGE thanks to you, our community, that provide tremendous support and shares in the joy, laughter and learning on the waters of Gig Harbor, "The Maritime City" ...for the kids!



Joan Storkman Gig Harbor Junior Sailing Program Director

Jessica Newhouse hones her skills at USODA Northwest Opti Champs by Columbia Gorge Racing Association (photo by Sean Trew). Our program sent a record number of sailors in 2023.

WHO WE ARE

Gig Harbor Junior Sailing provides programming for over 600 local youth each year with 9 months of programming annually. We have a large independent volunteer board, as well as two full time staff members. In the summer months, we employ an experienced and enthusiastic group of 15–20 instructors. We love what we do.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide a safe, fun, and educational environment for the healthy development of youth through sailing. Gig Harbor Junior Sailing is a 501(c)3 Nonprofit organization, established in 2010 for the purpose of teaching sailing & water safety to youth. Our programs develop local sailors at all skill levels and challenge them to achieve confidence and independence on the water.

OUR VISION

Our vision is simple – for our programs to be accessible to more people of current and future generations. Our goal is to become a robust and comprehensive sailing program, serving the Gig Harbor area through summer camps, family and community sailing programs, and a competitive racing team. We strive to secure a permanent waterfront location to ensure the future of the Gig Harbor Junior Sailing Program.

A Youth Camp sailor enjoys some wind for race day

The Sailing Foundation.org

ailingFoundation.org

Teen Camp sailors put their capsize drill practice into use

"My daughter had a great experience sailing with the youth camp. She has never sailed before and was met with great instruction and positive reinforcement. I appreciated the instructors' approach offering kids the opportunity to manage their boats from dock to sailing and back to the dock with minimal help. It allowed my daughter the room to grow and learn an impressive new skill. We will definitely be back! Thank you!"

-Sail Camp Parent

Teen Intermediate sailors learn the finer points of rigging



"This was our very first intro to sailing. My son is not quite 6 and loved the program, cannot wait to sail on his own and wanted play dates with the other campers. The leaders were so kind, communicative, fun, appropriate and knowledgeable. The care was obvious and the execution was flawless - a truly wonderful program we hope to grow with!"

-Sail Camp Parent



"I think it's great you offer this to kids. I've never been on a sailboat, but my kid still got to experience that and really loved it!"

-Sail Camp Parent

YOUTH PROGRAMS

2023 Summer Sail Camp programs benefitted from the expertise of our returning instructors. New staff approached their first summer with a growth mindset, and the result was incredible mentorship and a stellar camp experience for our 677 participants. We are excited to continue to develop and refine our camp programs, and get new sailors out on the water again next year.

In 2023 we expanded our Opti Intermediate classes and added Advanced ILCA and c420 classes to provide a challenge for returning campers. We also expanded our Jellyfish classes to include more young excited sailors than ever before.

Gig Harbor Junior Sailing could not provide any of our programming without the space at West Shore Marina, generously donated by The Stearns Family, and our ongoing partnership with Tacoma Yacht Club to facilitate programs at their facility on Wollochet Bay. Our storage and maintenance space is generously provided by Pen Met Parks. Each year, these partners work together to ensure a positive experience for youth in our community.

Site Director Julia Sherry lead the team at West Shore Marina again this year while Assistant Sailing Director Niko Twilla kept everything running smoothly in Wollochet Bay. Thank you to our incredible 2024 Youth Programs Staff: Anna Sherry, Ashley Nelson, Aspen Merrill, Bailey Rainbolt, Brent Hu, Camryn Lee, Connor Hoeksema, Dalton Lovett, Emily Smith, Finn Deprez, Hannah Welch, Jaden Unruh, Julia Sherry, Kel Cowart, Matt Embick, Nex Noland, Nico Konyk, Niko Twilla, Peter Ryalls, Reed Kregenow, Sky Rainbolt, and Will Embick. As well as our incredible Youth Interns Elijah Dekker and Eugenie Greenfield, and our Junior Instructor Team: Agatha Pape, Alex Cain, Annalise Landy, Beo Satterlee, Charlie Yando, Elliot Kwan, Genevieve Davis, Oona Lacey, Skylar Vasko, and Tru Jackson.

