



COMMUNITY BOATING CENTER  
INDIA POINT PARK, PROVIDENCE

## Go Sailing – A General Guide to Youth Outreach

Interested in reaching out to a diverse and expanded sailing audience? Embrace these simple, yet effective tips to jumpstart or improve your outreach efforts and enhance your overall program quality.

### Go There

Resist the “if you build it they will come” trap. You know your program is the best-kept secret around - does everyone else? It’s called outreach for a good reason - You must “reach out” to local schools, community groups, and programs by going out to their turf in a setting that is comfortable for your target audience. Sailing is not a natural draw for everyone. Outreach is a key element to reaching your recruitment goals.

### Go Big

Set a target for your class size – then bump it by 20%. Attrition will whittle your class down by a factor more significant than you may expect. Transportation, sick days, and the usual time competition suspects pale in comparison to the challenges that disadvantaged youth face today. The need to contribute to family income and scheduling difficulties of having parents with third-shift jobs are common, real-world factors that must often be dealt with prior to even considering your program.

### Go Real

Trust is earned. The only way to connect with you students is to be real. False pretenses or inflated promises will not fly. Be yourself, tell it like it is, and be wary that students need to trust you for your program to succeed. Stepping into a small boat and sailing in open water may be second nature to you, but it can be downright scary for youth with little to no experience around the water. Build trust in small, welcoming ways that make your students feel at home.

### Go Low

If you think nomenclature and wind direction form your baseline curriculum – think again. Go back to basics by addressing the most basic safety needs of students unfamiliar with sailing safety and the rigors of being on-the-water. Girls and boys naturally want to impress each other with heels or body sculpting t-shirts, and of course, cannot survive without being electronically connected 24/7. Simple concepts including proper footwear, thermal layering, sun protection, and the perils of salt-water immersion for cell phones are better taught than learned the hard way.

### Go Out

Skip the “chalk talk”, nomenclature, and knot tying on day one – Go Sailing! You never get a second chance to make a first impression. Get everyone out on the water right away with a qualified skipper at the helm. Most sailors of all ages remember their first sailing experience and the thrill of slicing through waves with nothing but wind in the sails. Give everyone a turn at the tiller and make them want to come back for more.

### Go Grill

For centuries, society has turned to food for social bonding opportunities. Get to your students through their stomachs! People tend to remember the beginning and end of any experience. Start with an ice-cream social and end with a BBQ or pizza party. A few bucks spent on a gallon of Ben & Jerry’s or a box of burgers goes a long way to enhance your students overall experience with you and your team.

### Go Hollywood

The concept of teaching sailing to inner-city youth is always well received. There are many potential celebrities, funders or supporters who are vying to align with an idea this good. Invite the Mayor, Senator, corporate president, or community leader to sail with your kids. You don’t know if you don’t ask. Make it a big deal for your community and your kids.

### Go Now

Quality outreach is not difficult – it takes discipline. With a few quality enhancements, you can create the tools you need to introduce a diverse and expanded audience to our beloved sport. Start sharing your passion for sailing today.