



Youth learn the ins and outs of sailing through inaugural HCS&R program

by Jenny Haglund

EAST TAWAS – “It’s just amazing; such an opportunity for the kids to enjoy the water here in Tawas,” remarked Mary Gmeiner of the first ever youth sailing program hosted by Heritage Coast Sailing & Rowing (HCS&R).

Gmeiner, an HCS&R member and certified sailing instructor through U.S. Sailing, was on hand to teach the youngsters the ropes – both literally and figuratively – of navigating the water by boat.

HCS&R, a nonprofit organization based in Alabaster Township, initiated the youth program on July 23, and the lessons will wrap up this Friday, Aug. 3.

The training has been taking place on Lake Huron, at the East Tawas State Harbor, “And the kids are absolutely loving it,” noted Gmeiner.

Organizer Rebecca Buchanan shared that for two weeks, Monday through Friday, two different age groups are taking part in sailing lessons for three hours each day. The program was open to participants age 7-17, with the younger group joining in on morning sessions, and the older children taking their classes in the afternoon.

According to Buchanan, the youngsters have had a riot training on both land and in the water, as well as learning about knot tying, terminology and other key elements of sailing.

In the first day, alone, Buchanan said there were about 30 adults who came up to HCS&R members and asked about lessons for them, as well.

Buchanan, Gmeiner and HCS&R member Kaye Chartier have all pointed out that the nonprofit is looking to continue and grow the program in the future, and they hope the new youth event is the first of many.

While some of the children – 15 in all – have been on sailboats before, organizers say it was the first time any of them had ever sailed on their own.

Chartier added that the youngsters have been engaging in every aspect of the process, from pulling the boats to the water on dollies, to rigging up the vessels, launching the watercraft and sailing in the lake.

“By the third day, they were all in boats by themselves,” she said.

“We’re learning all the sailing skills,” Gmeiner elaborated, not-



Photo by Jenny Haglund

BREAK TIME – The youth sailors make their way to shore for a quick break, after spending time on the water during their first independent sailing experience. They received their lessons from Mary Gmeiner, a certified sailing instructor and member of Heritage Coast Sailing & Rowing.

ing that this involves a three-part program.

“What we do first is we do what’s called a chalk talk. So we talk about the skill and learn it that way. Then we actually do the skill on land, then we do it in the boat,” she explained.

“So we already practiced on land what it would feel like to tack, that kind of thing. We have a boat on shore, we lean it up, we roll it so they know how the boat will feel when it rolls,” she continued.

“The kids have learned how to rig the boats already and we’re only in day three,” she said, when this reporter met with the group on July 25. “They’re learning very quickly.”

As for the actual vessels, Gmeiner said the two-person Hunter Xcite sailboats measure about 10 feet long and are of a very modern style. The design is

also ideal for novice sailors, as it provides greater safety with such features as an open transom.

Aside from embarking on their first solo voyages on day three, the children also learned about the role that weather plays in sailing.

“They know how to find the wind. Today we blew bubbles to find the wind and they took their bubbles out with them in the boat, and when they got out there they had to tell me if the wind was stronger than on shore,” Gmeiner shared.

The youngsters also got a lesson in balance and coordination that day.

Gmeiner was among the other HCS&R members who rode in separate boats near the children as they sailed, to keep an eye on them and be ready if there were any problems.

While she was in her boat, Gmeiner threw tennis balls to the children in the sailboats.

“As soon as I do, then you have to change direction and throw it back to me,” she told them before the exercise.

If the tennis ball didn’t make it into the boat, the students had to go get it for Gmeiner. “You sail your boat over and pick it up,” she advised.

One thing she wanted to stress is that the program would not have been possible if it weren’t for the generosity of helpers and donors.

“We have a large number of volunteers – that’s how this program is going well,” she said, adding that there have been six volunteers every day, who rotate their time to accommodate each other’s

See SAIL, Page 2C



Photo by Jenny Haglund

MAKING IT HAPPEN – Those from Heritage Coast Sailing & Rowing say the new youth program wouldn’t have been possible if not for the number of dedicated volunteers, as well as the donations taken in by the nonprofit group.



Photo by Jenny Haglund

FAST LEARNERS – Event organizers couldn’t give enough compliments to the sailing program students, who range in age from 7-17, for catching on to the lessons so fast. The younger group, which partakes in morning classes, sailed on their own after three days while the older participants, who trained in the afternoons, were ready to take to the water by day two.



Photo by Jenny Haglund

FIRST VOYAGE – Oliver Devereaux, 8, Whittemore, looks like a seasoned pro during his first solo sailing trip on July 25. He is pictured here launching his sailboat, for his second ride that day, from the East Tawas State Harbor.