SAIL CAMP PARTICIPATION



Camp participation numbers have neared facility capacity over the past two summers allowing fiscal stability and a focus on programming and staff development. Our ongoing partnership with Tacoma Yacht Club allows us to serve over 600 youth in our community each summer.





2023 was the most successful year in the history of the Gig Harbor Junior Sailing Scholarship Program! Thanks to generous community support, we experienced a 300% increase in funding from 2022 to 2023. This allowed us to award \$37,880 to families who demonstrated financial need.

Thank you to:

TK Spirit Fund Stearns Family Foundation Greater Gig Harbor Foundation City of Gig Harbor Many Private Donors

The demand for our scholarship program continues to grow. With the massive success of our 2023 Auction and the Boys & Girls Club Partnership Program, our scholarship program is entering 2024 poised to once again provide sailing opportunities to families in need! Scholarship funding supports access to the sport, and our beautiful maritime community.

I am so grateful for this incredible opportunity. My husband lost his job last year and there is no way we could have afforded to expose our kids to this new sport. The Scholarship made it possible and I believe this experience has been life changing for our children. My husband took a new job and we just moved to Gig Harbor from the desert of Phoenix, Arizona with no exposure to water sports. Being new to Gig Harbor, my kids came in without friends, not knowing anyone from the community and this experience not only exposed them to a new sport, they made lifelong friendships. This experience made them feel apart of our new community and gave them a sense of pride in where we now live. -Parent of Scholarship Recipients

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF SOUTH PUGET SOUND PARTNERSHIP



In July, Gig Harbor Junior Sailing and The Boys and Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound partnered to provide camps for underserved youth who otherwise would not have had the opportunity to sail. Staff members from both programs worked together to coordinate, build comfort amongst participants, and transport sailors to and from Tacoma.

With the support of the TK Foundation Spirit Fund, Gig Harbor Junior Sailing provided full scholarships and sailing instruction. The Boys and Girls Club of South Puget Sound provided member outreach & transportation via their club vans as well as program staff at camp each day. This unique partnership allowed 20 participants to get sailing.

The highlight of the week was the weekly camp sail to lighthouse beach. Sailors were enamored with their beach treasures, and staff were reminded what a special place we have to sail in each day.

This program is a first step in reducing barriers to the sport of sailing and access to outdoor recreation for underserved youth. We are excited to continue this program in the coming year and were thrilled to provide 20 youth with a great week at camp.

SPONSOR A SAILOR

We have raised \$24,269 toward 2024 scholarships so far, thank you for your support!

If you would like to be a part of getting kids on the water in 2024 you can support by:

Scan & submit!

Mail a Check to Gig Harbor Junior Sailing 11010 Harbor Hill Dr. Suite B PMB158 Gig Harbor WA 98332



Online at: gigharborjuniorsailing.org/scholarships

2023 REVENUE

2023 was a record year for fundraising and program revenue. Donations and money raised at our annual auction support fleet replacement and scholarships, while program revenue covers payroll and operational expenses. Grants received in 2023 contributed to scholarships, training and outreach.



Camp and Race Team Tuition \$ 315,400

2023 EXPENSES

Capital Purchases included: 16' rigid-inflatable safety boat, 15' Boston Whaler safety boat, 25HP safety boat replacement engine, 50HP safety boat replacement engine, two c420 trailers, 4HP outboard for Catalina, and six sets of FJ race sails



RACE TEAM

In 2023, we focused our race program efforts toward building skills and getting as many sailors as possible to regattas. Sailors benefited from an exceptional coaching roster, and made the most of equipment funded through our annual auction.

Parents supported race programming by going above and beyond to recruit and house coach Juan Videla who traveled to Gig Harbor to coach from Argentina. We were also lucky to add veteran Opti Coach Andrew Nelson to our summer roster. Both coaches pushed sailors to new levels of competition this summer and helped to create a strong foundation for future programs.

