



Impact Report

2023

Downtown
Sailing Center
of Baltimore

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A Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Stakeholder

During the last several years of dealing with the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, the Downtown Sailing Center (“DSC”) experienced an exponential increase in those seeking access to the water through our many youth and adult sailing programs. At the same time, the long-term growth of our community outreach and accessibility programming was paused, given the public health restrictions. Last year (2022) saw a return of our outreach and accessible programs, which, in tandem with our substantially larger tuition and fee-based programs, placed enormous strain on our staff and our aging facilities.

Returning to DSC as Executive Director earlier this season, I have marveled at the dedication of our 500-plus adult members from all walks of life, who come to the DSC to learn how to sail, help teach others, and give back. This community of sailors supports a dedicated staff, providing thousands of volunteer hours to support and run a myriad of educational, accessibility, and community engagement programs that gave over 2500 individuals, no matter their individual circumstances, the experience of sailing and the freedom of the wind and water in 2023.

Our long-term goal is to give all Baltimore City school children the opportunity to get on a boat and learn the impactful and life-enriching lessons that sailing teaches. This goal is only hampered by our aging facility (our boats and docks), which are in need of replacement.

We made great strides in 2023, as this report demonstrates, but we have a ways to go. Sailors, by their nature, deal with storms and setbacks and persevere, always following a course for what is just beyond the horizon. Thanks for your continued support of the DSC and its mission.

Best Regards



Doug Silber

Our Story So Far

WHO WE ARE

The Downtown Sailing Center (DSC) is a non-profit organization in Baltimore, MD, dedicated to providing accessible sailing opportunities and waterfront education to people of all ages and abilities.

Established in 1994, the DSC offers a wide range of programs and services that promote sailing as a recreational and educational activity. Our mission is to make sailing inclusive and affordable, ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background or physical ability, can experience the joy and benefits of being out on the water.

The DSC operates on the principle of "sailing for all" and is strongly committed to providing equal access to sailing opportunities. We offer adaptive sailing programs that cater to individuals with disabilities, allowing them to experience the freedom and exhilaration of sailing. Additionally, the DSC provides sailing lessons, community outreach programs, and youth development initiatives to foster a love for the water and promote teamwork and leadership skills.

Located in the heart of Baltimore's Inner Harbor, the DSC boasts a facility with a diverse fleet of sailboats, ensuring that participants have access to safe and sea-worthy equipment. Our team of experienced instructors and volunteers is dedicated to providing quality instruction and support, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all participants.

In addition to their sailing programs, the DSC actively engages with the local community through partnerships and collaborations. We work with schools, community organizations, and other non-profits to offer educational programs, waterfront clean-up initiatives, and environmental awareness campaigns.

Through our dedication to accessibility, education, and community engagement, the Downtown Sailing Center continues to be a leading force in promoting sailing as a transformative and empowering experience. Our commitment to inclusivity and our passion for the water makes us a valuable asset to the Baltimore community.

OUR MISSION

The Downtown Sailing Center (DSC) provides quality educational and life enriching programs that promote self-esteem and teamwork through the joy of sailing. The Downtown Sailing Center is committed to promoting an environment of inclusiveness and accessibility, especially to youth, persons with disabilities, and those with limited opportunity.

“Providing opportunities that promote personal growth by using sailing to foster independence”

610

Community Outreach
Participants

709

Access-Ability
Program Participants

254

Summer Camp Kids

1002

Adults who learned how
to sail

Introduction:

The following impact report outlines the multifaceted reach of our nonprofit organization, highlighting the transformative touchpoints that have positively affected various segments of our community. From community outreach participants and individuals benefiting from our accessibility programs to the vibrant experiences of summer camp kids and empowering engagements with adults, this report underscores our commitment to fostering holistic growth and positive change.

709

Participants
during 2023

Access-ability Saturdays

\$0

There is no cost to come
sailing on Access-Ability
Community Sails



The importance of accessible sailing opportunities cannot be overstated, as they play a pivotal role in promoting inclusivity, empowerment, and well-being for individuals with diverse abilities.

