

## 2024 Season Highlights Detroit Community Sailing Center

*Our 2024 Sailing Season saw exciting developments and collaborations, thanks to the generosity of our supporters. Here are some season highlights I'd like to share.*

*Harry Jones, President*

### **Boat Building Workshop Launches our Education Center Initiative**

This spring, we launched our Education Center initiative with a pilot after-school STEM boat-building workshop. The workshop was a collaborative effort between the [University of Michigan's Detroit River Story Lab](#) and sponsored, in part, by the Skillman Foundation. Participants not only built an Optimist Sailboat using hand tools, engineering drawings, and epoxies, but also engaged in interactive presentations that explored the river's environment, ecology, culture, and history.

See Ocean Cruiser's maiden voyage - [link to YouTube inside Great Lakes Sailing](#)



*Finished boat*



### **Water Safety: A Unique Approach**

Given the diverse backgrounds of our participants, we placed a special emphasis on water safety this season. We made a significant advancement by launching a unique "Open Water" Safety course in collaboration with the Detroit YMCA's "Detroit Swims" program. Our new program is specifically designed for sailors with limited or no swimming experience in open water conditions, unlike swimming pools.



*Detroit Swims Water Safety Class at Belle Isle Boathouse*

### **New Fleet Addition**

We added Open Bic sailboats to our fleet this season, thanks to a generous donation of boats from the Bayview Yacht Club and sails and rigging from a generous donor. These boats proved to be a huge hit with our sailors. The Bics are an excellent bridge to larger dinghies, for young sailors who have outgrown the single-sail Opti but are not yet ready for a larger boat with two sails.



*Open Bic*

### **STEM Schooner Outing**

We again took part in a half day outing on the Inland Seas schooner. The University of Michigan Detroit River Story Lab and the Inland Seas Educational Association in Sutton Bay MI made this wonderful program available to our participants. The program emphasized marine biology, the Detroit River's African American history, protecting our marine environment and tall ship seamanship while sailing on the Detroit River.



*Inland Seas Schooner Outing*

### **After School Sailing Practice to Stay Engaged**

We extend the sailing season into the start of school with after school sailing practice for our current and previous youth sailors. This is an initiative to keep our young sailors engaged in the sport.

### **Adult Programs**

We continued with two 9-week, once a week, beginning learn to sail and a 5-week intermediate program. The latter focused for advancing sailing skills and regatta participating. Using our 33' Tartan 10, we expanded our Race Crew Training program with additional crew evenings and DYRA race series participation. In addition, we provided the opportunities for new and experienced sailors to practice their sailing skills on Flying Scots and as crew members on DRYA skippered fix keeled boats.

### **Providing Access to Detroit's Waterways**

In 2024 we provided access to Detroit's waterways and education opportunities for over 100 youth and over 60 adults who otherwise may not have the opportunity.

## 2025 Plans

In 2025 we will continue to expand access to on-water and educational programming. In addition to another planned boat building project, we are exploring a project to update our Tartan 10, Macho Duck's powertrain including possible electrification.

## Facilities

We are working on several facility options to realize our vision of year-round program and on-water growth. The Belle Isle Boathouse project proposal is working its way through approvals and is an attractive option for us. However, we are mindful of a shifting environment and therefore continue to explore additional options. Those options include keeping the sailing program in the same general area on the river. Specific options we are exploring include the historic Police Station/North Fishing Pier and new construction/North Fishing Pier option. Shortly we hope to make an announcement on our facilities direction.

## Detroit River Education Center

**Detroit River Education Center** is a partnership between the [Detroit Community Sailing Center](#) (DCSC) a 501(c)(3) and the University of Michigan - [Detroit River Story Lab](#). The Detroit River Education Center will provide river-themed experiential learning programs and opportunities for the greater Detroit community, with an emphasis on water access, local environmental and cultural heritage, and career pathways exploration. The center is expanding existing programming and adding new programming.

This summarizes our Detroit River Education Center vision.

**Program Vision**

- Place-based learning programs and opportunities.
- Programming will include river-centered STEM, local history, environmental, career/education pathways exploration, and water safety.
- Open to public and focus on reaching underserved youth.
- Year-round with accessible fees.
- Delivered in classrooms, workshops and on the water.

## In the News

<https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2024/07/19/belle-isle-students-build-boat-sailing-lessons/74292176007/>

**Students build their boat, prepare to set sail on river**

Detroit Community Sailing Center program provided opportunity

Joe Maitland

Twelve students from Belle Isle and 12 from the Detroit Community Sailing Center worked together to build a boat. The boat is now ready for use and the students will be participating in sailing lessons.

## 2025 Help Needed

Three things top our wish list. One, securing another 420. Two, we need to replace a small dinghy that reached the end of its life. The motor was recently replaced so we just need the inflatable or RIB boat (7 – 10’). The last item is a big ask. We really need to add a second small, ~ 16’, center console safety/coach boat with a motor to support our growing 420 activities. Other, less ambitious, wish list items can be found on [our website here](#).

*For more information or questions please email us at [info@sailingdetroit.org](mailto:info@sailingdetroit.org)*