Gig Harbor Junior Sailing operates the Narrows Race Team with support from Tacoma Yacht Club. We share sailors, coaching, venues and equipment in order to get local kids racing.

This partnership had its most successful year as we were able to send the highest number of participants to compete in the Northwest Youth Racing Gircuit Summer Series. A total of 40 sailors set a record number of 111 regatta entries in 2023 summer events. A big thanks to coaches, Andrew Nelson, Juan Videla, Jake Tiedeman, and Niko Twilla for getting our kids racing safely all summer long. Our Scholastic High School Sailing Program focused on growth and team-building this year. Sailors competed from many area high schools with Gig Harbor High School and Bellarmine Preparatory set to build robust rosters in the coming years. Sailors also competed representing SAMI, Maritime, and Peninsula.

Opti and Junior Varsity programs have operated at steady numbers in 2023 with the region working toward a more consistent fall and spring competition season.

Thank you to fall and spring coaches; Niko Twilla, Ashley Nelson, Tommy Holmberg and Ellie Ungar:

The team is poised to blossom in the coming years as sailors take on new challenges, pursue opportunities, and push each other to grow.

NWYRC SUMMER SERIES OVERALL PODIUM FINISHES

c420

2nd: Bailey Rainbolt & Aspen Merrill 3rd: Finn Deprez & Chloe Hedge-Pollock

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2nd (Opti White): Reagan S

2nd (Opti White): Reagan Starke 3rd (Opti Blue): Steve Ngueyn

> Opti Champ Sailor Claire Valiani demonstrates her heavy air sailing skills at CGRA in July (photo by Sean Trew)

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ILCA & C420 RACE TEAM

Our ILCA sailors benefitted from another excellent clinic with coach Paul Swan this summer. Sailors Camryn Lee and Danny Cheng-Sun traveled to Rhode Island to compete in US Junior Women's Championships. Our c420 program built incredible momentum with all six boats traveling to almost every NWYRC Summer Series Event. c420 sailors also enjoyed the addition of the c420 to the annual WIND Clinic in Cascade Locks, Oregon in July.



OPTI RACE TEAM

Six dedicated Opti Champ sailors worked toward the top of the fleet throughout the summer. With Coach Andrew Nelson leading the charge, we saw momentum build for our Opti Champ Fleet. Sailors rose to the challenge, attending WIND Clinic with the highest participation rate ever. Sailors are pushing the program forward by attending travel events, area clinics, and taking advantage of every opportunity to race and build skills. Assistant Sailing Director Niko Twilla has offered continuity and development for this program over the past two years allowing a stable foundation for future seasons.



JUNIOR VARSITY PROGRAM

Our Junior Varsity Program continued to provide racing experience and the opportunity for younger sailors to develop skills. Sailors competed in regional events in fall and spring and the Northwest Youth Racing Circuit in the summer.



HIGH SCHOOL SAILING

In 2023 we were able to further develop partnerships with Gig Harbor High School and Bellarmine Preparatory School, allowing athletes to earn varsity letters in sailing for the first time. Twelve athletes received letters for varsity participation in Spring of 2023. We continue to build teams and strive to get every sailor on the water each season. Sailors continue to build school programs and successful recruitment efforts have already had a positive impact on team performance and culture.

RACE TEAM PARTICIPATION



Race Program numbers are approaching capacity. Numbers reflected above note the total number of sailors who participated over the course of three seasons. As teams get more competitive, sailors participate for all three seasons resulting in fewer overall participants.

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

2023 Auction Supporters

Each year, our community comes together to support Gig Harbor Junior Sailing. We are fortunate to have the support of countless donors and local businesses each year for our annual Dinner Auction. In 2023, we raised \$109,078 in support of youth in our community. This included \$16,400 in support of scholarships, and will also fund the purchase of a new safety boat, three FJs and new sails. Thank you for your support.

The Stearns Family

Longtime supporters, Stan and Judy Stearns, continued to help us thrive this year through the use of West Shore Marina and generous donations. Their contributions to the program have helped immensely.

