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Newark students experience sailing on the Shark River

By Zach Levine

Living at the Jersey Shore brings many different benefits to local residents, including the ability to utilize the ocean for swimming and boating. For many others who live in more urban areas however, this luxury is something which may only be dreamed of.

For a group of students from Newark however, the dream of sailing became a reality recently, as 41, 11- to 12-year-old children from the Robert Treat Academy in Newark got the chance to take out sailboats and enjoy the Shark River in Belmar.

The program was run with help from the Friends of the Belmar Harbor [F.O.B.H.] Sailing Program. This is the fourth year the program has been undertaken.

Paul Parada, a teacher at the Robert Treat Academy, explained that this sailing program provides a great service as it allows the students the chance to do some things they never thought they would have been able to do before.

“This program introduces the kids to sailboats, wind patterns, and life on the sea,” he explained. “Basically it is Sailing 101.”

Mark Stulbaum, another teacher at the school who accompanied the children on their trip, said that in the four years the students have been going on this sailing trip, many have viewed it as one of the most anticipated programs for the entire year.

“The kids talk about it all year and always remember the trip,” he said. “The sixth graders who go, look forward to going again as seventh graders, the seventh graders talk about what a great time they just had on the trip, and the eighth graders are just upset they aren’t able to go again.”

Besides sailing, the students also got the chance to try out kayaks and a variety of other water craft.

The 11- to 12-year-old students also had the opportunity to go clamming as well.

Aubree Phillips, 12, noted that she took part in the sailing trip last year when she was in the sixth grade, and she was eager to come back and try out everything she had learned during last year’s sailing class.

“It’s so nice to be doing this,” she said. “I think my favorite part of the whole program is the kayaking.”

Aubree’s classmate, Kenyetta Lionel, 12, said that by having another year under her belt taking part in the event, she was now able to show some of the younger children the ropes in regards to sailing.

“This really is a great way to learn sailing,” she said. “And from what I learned last year, now I can teach others.”

Michael Mixson, a member of the F.O.B.H., noted that the organization does two similar events during the rest of the summer, as they will be teaching students in Asbury Park and Long Branch next week a similar sailing

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Students from the Robert Treat Academy in Newark took a swimming test on Wednesday at Belmar’s Shark River to show off that they are able to swim and sail in the river. Since Monday, 41 of the school’s students have spent several hours a day learning to sail through the program run with help from the Friends of the Belmar Harbor. *Photo by SUEANNE GOSS, STAR NEWS GROUP*

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program.

Steve Adubato, who founded the Robert Treat Academy, explained that he thought up the idea for this program along with Mr. Mixson, as the two men are educators and sailing enthusiasts, and they wanted to merge their two passions.

“Mixson is an educator, I am an educator, and we both are sailing enthusiasts,” he said. “We decided one day, why not give this experience to urban, minority kids. And for an urban kid, a kid from Newark, this is an incredible experience.”

Mr. Adubato noted as well that sailing does much less damage to the environment than other forms of boating, as it does not use an engine and only needs wind to get the boat going.

“There’s no motor, so we’re not destroying the planet here,” he said. “It’s a hell of a lesson, and you’re not screwing up the environment, so it’s a beautiful thing.”

Mr. Adubato also brought up that sailing has a storied history behind it, and he was very happy to offer this sailing lesson to children who may have never otherwise had the chance to experience it before.

“To give the kids this experience, it really is a spiritual and transcendental type of thing,” he said.

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