

# CISFA

Conanicut Island Sailing Foundation

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The first step in learning to care for our environment is helping people to connect with it



Dear Friends,

In 2023, CISF programs reached more than 6,000 young learners as a result of new programs, extending our outreach programs, deepening partnerships and participating in the Exploration Zone of the Ocean Race stopover in Newport. Our programs and participants are the heart of CISF and the reason our team is dedicated to this community.

CISF programs are deeply focused on the importance of experiential learning and the idea that human health and ocean health are inextricably connected. Oceans provide us with food, medicines, livelihoods, mental and physical well-being, and a huge number of recreational activities. They cover more than 70% of the Earth's surface and provide the Earth's largest carbon sink. Accessing, understanding, and experiencing the ocean and coastal ecosystems is essential, and providing these opportunities to youth is the core of our mission.

CISF programs engage youth with coastal ecosystems and science through exploration, experiential activities, and play. Facilitating positive experiences in nature, whether that means climbing a tree, sailing a boat, counting invasive species in the local marsh, or digging in the garden are all important in helping people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities learn and thrive. All of these experiences connect us to the natural world, make us feel better (mentally and physically), and are how we start to develop a sense of place, and even develop favorite places. These encounters are what spark a child's interests and pathways, and are the first step in learning to care for our environment, and to protect these special spaces.

Thanks to our continued public-private partnership with the Town of Jamestown, we are able to operate from a truly magnificent location at Fort Getty, where we have access to the ocean and a variety of ecosystems that provide endless educational opportunities. The salt marsh plays an important role in the aquatic food web. It also helps protect against storm surge by absorbing excess water and provides a buffer between land and sea. Youth are able to use seine nets to discover a wide variety of sea life, and to see how this variety changes throughout the seasons.

The rocky shore and sandy beach are two additional ecosystems we get to explore. Each provides a chance to look at different creatures, plant life, and habitats. And, surrounding a good portion of all of these environments is eelgrass. Eelgrass is one of two seagrass species that grows in our waters. They serve as "nurseries" for marine life, help stabilize the shoreline, and baffle wave energy, which protects our coastlines. Each of these distinct ecosystems is vital to Jamestown's coastal health, and the healthy exploration and understanding nurtured in our youth.

As we look towards our future, we have our sights set on organizational and programmatic strengthening goals. Enhanced measuring and communicating of impact are high on our list of priorities. Ensuring programs are mission-centric and meet the needs of our community is also top of mind. And, we have our eyes set on building a more permanent future at Fort Getty that meets our needs and just as importantly, the needs of you, our community. 2024 is a year focused on engaging with our community and building into the future!

Sincerely,



Meg Myles, *Executive Director*



## CISF VISION

Connect the community to the water and our environment.

## CISF MISSION

Through boating and education, we inspire and engage people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities with the coastal environment.

## CORE VALUES

The Conanicut Island Sailing Foundation is built on the following core values that drive every decision that we make and every program that we offer:



**Opportunity** –Foster competence and confidence on the water and in coastal environments by offering affordable access to boating opportunities & coastal education instruction on Narragansett Bay.



**Education** – Provide environmental and science-based programming, with a focus on fun and hands-on learning.



**Stewardship** – Through education & personal impact awareness, create generations of informed marine and environmental stewards.



**Positive Youth Development** – Use boating as a platform for personal growth, provide confidence-building, leadership, & team work opportunities.

“This program really improved my mental health. It gave me something to look forward to every week.”

-Valentina, YouthBuild student & Marine Trades Career Exploration participant



# CORE PROGRAMS

Getting children outside and into nature to explore the coastal environment is critical. CISF offers a variety of programs that do just that while empowering young learners to discover, wander, investigate, and be curious.

## CAMP

Jamestown Sea Adventure Camp is a cornerstone of CISF programming. It has grown from 60 youth participating in 2012 to over 600 in 2023! Children ages 4 – 16 explore the saltmarsh, learn to sail, make new friends, play games, and generally enjoy the outdoor environment provided by Fort Getty. Activities at the heart of Sea Adventure Camp are: sailing, marsh & coastal exploration, fishing, leadership, and gardening.

## AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

CISF offers an assortment of afterschool programs that run September through December and March through May. Sailing is just one of many programs that are offered. In fact, the majority of our after-school programs are land-based and get youth into the coastal environment, where they can explore, learn science through fun activities, and gain confidence. “Classic” CISF afterschool programs include: Sailing, Kayaking, Backyard Explorers, Jr Naturalist Training, Outdoor Survival Skills, K-2 Nature Explorers, Fishing.