A Special Thanks To:

Edward Nadler & Vicky Alsaker Erik & Kathleen Carlson John & Kate Landy Julie & Andrew Cain Katherine Teel Mario and Anne Lee Mary Theo & Greg Hoeksema Paul Thorpe Terry Smith Thomas Reir Tom & Cyndee Gray

Thanks to our "Admiral" and "Captain" Corporate Sponsors:

Affinity Ventures NW Cox & Harbough Inc. Peninsula Yacht Basin Spirent Communications

2023 GRANTMAKERS

The TK Spirit Fund

Grant funding from the TK Spirit Fund supported our inaugural year of partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of South Puget Sound. This partnership provided transportation and scholarships for 20 Boys and Girls Club participants.

The Greater Gig Harbor Foundation

Funding from the Greater Gig Harbor Foundation Community Recreation Scholarship Fund provided scholarships for three Gig Harbor sailors who otherwise would not have been able to attend camp.

The City of Gig Harbor

Grant funding from the City of Gig Harbor supported staff development, promotion of sailing camp, auction donations to local schools, scholarships, and promotional events.



Above: Program Director Joan Storkman and supporter Judy Stearns congratulate Opti Race Team Sailor Reagan Starke on her spectacular speech reflecting on her growth through sailing. She reminded us all that it is always, for the kids!

Below: High School Sailors are always ready to dish up some smiles and dinner at our annual Dinner Auction.





VOLUNTEERS & PARTNERS

Board of Directors

Our board of talented and dedicated volunteers does so much to keep operating smoothly and moving forward. Board members work tirelessly to ensure the security and progress of our organization. Our board is actively involved with the program and does everything from overseeing budgets, hiring and operations, to meeting with local partners, and making strategic plans for the future. Thank you to all those who currently serve, and have served, on our Board of Directors.

Thanks to: Joan Storkman, Kathleen Carlson, Abra Jackson, Dale Reiman, Don Bernard, Greg Olsen, Greg Hoeksema, Lisa Embick, Mary Godwin-Austen, Mary Theo Hoeksema, Pete Clement, Tom Mitchell, and retiring board member Rachel Rainbolt for your contributions to the program.

Narrows Race Team Leadership Committee

Race team families help support the program through membership on the Narrows Race Team Leadership Committee. This group helps plan and adjust programs, hire coaching staff, and maintain healthy relationships with our school partners.

Thanks to: Joan Storkman, Joe Guizzetti, Lisa Embick, Abra Jackson, Michelle Valiani, Olivia Yando, Melissa Deprez, Mario Lee, Tanya Starke

Maintenance Team

Volunteers, led by Fleet Manager Greg Olsen, meet weekly to work on boats, build facilities, and keep everything running smoothly. We could not do it without them!

Thanks to: Greg Olsen, Dale Reiman, Jim Drake, Aspen Merrill, Greg West, Tom Mitchell, Jim Nixon

Auction Committee

Auction Committee members work throughout the year to plan our annual fundraiser. We had our largest ever group of volunteers this year, and so appreciate the work of this group to plan the event, organize donations, and advocate for us within the community.

Thanks to Auction Committee: Abra Jackson, Kathleen Carlson, Lisa Embick, Jill Bernard, Vicky Alsaker, Ed Nadler, Mary Theo Hoeksema, Joan Storkman, and Auction Volunteers: Marti Anderson, Mark Anderson, Peggy Butler, Angela Cochran, Alisa Anderson, Sara Davis, Christine Konyk, Jennifer Hedge, Rachel Rainbolt, Michelle Valiani, Tanya Starke, Sherry Siegert, Scott Siegert, Helen Sun, Gary Yando, Olivia Yando, Kelly Merrill, John Landy, Kate Landy, James Zeigler, Ruth Greenfield, Jason Embick, John Lavin, Jake Fournier, Mike Jackson, Greg Hoeksema, Kate Cutting, Nick Cutting, Jennifer Hedge, Katie Sosnoff

Community Partners

Our program is fortunate to have working relationships with many area organizations. These partnerships allow us to serve over 600 kids each year. We could not do it without the support and collaboration of our partners.