AREA NEWS

SAIL

Continued from Page 1C

work schedules.

HCS&R member Doug Lentz stepped it up a notch, committing every day to being a volunteer and even bringing in his personal boat to use during the program.

Gmeiner explained that Lentz was there to stop the children if they traveled too far, show them where they need to be and so on.

"She and her husband were actually the people who wanted to get it started," Gmeiner then praised of Buchanan.

According to Gmeiner, Buchanan and her husband are very active in HCS&R, they have helped rebuild boats and have also assisted with refinishing the sailboats used for the youth program.

Gmeiner said HCS&R members not only traveled out of state to obtain the sailboats, but also repainted them, put on new symbols, hooked up all new lines, checked the rigging to make sure it was safe for the children and more.

"And that's all off of people's donations," Gmeiner said, of how both the sailboats and the dollies used to transport them were acquired.

"We have wonderful volunteers. It's just running really well," she expressed.

"It's going better than we even had imagined," she continued, noting that the program has greatly exceeded the expectations of those from HCS&R.

"They don't want to get out of the boats!" Gmeiner added of the young sailors, saying they often have to be reminded to take a break for a snack or to use the restroom because they're too busy having so much fun. "They're just loving it."

"They're doing really good," said Lentz of the students.

The children seem to agree, as one youngster was overheard yelling to another on the water, "You're doing a really good job!"

One example of this was witnessed with Oliver Devereaux, 8, Whittemore, who confidently set off on his first independent excursion last week.

The small sailor effortlessly put up his own sail, maneuvered his boat to and from the shore and coasted across the water like a pro.

Devereaux's mom watched him and her other children who participated in the program, saying that she is also looking to become a member of HCS&R.

Ryan Chequer, 8, who used to live in Bermuda but recently moved to the Tawas area, agreed with Devereaux that the best part about the program so far has been doing the actual sailing, all on their own.

For more information about HCS&R, visit www.heritage-23.org, or contact Dave Wentworth or Leo Chartier at 460-2642.



Photo by Jenny Haglund

SPLENDID SAILING – With calm waters, ideal breeze and clear skies, the sailing students have been met with great weather conditions for most of the two-week program. This shot was taken of the youngsters coasting across Lake Huron as their instructor and other volunteers, shown at left, keep watch.



Photo by Jenny Haglund

YOUNGEST SAILOR – At just 7 years old, Marley Montney of Ortonville is the youngest participant of the inaugural Heritage Coast Sailing & Rowing youth program. Montney, who is in the area visiting her grandparents for the summer, has no prior experience but she took to the lessons so well that she sailed independently for the first time after just three days into the program.



Photo by Jenny Haglund

VARIED LESSONS – Prior to embarking on their solo journeys, as witnessed here, the students are trained during the program using a three-part system, which includes lessons in the boats on land before the vessels could be used in the water.



Photo by Jenny Haglund

MORE TO COME – The first-ever youth sailing program put on by Heritage Coast Sailing & Rowing has been such a success that organizers are already looking forward to continuing the offering next summer and expanding the program even further.

Vital Statistics

Assumed Names Filed

D. Gray & Daughter Welding, Fabricating & Cleaning, 3448 E. County Line Rd., Hale, by Kimberly May Gray.

HANDMADEBYLAYLA, 9809A Minnesota St., Oscoda, by Kayla Marie Root.

R & D SPORTS, 4901 Long Lake Rd, Hale., by Rodney Albert Eno.

Wassman Tree Service, 3899 Forest Rd., Oscoda, by Mark Wassman.

Marriage License Issued

Julie Theresa Moore, 22, and Cody Carlisle, 24, both of Tawas City.

Sabrina Ashley Miller, 21, and Justin Scott Apsey, 22, both of Oscoda.

Roxanne Talia, 42, and Eugene Lyndon Shellenbarger, 45, both of Hale.

Power Up!

Advertise in the Oscoda Press
989-739-2054
 losco Co. News-Herald
989-362-3456

The Heat is On!

A/C System

Clean & Check

Dont Get Stuck in the Dark!

Avoid power outage problems with a Stand By Generator installed by Goyette. Stand By systems can power your entire home, even while your away.

It can be the best insurance policy you ever own!



Make sure your system is ready for the warmer months with a Goyette A/C Clean & Check. The Experts from Goyette will perform an 11 point inspection, checking all gas levels and install a new filter.

System Clean & Check Only **\$90.00**

Gotta Get Goyette!



PLUMBING • HEATING • COOLING • ELECTRICAL (989) 739-9089 GoyetteService.com