\$0

No Cost

100%

Volunteer-Supported
Program

1st

Adaptive Sailing Race
Team in Maryland

880

Volunteer hours that
were required for this
program

220

Volunteers who
dedicated their
Saturdays

Access-Ability Overview

Focus Area Supportive Community Opportunity

Population Anyone with a disability

Objective & Scope

- **Access to Adaptive Equipment**
 - Facilities are designed using specialized equipment that caters to different types of disabilities, such as modified sailboats, adaptive seating, and controls that can be operated with limited mobility.
 - **Skill Development**
 - Providing tailored training to individuals to develop sailing skills, including boat handling, navigation, rigging, and safety procedures
 - **Individualized Instruction**
 - Recognizing the unique abilities and needs of each participant, and providing individualized instruction and support, to help them succeed and feel comfortable on the water
 - **Empowerment and Confidence**
 - Fostering a sense of accomplishment and self-confidence by enabling individuals with disabilities to independently sail a boat, make decisions, and handle challenges on the water
 - **Team Building and Social Interaction**
 - Creating opportunities for participants to sail in pairs or groups, fostering teamwork, communication, and camaraderie among sailors.
 - Building a supportive community where participants can share experiences and connect with others.
 - **Inclusive Environment**
 - Establishing an environment where individuals with diverse disabilities feel welcomed, respected, and understood creates a sense of belonging and reduces social isolation.
 - **Awareness and Education**
 - Raising awareness about the capabilities of individuals with disabilities and challenging stereotypes by showcasing their achievements in the sailing program.
 - Educating the broader community about adaptive sailing and promoting inclusivity.
-

610

Participants
during 2023

Community Outreach

39

Number of Local Partner
Organizations



Community Engagement is at the heart of connecting our organization to our local community and creating key pathways to accessing natural resources

\$10-\$75

Costs are offered
on a sliding scale

716

Number of hours
volunteers gave

96%

Number of events that
were funded by the DSC

30

Community
Engagement Events
Held

204

Number of Volunteers
that contributed to
our Mission

Community Outreach

Focus Area Community Engagement

Population Baltimore Residents

Objective & Scope

- **Inclusivity**
 - We aim to make sailing accessible to everyone, regardless of age, gender, ability, or socioeconomic status.
 - **Community Engagement**
 - The DSC collaborates with numerous local organizations in the greater Baltimore area, including:
 - Johns Hopkins Limb Loss Support Group
 - Humanim Client Empowerment
 - CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) serving youth in the foster care system
 - Loyola Clinical Stroke Survivors Support Group
 - Mt. Washington Pediatrics Hospital Abilities Adventures, which aims to enhance the quality of life for children post-hospitalization
 - God's Best Family
 - Equipment Connections
 - Ability Alliance
 - Ability Pride
 - Empower 4 Life
 - SCALE Aphasia Program
 - The League for People with Disabilities
 - Project S.T.E.A.M
 - Sisters Circle
 - Corner Team
 - Pathfinders for Autism
 - YMCA
 - **Community Building**
 - Foster a sense of belonging and camaraderie within the program, to form long last connections
 - **Health and Well-being**
 - Promote physical activity, mental well-being and stress reduction through the joy of sailing.
 - **Public Awareness**
 - Raise awareness in the broader community about the value of inclusive and community-engaged sailing programs, ensuring that everyone in Baltimore has access to their local waters
-

14

Participants
enrolled in 2023

Young Mariners

5

Mariners who returned to
complete a 2nd year in 2023



The 8-week paid workforce development program for Baltimore teenagers, utilizing sailing as a platform, creates a transformative experience that imparts valuable skills and fosters personal growth.

257

Young Mariners completed the entire 8 week program over the last 20 years

100%

Mariners who completed certification in 2023

30%

Number who return for a 2nd year

160

Number of Program Hours Completed

615

Number of healthy meals provided

Young Mariners Overview

Focus Area Workforce Development

Population Ages 14-16

Objective & Scope

- **Sailing Education**
 - Receiving hands-on sailing education covering topics like boat handling, navigation, and safety procedures.
- **Soft Skills Training**
 - Developing skills through sailing experiences that focus on communication, teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, and time management
- **Mentorship**
 - Participants are paired with peer mentors who can provide guidance, motivation, and support in both sailing and job skills development.
- **Advocacy**
 - Encouraging participants to become advocates for inclusive recreational opportunities, not only for themselves but for others in the community.
- **Environmental Awareness**
 - Developing a deep understanding of the environment, emphasizing water conservation and an appreciation for marine ecosystems while highlighting the impact of human activities on them
- **Social-Emotional Wellness**
 - Promoting personal growth, effective communication, and resilience by fostering these qualities through teamwork, adaptability, and social interactions with populations from different backgrounds and ability levels.
- **Recreational Fitness**
 - Providing an outlet that instills a sense of adventure and connects participants to the outdoors.

