

little heart newsletter

March 15, 2007



Greetings from Your Program Director, Amber Small

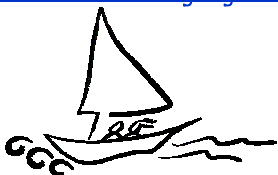
In this edition:

- 2007-Season Launch
- Media Spotlight-Autism One Radio
- Southern California Ambassador Program
- Current Course-New Feature
- Upcoming Events
- Donors/Volunteers/Sponsors

2007-SEASON LAUNCH

This year is promising to be our busiest ever. It is only March and many of our regions aren't even warm enough yet to begin sailing. However, Executive Director George Saidah hasn't been in dry-docks during the winter! He has been traveling and growing Heart of Sailing and is happy to announce 2 new regions for 2007: Heart of Sailing-Canada and Heart of Sailing-Boston. We will be introducing additional information about the new regions in upcoming little heart issues and on our website. In February, HoS returned to Southern California to launch the 2007 season with the opening Daysail in Dana Point, California. Since its debut in October 2006, the Southern California region continues to grow with participation of families from Santa Barbara to San Diego! Read more about the developing regions and Southern California events below!

For more information about our exciting news, see <http://www.heartofsailing.org/newsletter.asp>



MEDIA SPOTLIGHT



Heart of Sailing has launched a radio program on Autism One Radio!

Autism One is a 501(3)(c) nonprofit charity organization started by a small group of parents of children with autism. Maintaining a simple message that children with autism get better with proper treatment and therapies, the programs feature a variety of topics grouped in four areas ranging from biomedical treatments to legal advocacy. Hosts include knowledgeable autism experts across a variety of fields. Many are also parents of children with autism, a great number recovered or on the road to recovery. Their combination of education, experience, passion, and insight puts theory into practice helping turn difficult questions into real-life answers.

Heart of Sailing's monthly 30 minute broadcast features interviews of participants and volunteers and provides more detailed information about therapeutic aspects including socialization, communication, teamwork, motor skills, and confidence building. The broadcast also serves as a travelogue by providing brief summaries of interesting cultural, social, and historical facts of the various Daysail regions, with different regions. Ultimately, the program will be offered in 4 different languages.

For more information about Autism One, or to tune into Heart of Sailing's monthly broadcasts, please visit: <http://autismone.org/radio/>

*A Conversation of Hope
with Betsy Hicks*



Executive Director George Saidah and Program Director Amber Burton Small were recently featured guests on *A Conversation of Hope*, hosted by Betsy Hicks. Noted for her lectures on biomedical treatments, holistic options and implementing restrictive diets, Betsy and her husband, Dr. John Hicks, run Pathways Medical Advocates in Southern Wisconsin, with 6 offices nationwide. Betsy, the mother of a son with autism, is also author of *Cooking Healthy Gluten and Casein-Free Food for Children*, and anchor of *The GFCF Diet Comprehensive Video*.

Betsy offers interviews and insights highlighting the progress in areas related to autism spectrum disorders such as: biomedical research and treatment; communication, education, and behavioral modalities; adult services; sociological and philosophical issues; and legislative, advocacy, and insurance concerns. "A Conversation of Hope" first broadcasts each Tuesday at 9am Pacific (Noon Eastern) on the VoiceAmerica Health & Wellness Channel (www.health.voiceamerica.com), then on Autism One Radio the following Wednesday.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA AMBASSADOR PROGRAM



Checking out the view topsides in San Diego

Heart of Sailing introduced its Daysail program to San Diego on March 3&4 at Silver Gate Yacht Club on Shelter Island. Shelter Island, actually a man-made peninsula formed from a sand bar, was developed in the 1950's and is now a 1.2 mile stretch of marinas, hotels, and parks. Silver Gate Yacht Club, formed in 1952, is committed to community service and has hosted an annual Wheelchair Regatta since 1960. The weekend could not have been a success without the club's assistance. Special thanks to all at SGYC, Commodore Dave Lancaster, the Officers and Board, and Port Captain Tony DiLeva.