## VACATION DAY PROGRAMS & FIELD TRIPS

Providing programs on school vacation days and field trips for schools across the state are important to fulfilling our mission and increasing our reach to more youth. Both vacation day programs and field trips have a singular focus and are approximately three hours long. Subject matters are science and STEAM-based. Typical programs are:

- STEM Building challenges
- Biodiversity: invasive species count
- Ecosystems and Watersheds
- Outdoor Survival Skills
- Sailing

## HOME SCHOOL

CISF’s homeschool program draws students from across the state. Home-school manager, Fiona Christie, has created and built two sections of home-school – one for youth ages 5-7 years old, and another for youth in grades 3-8. These groups meet twice a week in the spring and fall over two, five-week sessions. Each session has a different theme such as Engineering, Natural Science, Sailing, and include topics like ROV’s, weather, sailing, and marine science.

**Jr Nature Explorers:** children ages 5-7

**Coastal Citizens:** grades 3-8



“I taught my parents how to tie an 8-knot last night.... With pasta”

-Koi, Sea Adventure camper



### IN-SCHOOL SUPPORT

CISF's partnership with Jamestown Public Schools is one of our most important. Program Director Haley Barber has worked alongside Jamestown teachers and students during the school day since 2016. Annual, stand-out programs include the following:

**Kindergarten science** – Haley has delivered and supported Kindergarten science for years. Haley teaches several of the Guiding Education in Math and Science Network (GEMS-NET) curriculum, such as ‘materials in motion’. More recently, Haley has led the science classes for this grade.

**Worm Wednesdays** – CISF's two worm composting bins reside in the school's greenhouse during the school year. Every Wednesday, Haley engages students in grades K-4 around food waste and composting leftovers with the resident worms. Each week Haley and her “worm workers” (student volunteers), feed left over food to the worms before heading back to class.

**7th and 8th Grade Creek Support** – Lawn School science teacher, “Mr. K” takes 7th and 8th graders to the local creek weekly throughout the year. Students measure temperature, salinity, water flow, and participate in a variety of additional experiential projects. CISF provides support for this weekly and collaborates on hands-on projects.

**Outdoor Learning Support** – Haley provides teachers with educational support within the outdoor learning setting. Support includes assisting with projects and creating activities.

### OUTREACH PROGRAMS

CISF is committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access to the coastal environment for all. Through partnerships and collaborations with organizations and schools who serve typically marginalized and underserved populations, CISF offers a variety of activities, experiences, and opportunities for these youth.

From exploring the marsh, to kayaking, sailing, and our Marine Trades Career Exploration Program, CISF is committed to providing an equitable, safe, supportive environment to all youth.

**Marine Trades Career Exploration Field Trip Program** – Twenty high school youth from YouthBuild Providence and Movement Education Outdoors learned about opportunities in marine trades, a quickly growing sector of the RI Economy. This was made possible through CISF partnerships with local businesses and a grant from 11th Hour Racing Team.

**FabNewport** – CISF is thrilled to be a part of FabNewport's ecosystem of learning. Our organizations are closely aligned in our shared view of the importance of experiential learning as well as providing consistent support and encouragement. We both strive to create “spark” experiences that engage the hearts, minds and souls of youth; and to provide access to new experiences and opportunities.





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## PARTNERS:

Town of Jamestown  
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GT3 Creative  
Jamestown Conservation Commission  
Jamestown Outdoors  
Jamestown Public Schools  
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SouthCoast Wind  
TPG Marinas  
URI GSO Shark Camp  
US Sailing  
YouthBuild Providence

## 2023 MARINE TRADE FIELD TRIP BUSINESS PARTNER:

Dynamic Yacht Rigging  
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Safe Harbor New England Boat Works  
Sailor and Seam  
Seven Star Engineering  
The Sailing Museum

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Safe Harbor, Jamestown Boat Yard



“Nature Explorers changed  
my life.”

**-Child in Nature Explorers**

## GRANT FUNDERS:

11th Hour Racing Team  
Devereaux Ocean Foundation  
Jamestown Education Foundation  
Rhode Island Dept of Education, Learn 365 (Jamestown)  
Spindrift Foundation  
Rhode Island Foundation  
van Beuren Charitable Foundation

## STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Brendan Training, June  
(Training about working with neurodivergent learners)  
Ocean Literacy Conference, October  
RI DEM - Fishing Training, May  
US Sailing Leadership Conference, February  
The Sailing Museum Field Trip, March  
The Tomaquag Museum - DEI training & Native American  
History education with Silvermoon LaRose



“CISF continues to be a child-focused, creative partner with the schools. The leadership at CISF asks the right questions and listens to our answers. They create programs that address the specific needs we verbalize. The children in the Jamestown community reap the benefits of the work done by CISF.”