By focusing on these areas, the YMI program equips participants with a well-rounded set of skills and knowledge that extends beyond sailing techniques, enhancing their personal development and creating a lasting impact for careers at DSC and beyond.

1002

Participants
enrolled in 2023

Adult Education

16

US Sailing Certified Basic
Keelboat Instructors



**Navigating personal goals, teamwork, leadership, and the
boundless horizon. Crafting dreams, one course at a time,
while promoting inclusivity through scholarships and
fostering communication, teamwork, and leadership skills**

1300+

Number of hours
Adult education
spent on the water

30

Number of Instructors

150

Participants from
Corporate/Team
Building Events

70

Class Sessions offered
this season

21

Private Lessons
Offered

Adult Education Overview

Focus Area Adult Education

Population Ages 16 & Up

Objective & Scope

- **Intro to Sailing**
 - The essential course for beginners with no prior boating experience. Our goal is to transform you into a competent crew member.
 - **Intermediate Sailing**
 - Increasing skills to skipper level. Learn docking, person-overboard maneuvers, and advanced skills for solo boat handling.
 - **Advanced Sailing**
 - Fine-tune established sailing skills to reach competency and take the certification exam.
 - **US Sailing Basic Keelboat Certification**
 - A 5-6 day course to earn your certification, opening doors to further US Sailing classes and providing a solid foundation for broader sailing opportunities. Includes a full day of testing, both written and on the water.
 - Flexible format offerings to match your schedule and preferences with options for a 5-day intensive course, three-weekend choices, and a self-paced option
 - **3-hour Taste of Sailing**
 - Dip your toes into the world of sailing with a basic introductory experience. It's a fun opportunity to explore sailing, get on the water, and discover if it's right for you. Ideal for prospective members and those looking to ease into scheduled classes
 - **Performance Sailing**
 - Elevate your skills and learn to sail faster by mastering sail trim and spinnaker utilization.
 - **Women on the Water (WOW)**
 - Our long-standing volunteer-run program fosters informal sailing education for women and non-binary sailors. We empower women to take the lead, build confidence as skippers, and create a supportive community of women empowering women.
 - **US Sailing accredited program**
 - Gain nationally recognized certification that opens doors to pursue boat charter qualifications elsewhere.
-

254

Kids Enjoyed
Summer Camp

Summer Camp

\$30k

Scholarships provided
ranging from \$50-\$1,100.
Every request was able to
be accepted



The A.C.A. Accredited Sailing Summer Camp for kids is centered around teaching children the fundamental skills, knowledge, and values associated with sailing and water-based activities.

40%

Number of campers participated were BIPOC

12

Number of campers who passed Adult Level US Sailing Basic Keelboat Certification

52

Number of campers received camp scholarships

400

Number of Summer Camp Hours

83

Number of campers who experienced the water for the first time

Summer Camp Overview

Focus Area Environmental Education

Population Youth Ages 8-16 years old

Objective & Scope

- **Sailing Skills and Safety**
 - Teaching campers how to handle sailboats, including rigging, steering, and maneuvering
 - Educating them about wind patterns, currents, and other essential nautical concepts
 - Instilling safe practices, including proper use of life jackets, navigation rules, and emergency procedures
 - **Teamwork and Communication**
 - Fostering teamwork among campers as they work together to navigate and operate the sailboats
 - Promoting effective communication among crew members and instructors for smooth sailing
 - **Environmental Awareness**
 - Instilling a sense of responsibility and respect for the ecosystem they're interacting with.
 - Educating campers about the importance of preserving marine environments
 - **Problem-Solving and Decision-Making**
 - Encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving skills as they encounter challenges while sailing
 - **Leadership and Independence**
 - Allowing campers to take on leadership roles within sailing teams, fostering independence and decision-making abilities
 - Encouraging them to take responsibility for their actions and choices while on the water.
 - **Character Development**
 - Creating an environment where campers can develop self-confidence and a positive self-image.
 - **Fun & Exploration**
 - Providing a platform for campers to have fun and explore the joy of sailing and being on the water.
 - Offering opportunities for friendly competitions, races, and creative activities related to sailing.
-

Our 2024 Goals

1

Access-Ability Saturdays

For the 2024 season, our Accessibility Program aims to continue to secure funding to sustain the program at no cost to participants. Additionally, we intend to expand our pool of dedicated and long-term volunteers, promoting greater program autonomy. Another key objective is to establish accessible membership options to further inclusivity.