Thanks to: Tacoma Yacht Club, Gig Harbor Yacht Club, West Shore Marina, Pen Met Parks, The Boys and Girls Club of South Puget Sound, The Sailing Foundation, Northwest Interscholastic Sailing Association, Bellarmine Preparatory School, Gig Harbor High School



Top: The Gig Harbor Junior Sailing Board meets all year long to plan and implement programming.

Above: Tacoma Yacht Club Junior Sailing Committee members Joe Guizzetti, Terry DeMars, and Lance Lindsley meet with staff and Board Members from Gig Harbor Junior Sailing at TYC in the spring. Our partnership with Tacoma Yacht Club has allowed youth sailing to thrive in the Tacoma and Gig Harbor area.

Below: Staff members Anna Sherry, Niko Konyk, Dalton Lovett, and Julia Sherry celebrate with Program Director Joan Storkman after a successful week of partnership with The Boys and Girls Club of South Puget Sound.



2024 PROGRAM GOALS

Fund scholarship program of at least \$35,000 through donations and grants

In 2023, we saw the highest ever demand for scholarships, and we expect higher demand in 2024. We are proud to provide access to the sport for all youth in our community, regardless of ability to pay. In 2024, we hope to secure grants and donations to fund scholarships that meet the demand in our community.

Maintain and develop partnerships with local organizations, including The Boys and Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound and local schools.

We plan to operate our partnership week with The Boys and Girls Club of South Puget Sound again in 2024. We also plan to expand our involvement in school and community events.

Develop and formalize internship and volunteer opportunities for youth

We are proud to provide job skills and employment opportunities to local youth. In the coming year we plan to expand and develop our Youth Internship and Junior Instructor opportunities.

> c420 sailors Bailey Rainbolt and Aspen Merrill lead team-mates Finn Deprez and Chloe Hedge-Pollock to the finish during Bellingham Youth Regatta. The two c420 pairs tied for 2nd overall in the Northwest Youth Racing Circuit Summer Series

A SECURE FUTURE

Our goal is to secure a permanent waterfront location to ensure the future of the Gig Harbor Junior Sailing Program

Year-over-year we have met our enrollment goals, solidified our partnerships and established a firm financial footing. We are now in a strong position to plan for a sustainable future by securing a permanent on-the-water location for our organization.

Half of GHJS's program is delivered at West Shore Marina, Gig Harbor, in space generously provided by the Stearns Family. Additional sailing camps and race programming are operated on Wollochet Bay out of a facility owned by Tacoma Yacht Club. Our partnership with Tacoma Yacht Club is strong and we will continue facilitating programming at this facility into the future. Pen Met Parks provides space at Peninsula Garden's greenhouses where we store our fleet in the off season and complete necessary maintenance. These spaces, provided by our community, are key to the success in delivering GHJS programing. However, none of these spaces provide a permanent long-term home for the program. Securing dockage and a waterfront facility will enable us to continue making a positive impact on our community.

At the end of 2023, a Capital Campaign Committee was formed whose sole purpose is to identify potential opportunities and to lay the groundwork for fundraising and grant efforts. Our roots are in Gig Harbor, leading us to focus our search in Gig Harbor and the surrounding area. A feasibility study is underway that will guide the board's evaluation of opportunities as they arise.

Throughout 2024 we look forward to charting our course to sail into the FUTURE.



Above: A day of camp underway at West Shore Marina. Two slips at West Shore are generously provided by the Stearns Family and serve 300 area youth each year for summer camp. Our High School and Middle School program run from West Shore in the fall and spring, while the Opti Team calls West Shore home during the summer months. Our partnership with Tacoma Yacht Club at their Wollochet Bay facility facilitates 350 summer camp sailors and hosts the ILCA and c420 teams in summer and the Opti team in the fall and spring. We are so fortunate to call these spaces home.



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