

Thursday, July 2, 2015

OUCARES students learn the ropes of sailing

This year's **Bell's Beer Bayview Mackinac Race** during the weekend of July 17-19 from Port Huron to Mackinac Island will feature a special group of race fans including students, faculty and staff in the School of Education's **OUCARES** program. OUCARES is the Outreach Services of the **Oakland University Center for Autism**.

Set Sail for Autism, a community engagement piece of the Bayview race, is giving a handful of young adults with autism spectrum disorder an opportunity to learn how to crew a major sailboat and actually work on the boats during the return trip to Port Huron. This will be a memory of a lifetime for participants and bring much-needed attention to the abilities and capabilities of young adults on the autism spectrum.

In addition to crewing the sailboats on their voyage, other students and faculty involved with the OUCARES adult practical film workshop will be creating a documentary video of this year's event. The plan is to screen their finished product to the sailors at Bayview and the public alike. This documentary will showcase the experience and newly acquired skills of the participants.

Kristin Rohrbeck, the director of OUCARES, thinks that participating in Set Sail for Autism will highlight the strengths of the individuals she works with on a daily basis. "Adults with autism have the potential to be amazing employees. They are motivated to work hard and possess great attention to detail."

Proceeds generated from the Set Sail for Autism program will also directly benefit the Oakland University Center for Autism. **A \$3,000 check was presented by title sponsor, Bell's Beer, to kick off the fundraising effort at the race preview on June 25.** And, money raised now until the conclusion of the race will benefit programming and autism initiatives at Oakland University.

Larry Bell, founder of Bell's Beer, told **C&G Newspapers** at the preview, "It's great that we can have a charity aspect to the race. This race is something that celebrates Michigan and promotes the area. A club like this (Bayview Yacht Club), celebrating its 100th anniversary, when they get involved in contributing to a group like the Oakland University Center for Autism. I think it really carries weight. Hopefully, it raises awareness for the center and, hopefully, others will feel compelled to contribute."

Visit **Set Sail for Autism** to learn more about the program or make a donation.

SetSailForAutism2015-Flyer-Updated061515.pdf



OUCARES students being taught how to rig a sail during race preview day on June 25.

(photo: Paige Blakeslee/Hack Into the Cause)



Participants are learning new sailboating skills and proceeds generated from the Set Sail for Autism program will directly benefit the Oakland University Center for Autism. (photo: Paige Blakeslee/Hack Into the Cause)