3

Young Mariners

In 2024, the Young Mariners Program has set two primary goals. The first is to expand participation to accommodate 20 participants by establishing a well-structured leadership framework, recruiting additional instructors, and securing additional funding to facilitate the program's growth. The second goal involves extending the program to a three-year format, allowing participants to transition into mentorship roles for those in the preceding year. This mentorship program aims to foster increased leadership within the program, promote a peer-supported environment, and offer upward mobility, enhancing essential work skills critical for success in their future careers, whether on or off the water.

5

Summer Camp

Summer Camp at the DSC is focused on providing the highest possible level of both childcare and US Sailing certified sailing instruction. With the new addition of tiered instruction, Camp in 2024 will see the highest number of US Sailing Basic Keelboat level graduates in its history. With a diverse staff reflective of the city in which we are based, DSC Summer Camp is a place where everyone can feel welcomed into the sport of sailing.

2

Community Outreach

In 2024, our community engagement goals encompass building lasting partnerships with existing organizations, broadening mini-camp offerings, strengthening ties with veteran-serving groups, expanding our outreach instructor team, enriching education through STEM, maritime black history, and learn-to-sail curricula, all with the overarching mission of ensuring that everyone in Baltimore has access to their local waters.

4

Adult Education

In the 2024 season, our sailing program aims to meet rising demand by increasing course offerings and enhancing instructor training. We are dedicated to fostering diversity and inclusion by actively engaging more women and sailors of color. Our commitment to accessibility includes securing funding for scholarships to reduce course costs. Additionally, we strive for gender balance and empowerment by working toward a 50/50 ratio of female and male skippers at the DSC, while continuing to offer incentives for women to take on leadership roles in sailing.

Our Strategy

Our strategy entails achieving our programming objectives while also upgrading our facilities to extend our outreach to underserved areas of Baltimore. As we reach a pivotal transition point, we recognize the need for facility expansion to accommodate our growing impact, ensuring we remain an empowering force in our community now and for the future

PROJECTS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
Water Access Equity	Expanding our reach to the farthest corners of Baltimore, connecting residents who have limited access to the water	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every Baltimore youth will have the chance to view their city from a unique perspective, and feel a sense of ownership over their waterways
Upgrade Accessibility of our Facilities	Continue to adapt the existing dock configuration to meet our expanding program needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Having additional hoist lifts• Accessible shaded dockspace; ADA certified• Hansa docking system
Replace Aging Marina	The used docks obtained from Baltimore City are over 40 years old and in need of replacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New docks that will provide a safe and strong foundation to run future programs for another 45-50 years
Securing Adequate Indoor Space	We currently lack conditioned indoor facilities for classrooms, meeting rooms, and related needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A safe place, protected from the weather, that enables us to expand our programs

Acknowledgements

In closing, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to the dedicated individuals who have tirelessly contributed to the success of our projects mentioned in this impact report.

- Doug, one of our founders who has stepped into the role of Executive Director, effectively communicating our progress to our Board of Directors
- John, Director of Operations
- Rena, Director of Community Engagement
- Emma, Community Event Manager
- Laura, Director of Adult Education
- De'Corer, Lead Young Mariners Instructor
- Frank, Assistant Young Mariners Instructor
- Josh, Youth Program Director
- Shanna, Grant Coordinator, who designed this report to showcase the DSC
- Shannon, who continues to be involved by managing our finances

We also extend our deepest thanks to our donors, corporate sponsors, community foundations, and priceless volunteers for their unwavering dedication and our Board of Directors for their steadfast support. Without them, we would not have such a meaningful impact on the Baltimore Community.

Your dedication and hard work have made a significant difference in our mission's fulfillment, and we are truly grateful for your unwavering commitment.



We thank you for your continued support in our programs.

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