

AS SEEN IN The JOURNAL *Publications*



Ms. Race IS A HUGE SUCCESS

By Lori Draz

On the sunny Saturday morning of August 20, one of the largest groups of women sailors in recent years met for the 12th Annual Ms. Race, the women-only sailboat race crewed by girls in their pre-teens to women in their 70s. The annual charity Ms. Race is a sailing regatta hosted by the Atlantic Highlands Yacht Club (AHYC) each August, sponsored by and for women, with the support of the AHYC race committee and sponsored for the third year in a row by AT&T. Proceeds from the Ms. Race, as well as other related special events throughout the year, are donated to 180 Turning Lives Around, a private, non-profit organization dedicated to ending domestic violence and sexual assault in our community. The teams raised a record-breaking \$18,000+ for the charity.

This year's theme was United We Sail. The teams met in the morning for the captains' meeting and sailing seminar, along with an informative presentation by Adrian Begley and greetings from Commodore Steve Graziano. As the crews made their way to their boats, they were greeted by Brian Gillen and the crew of Latitude, with a spectator boat tailgate on the launch dock.

The Journal's Dan Seslar commented, "It started with a lovely breakfast and the whole event was so well run. The sailors gave all who watched a fine race, and even those new to the sport could catch on. It is an event to remember for next year."

Seven participating boats made their way to the starting line as a moderate oscillating breeze played with the sailors, who were anxious to get the race underway. The race started at 2:00 p.m. sharp with an east wind course sailed only occasionally on the AHYC's Olympic circle. AHYC sailboats Overlap, My Time, CODA, Confiscated, A Good Hair Day, and Killian were joined by Magic from the Raritan Yacht Club. Elaine Maher, on her J24, A Good Hair Day, with a crew of three experienced sailors sailed to their second first-place victory. Eileen Campbell, on CODA, came in second, with My Time placing third.

Elaine Maher shared, "As two-time winner of the Ms. Race regatta, team A Good Hair Day believes that it was good teamwork that helped us get around the race course fast to deliver the winning race result. We are grateful to race for such a good cause and excited to receive the perpetual trophies from both the Ms. Race and the NJYRA." This is the third year in a row that the New Jersey Yacht Racing Association has awarded the prestigious Commodore's Cup to the top female skipper of the Ms. Race event. Young women sailors from AHSEP, the Atlantic Highlands Sailing Education Program,

were well represented again on boats for this year's race.

Friends and family snapped photos and shot videos as they enjoyed a wonderful afternoon on the water. Co-chair Diane Kropfl said, "Recognition goes to everyone who participated. The success we achieved this year, without question, makes everyone a winner! Special thanks to all our sponsors and the organizing committee members: Eileen Campbell, Steve Colitz, Kay Curtiss, Kim Kolb, Janice Miller, Maureen Pitman, LuAnn Rathemacher, Bill Sabanski, Emily Smith, and Donna Syers."

Following the race, the crews and their friends and families convened at the club for an awards ceremony that featured dancing to the music from the AT&T Cares Band, appetizing hors d'oeuvres, and pasta prepared by Chef Barbie, plus a delicious cake featuring the Ms. Race logo, which was donated by Whole Foods Market. There were also chance and live auctions and a heartrending speech by 180 client Colleen. Best of all, the event added substantially to the funds raised for the 180 organization.

Ms. Race Committee co-chair Aleen Colitz explained, "I am very proud of our Ms. Race committee, and all those who made this year's event such a spectacular success. Over the past 12 years, we have raised over \$100,000 for local charities. I feel very privileged to be a part of such a hardworking and organized group."

Janice Miller shared, "The Women's Resource and Survival Center (WRSC, now 180 Turning Lives Around) was founded by seven women from a National Organization for Women (NOW) chapter in March 1976. At that time and for many years after, there was no safe house for victims of domestic violence, and the women who worked there, including me, sheltered victims in our own homes. 180 Turning Lives Around's legacy of strength, built by the tireless efforts of dedicated employees and volunteers, provides safety and a future for victims of domestic violence and their children. The race committee worked all year for the one day of the race, to raise money to continue the work of 180. And I don't want to forget to mention that we all have a great time racing across Sandy Hook Bay on the third Saturday of August each year."

The Ms. Race is open to all women and they are always looking for women with boats to participate in the race and women who want to crew; any or no experience needed. You can learn more at www.ahyc.net or by contacting ahyc.ms.race@gmail.com.

(All photos courtesy of Jeff Smith Photography at www.jeffsmithphoto.net)



(LEFT) Captains and crews (CENTER) Elaine Maher and her crew accepting the 2016 Ms. Race Trophy (RIGHT) Ms. Race co-chairs Diane Kropfl and Aleen Colitz