

TRAILER-SAILING: HITCH A RIDE TO MORE DESTINATIONS p. 100

CRUISING WORLD

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GREAT LAKES: MILWAUKEE'S THRIVING SAILING CENTER

CAN SAILING REALLY CHANGE A COMMUNITY? Can it keep troubled teens from making wrong turns? Can it give disabled people the same freedom as others? Wouldn't it be worth a try to find out?

Such were the sentiments in the 1970s, when a garage-sized facility surrounded by mud got started on the "fresh coast" shores of Lake Michigan. The evolution of the Milwaukee Community Sailing Center (www.sailingcenter.org) from modest accommodations to a \$1.7 million, 6,000-square-foot education center, didn't happen overnight. It was built, using the latest in environmentally friendly technology, thanks to grassroots fundraising efforts conducted mostly by individuals.

The mission has always been simple: make sailing available for everyone. The typical M.C.S.C. sailor isn't a guy wearing an ascot and a yachting cap; it's an inner-city kid, a single mom, or an adult who wants to sail with family members but might think that sailing is too costly to consider. It's truly a place where the people of Milwaukee who might otherwise never give sailing a second thought can have a try.

There are many types of courses offered, but it's the outreach programs that change



The new Milwaukee sailing center was built to have a low impact on the environment.

such as boys and girls clubs, Ys, and teen programs, with the goal to steer at-risk urban youths toward a healthier lifestyle through sailing. The adaptive-sailing program features a new, \$180,000 setup, complete with hydraulic lift, to help the disabled experience the same freedom of

lives. M.C.S.C. works closely with a variety of community programs,

sailing as others by leaving the wheelchair behind. The Prams in the Park series brings sailing closer to youngsters aged 8 to 12 at off-site locations, with close to 350 kids participating. The education center's well-insulated building utilizing passive solar makes year-round programs possible.

Now that's a true case of leading by example and proof that the effort was worth a try.

Mike Lee