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**SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS SAIL.** Special needs children take two sailboats for a ride with family members and an experienced crew on a sunny Saturday at Shilshole Marina. The event was sponsored by the Heart of Sailing Foundation, a not-for-profit that uses the sailing experience as therapy. Participants ride for free. Steve Shay

**Kids get chance to sail on Sound**

By Steve Shay

Tuesday, December 11, 2007

As the sun lit up Shilshole Marina recently, about a half dozen special needs children and family members embarked on two boats and sailed into the Sound. Each child had a turn at the helm while wearing a captain's hat. Under the watchful eyes of experienced sailors, they learned navigation and safety skills.

The Heart of Sailing Foundation, a not-for-profit serving the United States and Canada, sponsored the event, and kids ride for free. It's founder, George Saidah, of Bloomington, Indiana, said he considers the sailing trips as a form of alternative therapy, much like horseback riding, and art and music, which gives the special needs child an experience of team-work and self-respect.

Ken and Susan Fitzgerald volunteered their time, and boat, a Caliber 40, the "Bint al Khamseen," Arabic, they said, for "Daughter of the Desert Wind." Ken is a marine

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- Ballard police
- Apartments, grocery may open in 2009
- Freshly paved street collapses in storm
- Hospital leader says Ballard site assured
- Santa visits kids to start the holiday festive season
- Kids get chance to sail on Sound
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### Ballard

#### News-Tribune

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## CARRIER INFO

consultant in a naval architecture firm. Stu Farrell volunteered aboard his boat, "Kismet."

Curtis Wood, who lives on his boat, WindDancer, at Shilshole, helped Saidah pull the event together. Also contributing his crewing skills and spirit was Al Hughes, president, Washington State Liveaboard Association, who lives with his wife, Louise, on their boat, also named Louise.

Two more launches were scheduled for Sunday. On this West Coast leg, Saidah met up with volunteers and kids in Vancouver last week, and after Seattle, works south to Portland, San Francisco, and beyond.

More information can be found at [www.heartofsailing.org](http://www.heartofsailing.org)

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