



Spectrum Sailing

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Who We Are

Mission Statement Spectrum Sailing provides maritime education, programming, and outreach for autistic individuals. Our free camps provide opportunities for skill development, social interaction, and confidence building. Sailing is our platform to positively impact the physical, mental, and social health of our participants.

Vision Statement Spectrum Sailing envisions a world where every autistic child has the opportunity to build confidence, independence, and connection through sailing. We are committed to creating inclusive programs that open new opportunities, create community connections, and inspire lifelong adventure on and off the water.

Video: A Look Into Spectrum Sailing



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teyjdy4_Gr8

Our Program at a Glance:

- Three-day programs in partnership with local sailing organizations and yacht clubs across the country.
- On-the-water instruction and individualized support from trained instructors and local volunteers.
- Curriculum designed specifically for autistic sailors with a sensory-friendly and inclusive approach.
- All instructors and volunteers receive our proprietary Autism & Water Safety Training curriculum, building inclusive practices that extend beyond the program.
- Donors, sponsors, partners, and grants ensure every camp remains completely free for participants and families!



Dear Spectrum Sailing Community,

As we look back on 2025, we are filled with gratitude for the families, volunteers, supporters, and partners who made this year one of the most meaningful in Spectrum Sailing's history. Spectrum Sailing began as a small effort to create more opportunities for autistic youth in Charleston, SC. Now, this program has grown into a national movement, expanding access and inclusion for young sailors across the country.

This year, we delivered more programs than ever before, expanding access to inclusive sailing nationwide. Our partnership with George Washington University deepened our understanding of the lifelong skills and benefits sailors develop on the water. Through our national partnership with NEXT for Autism, we expanded inclusive sailing opportunities to new communities across the country. From long-standing host sites to newly established locations, each camp remained rooted in our mission of inclusion, confidence, and belonging.

Looking ahead, 2026 brings even more exciting momentum. We are growing into new communities and building even stronger programming. We are also launching a new 8-week pilot program focused on peer mentorship in Sarasota, FL. Together, these efforts move us closer to reaching more autistic youth nationwide.

Thank you for being part of this work. Your support is essential to our mission and directly impacts every sailor who steps into a boat. Your support helps touch more lives, build better programs, and keep every experience free and accessible for autistic youth.

Sincerely,

Scott Herman
Founder & Executive Director

Alwin Brunner
Board Chairman

Spectrum Sailing: An Autism Story from SPARK



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wJf-7Gm5SY>

2025 Impact Highlights

A record-breaking year of growth and impact across our national programs.

240
Participants

12
Camps
All provided for free!

137
Volunteers

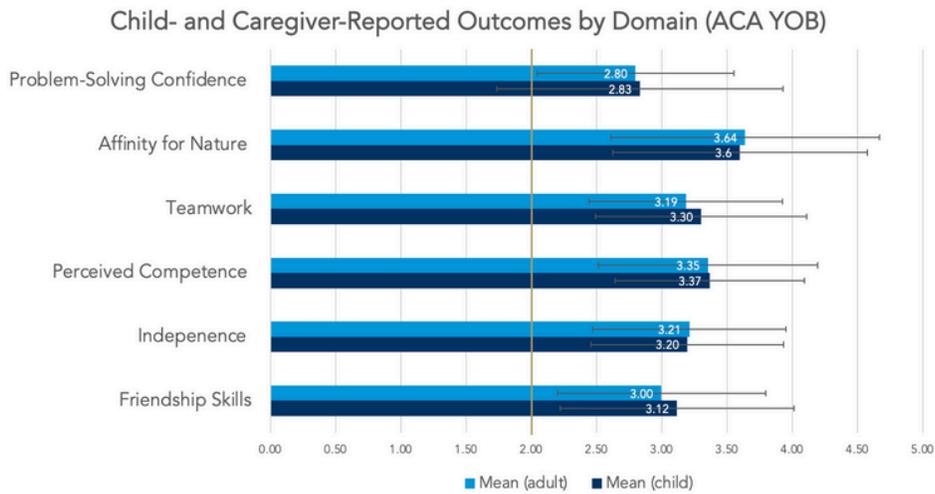


Year in Review:

- Hired our first part-time staff member to support national program growth and grant development.
- Launched a proprietary online volunteer training focused on autism inclusion and water safety developed by Aspiretech.
- Completed our first formal research study in partnership with George Washington University Occupational Therapy.
- Received a grant from NEXT for Autism pilot Next Tack, an 8-week advanced sailing program.
- Expanded internal systems to support scalable training, evaluation, and multi-site growth.