HoS completed 4 Daysails with more than 20 participants and family sailing San Diego Bay, encountering seals lazing about on the channel buoys, watching the military helicopters, and even seeing a submarine. Participants also enjoyed a picnic lunch aboard the boat. HoS also had a special guest, Board Member Christian Chahine, visiting from Europe. However, the star of the weekend was Ivy, our adventurous cat who lives aboard. Her outgoing personality and fondness for sailing delighted the participants.

HoS returns to Dana Point for Daysails on March 17&18, and then continues the Southern California Ambassador Program with events in Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Barbara and Marina del Rey. To sail with us please visit the link "Sail with Us" at our website: www.heartofsailing.org.

DONORS

Special thanks to families of participants who have recently donated to HoS. For 2007, we have a new fundraising campaign, entitled SOS HOS (Support Our Sailing at Heart of Sailing) to target funding for Daysails in our established and growing regions. Contributions enable children with developmental disabilities to enjoy our unique recreational therapy program. For more information about donations and other items needed please check our website, <http://heartofsailing.org/whatisneeded.asp>

Current Course

A recurring feature highlighting news and research regarding pervasive developmental disabilities

Research now indicates that signs of autism spectrum disorders can be detected in children as early as 18 months.

Autism is typically diagnosed around the ages of 3 and 4. However, critical signs apparent in younger children are making it possible - and important - to identify autism earlier, said Hannah Schertz, an assistant professor at the University of Northern Colorado, who conducted research while a doctoral student at Indiana University. Researchers are beginning to find ways to intervene more effectively with children who have been identified with an autism spectrum disorder before age 3. Schertz found that a relationship-based approach that builds on the parent-child relationship is effective in promoting joint attention in toddlers. Joint attention is a milestone that is evident when a child shares attention about an object or event. It is a precursor to verbal language, a core difficulty for children with ASD.

Schertz's "joint attention mediated learning" model builds competency through a sequence of focusing on facing, turn-taking, responding to and initiating joint attention Characteristics of joint attention:

- The child may respond to a parent showing an object by exchanging looks between the object and the parent or by visually following a parent's point.
- The child may initiate a joint attention encounter by holding out, or pointing to, an object while shifting gaze between the object and the parent.
- Studies have found that verbal language follows very quickly on the heels of joint attention in typical development.
- Toddlers with ASD have less difficulty communicating non-verbally about an object for the purpose of requesting than for purely social reasons. They are relatively able to make their wants and needs known even without the benefit of verbal language. However, they have difficulty with socially-oriented nonverbal communication that is for the purpose of sharing enjoyment or excitement about objects or events.

One difference at about age 1 is that children with a later diagnosis of autism did not spend as much time looking at others' faces. An even more reliable sign is seen in toddlers who do not show signs of joint attention by age 18 months.

This article is excerpted from the feature in *Active for Life*, produced by *Indiana University Media Relations*. For more information, visit: <http://newsinfo.iu.edu/>



VOLUNTEERS

We continue to recruit new volunteers to assist us with operations, event planning and fundraising. As we continue to grow, the work of our volunteers is even more crucial. As part of our Operations Manual, all volunteers working directly with children in our program must pass background screening. We will be featuring bios and info regarding our dedicated volunteers in upcoming *little heart* issues!

COMMUNITY PARTNERS PROGRAMS

Heart of Sailing is pleased to announce it has received approval as an authorized recipient for the *Community Contributions Program* with Ralph's as well as Albertson's *Community Partners*. The retailers, with locations in California, only provide funds to 501(c)(3) charities that pass eligibility tests and complete an application process.

This participation is an easy way for families to support Heart of Sailing by choosing HoS to receive contributions from their grocery purchases. Both retailers will donate percentages of qualifying purchases to the charity chosen by the shoppers who enroll their cards. Simply by scanning the shopper's card, a percentage of the groceries purchased is donated to HoS by the supporting store.

To learn how you can enroll, please visit the link on our website. HoS is pursuing approval for similar programs at retailers in our other regions. Please contact us with the stores in your area.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DAYSAILS:

Dana Point, CA - March 17-18
Oxnard, CA - March 24-25
Santa Barbara, CA - March 31-April 1
Ventura, CA - April 7-8
Marina del Rey, CA - April 14-15
Dana Point, CA April 21-22

LEXUS Newport to Ensenada Race
April 27-29, 2007

Summer Sailstice Sail-a-thon
June 23-24, 2007



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