



Jessica E. Koenig

MY SUMMER JOB: TEACHING SAILING, CREATING SAILORS

School is out! There are a variety of camp options for kids these days, and in my opinion there is no better way to spend your summer than on the water. I grew up sailing on the Chesapeake Bay, mostly cruising with the family and then being shipped to sleep away sailing camp. After several years of sailing camp at St. Marys College, I was hooked. I attended Washington College in Maryland and sailed on the Varsity Team for four years. Every summer I would pick a new yacht club and head that way to teach sailing for three months. Not a bad way to make a living while making new friends and doing something I love.

Following college I moved to Charleston, SC and I am very fortunate to share my passion for sailing with the youth of Charleston as a career.

From what I can see, youth sailing is growing. What do I do you ask?

I run a non-profit organization called Charleston Community Sailing. We provide access, facilities and sailing instruction to anyone, regardless of socioeconomic background, skill level or physical ability. Our purpose is to engage the lives of children, ages 8 -18 years old in unique learning experiences through innovative programs to build character and promote a healthy spirit, mind and body.

A majority of our instruction is youth

based but we also offer adult sailing classes. We have some strong community partnerships with Charleston County Parks & Recreation Commission, Special Olympics South Carolina, Boys & Girls Club of the Trident Area and 9 area high schools. This summer we partnered up with Charleston Yacht Club to run the largest youth sailing program in town. We have a fleet of Vanguard 420's, Optimists and through a grant at the National Sailing Program Symposium we currently have a fleet of Open Bics. We've got our hands full with close to 50 boats and for our summer programs we have 200-plus kids.

Kids racing sailboats?

After kids learn the basics of sailing, next they naturally want to learn how to race. Competition can be healthy right? At the age of eight, you have your Beginner Racer sailing in Opti Green who can be coached around the course. Once you win your first Green event, you progress to White (10 and under), Blue (11 and 12) and then finally to Red (13-15). When you hit 15 you're done with the Opti, and you move onto a 420, Sunfish or Laser.

Summertime is an ideal time to get your new sailor out racing the interest is there. The water is warm and summer open regattas are just plain fun. I love the competitive side of sailboat racing, and my current boat of choice is a Melges 24. Sailboat racing is addictive and can be a huge rush, but not all sailors want to race.

That is one great thing about adding the Open Bics to our fleet at Charleston Community Sailing – for the kids who may not want to race and just have fun the Bic is a great option. One of the most important things when instructing youth is to keep it fun!

Once your kid is hooked on sailing and summer comes to an end, check with your school and see if they have a sailing team. If no team is in place, consider starting a club sailing team. Currently, at Charleston Community Sailing we have nine high school teams who sail 420's, seven days a week out of our facility. Teams compete against each other at local events and travel all around the Southeast.

How can you get involved in sailing?
Check out local community sailing

centers and your area yacht clubs. Most yacht club summer sailing programs are open to all youth so don't think you need to be a member to sail. Many of these organizations are run by volunteers so there is always a way to help whether it be on water or land.

Sailing is a lifelong activity and helps build self-esteem and self-confidence. Young sailors learn about water safety; how wind and weather affects sailing skills and develop a sincere appreciate for the water. Sailing is not just for the elite- it is for EVERYONE! See you on the water. ♦

Jessica E. Koenig is the Executive Director of Charleston Community Sailing, Charleston, SC.
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JULY THROUGH LABOR DAY RACING CALENDAR

July 9-11	Rocket Regatta (CYFC)
July 10-11	Firecracker Regatta (SYC)
July 10-11	U.S. Sailing Men's Area D Championships (ChYC)
July 17-18	Water Festival Regatta (BYSC)
July 17-18	Windmill Championships (LLSC)
July 24-25	Spar Wars (SCYC)
July 31-Aug. 1	Carolina Yacht Club Regatta (CYC-SC)
July 31-Aug. 1	Diva Day Ladies Regatta (WCSC)
Aug. 5-6	SAYRA Team Racing Juniors (CYC-NC)
Aug. 7-8	SAYRA Open Invitation (CYC-NC)
Sept. 4, 5	Labor Day Regatta (LNYC)
Sept. 5	Michelob Ultra Regatta, New Bern (NYRA)

Club Abbreviations

AYC	Atlanta Yacht Club	CYC-NC	Carolina Yacht Club (NC)
BSC	Blackbeard Sailing Club	CYC-SC	Carolina Yacht Club (SC)
BYSC	Beaufort Yacht & Sailing Club, SC	LLSC	Lake Lanier Sailing Club
CFYC	Cape Fear Yacht Club	LMSC	Lake Murray Sailing Club
CORA	Charleston Ocean Racing Assn	LNYC	Lake Norman Yacht Club
ChYC	Charleston Yacht Club	NYRA	Neuse Yacht Racing Association
CSC-SC	Lake Murray Yacht Racing Association	SCYC	South Carolina Yacht Club
		WCSC	Western Carolina Sailing Club

www.sayra-sailing.com