GWU Research

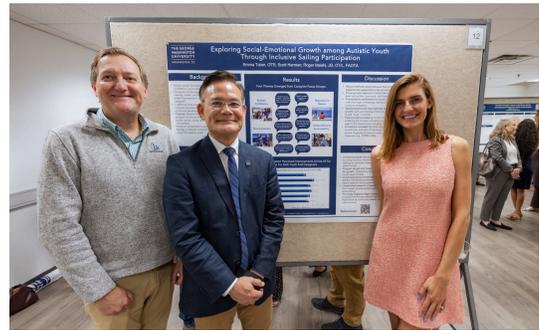
In partnership with George Washington University (GWU) Occupational Therapy, Spectrum Sailing evaluated sailors' social-emotional growth at four camps in 2025. Post-camp surveys from sailors and caregivers showed consistent perceived improvements across all six social-emotional domains, summarized below.



On a 5-point scale, a score of 2 reflects “increased a little” and a score of 3 reflects “increased some.” Across just three days of camp, average child- and caregiver-reported scores exceeded 2 in every domain, with most domains averaging above 3, indicating meaningful perceived growth.



Parent Focus Groups reinforced program impact and highlighted the value of Spectrum Sailing staff, while emphasizing the need for longer programs and expanded opportunities.



Emma Tober & Scott Herman presented the findings at GWU OT Doctorate Capstone presentations alongside program director, Dr. Roger Ideishi.

View research summary here: [Social-Emotional Growth Through Sailing](#)

What's Coming Next? GWU OT and Spectrum Sailing will continue the research into 2026, evaluating the outcomes of our pilot 8-week program, Next Tack.

The Word on the Water

“My son thought he would mostly just get to ride on the sailboats and maybe learn a few things, but **he said getting to be treated like a ‘normal’ kid and not judged and treated differently right away was amazing.**

He said he loved being trusted enough to steer and actually learn how to control the boat.”



“I am so grateful for this experience for my sailor! It was wonderful for him to have an activity of his own, like his ‘typical’ siblings. Watching him interact with peers and teach me something new was awesome!”

“Spectrum Sailing reminded me of the possibility that our kids can live and experience great things like sailing.”



“Everyday on the way home he would say, ‘mom I just love sailing.’ We are grateful for the people who invest in our kids and truly presume competence, since as parents **we know our kids can do so much more than society expects when given the opportunity and right circumstances.**”

Our Partners

Recognizing partners nationwide who powered our mission in 2025.

Nationwide Partner



Market Presenting Sponsors



Commodore



Our Partners

Recognizing partners nationwide who powered our mission in 2025.

Vice Commodore



Rear Commodore



Skipper



Crew



Our Community Supporters

Thank you to our 2025 camp hosts!



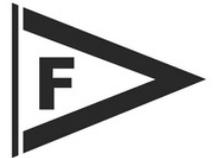
COLLEGE OF
CHARLESTON
SAILING



BAY ACCESS
SAILING FOUNDATION



CHICAGO CORINTHIAN
YACHT CLUB®



COMMUNITY
BOATING
BOSTON



And to every **donor**, **volunteer**, and **instructor**, thank you for supporting the Spectrum Sailing experience! Together, you helped create a welcoming environment where sailors could learn and thrive on the water.



Looking Ahead to 2026

In the coming year, Spectrum Sailing will build on its momentum while maintaining a strong commitment to our mission.

2026 Priorities

- Grow our reach by adding new camp locations and returning to long-standing communities.
- Expand community outreach efforts to increase program awareness and connect more families with our free, inclusive sailing opportunities.
- Invest in leadership development and enhanced instructor training.
- Continued research efforts to validate our program and strengthen our evidence-informed impact.

Expanding What's Possible

- Launching Next Tack, our new inclusive mentorship program pairing autistic youth with peer mentors to build skills, confidence, and teamwork.
- Establishing a pilot program for adults with intellectual disabilities, extending the joy of sailing to more members of our community.
- Developing a Camp Lead pathway, creating a track for future leaders and strengthen our instructor pipeline.

2026
at a Glance



13 Camp
Locations



NEXT TACK
New Pilot
Programs



Continued
Research
with George Washington
University



New +
Strengthened
Partnerships

Make an Impact and Join Our Community

DONATE *Every Dollar Counts!*

Your gift directly supports our free camps! Donations make it possible for young sailors to build confidence, make friends, and discover joy on the water.



www.spectrumSailing.Org/Support/Donate/

SPONSOR *Make a Bigger Impact.*

Your sponsorship makes it possible to offer life-changing sailing experience in your community. This partnership demonstrates your businesses' commitment to supporting local youth and families.

VOLUNTEER *See the Difference You Make.*

Volunteers create the welcoming and supportive environment that makes our programs special. We would love to have you join any of our upcoming camps!



To learn about more opportunities to support Spectrum Sailing, please visit:
www.spectrumSailing.Org/Support/



Spectrum Sailing

PO Box 1111, Isle of Palms, SC 29451
847-863-3059 • [Www.SpectrumSailing.Org](http://www.SpectrumSailing.Org) • EIN: 88-0637151