

Juneau Youth Sailing-- We Need Your Help to Keep the Wind in Our Sails!

Our Mission

Juneau Youth Sailing provides the only youth-focused sailing instruction in Alaska. We teach safety, navigation, and boat handling while building confidence, competence, and leadership.

Our Story

Juneau Youth Sailing (JYS) was founded in 1997 and remains the only youth sailing school in the state. Over 2,500 youth have benefited from this program in its 25+ seasons. It has a well-tested operational structure and it is a special opportunity uniquely available to Juneau as a maritime community.

We teach all levels of experience, and kids come back again and again. Sailing feels a bit like magic, and we show kids how to perform that magic themselves. JYS takes early teens on the cusp of independence and shows them what they are capable of, how to deal with the unknown and control variables, and how to *keep going* when everything changes in a moment. As a multi-season program with room for skill advancement, it has both the impact and the investment of time to create a life-long passion. Youth sailing inspires art, writing, study, and is a window into a whole new marine world and the people in it.

All four of our instructors are former JYS students who have years of experience sailing with us. They are all graduates of our highest-level class, and, prior to their experience teaching, had program volunteer experience coaching beginner students on the water under the guidance of past instructors. They are excellent sailors and enjoy sharing knowledge with kids.

Behind each sailor is extensive volunteer support from our four volunteer board members; "The Mizzen" non-board volunteers; onliney and the students, parents, and Coast Guard volunteers who attend work parties at the start and end of each season. Key tasks include cleaning and moving the boats and heavy modular dock sections between shore and sea twice a year, cleaning equipment, drysuit repairs and storage, and repair and maintenance of our powerboats, storage containers, and sailing dinghies,

Our Impact

JYS does more than just teach kids how to sail and handle boats. It fosters physical and emotional growth, self-empowerment, teamwork skills, and life skills like self-preservation, problem-solving, and paying keen attention to one's surroundings. It leads to jobs and careers in marine biology, naval architecture, and education. It leads to national sporting competitions and guides students to other leadership roles within the program and the broader Juneau community. Beyond the personal empowerment, the program provides exercise, new skillsets, and on-the-water experience essential to

children living in Juneau's often perilous marine environment. In over two and a half decades of operation, we have taught over 2,500 children in critical cold-water safety and nautical savvy.

Our Needs

We strive to keep our classes as affordable to everyone as possible and to also attract and maintain quality staff. The program can meet its minimum operational costs through tuition income, but we turn to our community and groups like the CBJ Youth Activities Board for funding support for larger, longer-term projects, like equipment maintenance and replacement, especially of safety boat outboard motors, and other essentials all of which we are working towards replacing after decades of hard use. Equipment improvements, once made, have the advantage of benefitting many future cohorts of students.

JYS has not purchased a new sailboat in many years and most of the fleet was purchased used in 1997, making it about 35 years old. After decades of hard use, our hulls are a patchwork of fiberglass repairs and parts pilfered from donor boats. It is time for a capital campaign to refloat our fleet.

A new Vanguard 420 Sloop is approximately \$12,000 plus shipping and we need eight of them for a total of \$100,000 to refresh the fleet. We have raised over \$25,000 from groups such as the Juneau Community Foundation, CBJ Youth Activities Grant, Gaguine Foundation, CHARR, Territorial Sportsmen, and the Marine Exchange. We continue to approach other funding sources to have a new fleet for our kids by summer of 2025. Most importantly, we need some active assistance and leadership in maintaining the JYS program for the community.

Your Support

Your support has a direct impact to our program to keep youth on the water. You can help by taking on an active role in JYS—we need folks with:

- Program Administration skills (enrollments, insurance renewal, staff recruitment)
- Fundraising confidence
- Outreach and social media interests
- Safety boat maintenance, dry suit maintenance and replacement
- Sailing dinghy maintenance, parts ordering
- Dock re-visioning (is there a better way do float our fleet that takes less work?)
- Any other creative way you can help!

Contact

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