**-Erica Dickson, Jamestown Schools,  
Director of Student Services**





## 2023 DONORS

We are grateful for our generous donors, volunteers, businesses, and foundations whose support make it possible for us to connect and engage more people to coastal environments every year! These individuals and organizations made gifts to CISF between January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2023.

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# IMPACT INFO & FUN FACTS

5,000 school children from across Rhode Island participated in our hands-on buoyancy challenge at the Ocean Race Exploration Zone

28 of 35 Jamestown Fourth Graders participated in a week of free sailing lessons through the Fourth Grade Sailing Program

Inaugural Bay Day community open-house event in June hosted more than 120 attendees

Hosted our first-ever Marsh Exploration for parents in July and August!

**“This really is the ocean state! There is so much more to Rhode Island than Providence!”**

**Valentina, YouthBuild student & Marine Trades Career Exploration participant**

Over \$14,000 in scholarships were awarded in 2023

340 days of afterschool, homeschool, vacation, outreach and summer camp programming

200 hours of in-school support from October through May

A 16% increase in participation and capacity in Sea Adventure Camp from 2022, with more than 600 spots filled

More than 400 people enjoyed our Free Sailing program in the summer

**“I love the ocean and I love nature. I think that’s why my two favorite colors are green and blue”**

**-Hunter, Sea Adventure camper**

Doubled the size of our Marine Trades Career Exploration program for high school from our pilot program in 2022  
456 pieces of trash were picked up at Fort Getty in a single day during a camp trash collection competition  
More than 300 Jamestown School students were served by CISF’s in-school educator

50% of after-school youth and 65% of homeschool youth participated in multiple CISF programs and sessions – exciting as return attendance improves retention and engagement.  
Youth from across the state participated in 30 homeschool programs

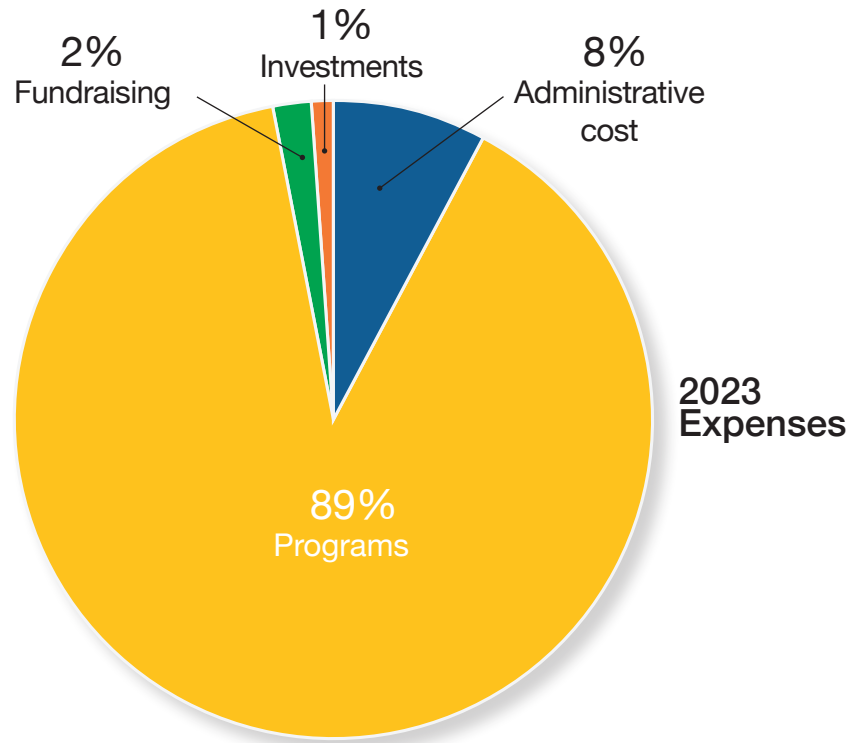
Thanks to our continued partnership with Town and a State grant, bus transportation was available to Jamestown School students attending CISF after-school programs, allowing students to participate who have not otherwise been able

Introduced Fishing to our quiver of activities, resulting in 50 kids fishing, many for the first time

Development Associate, Phoebe Livingston joined the CISF team



# 2023 Financials



## EXPENSES

Program	\$540,480	89%
General and Administrative Costs	\$49,463	8%
Fundraising	\$13,684	2%
Investments	\$4,469	1%
Capital Campaign	\$1,942	0%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$610,038</b>	

## REVENUE 2023

Programs	\$196,023	27%
*Donations	\$412,658	56%
Grants	\$95,500	13%
Investment	\$14,609	2%
Sales/Leases/Gains	\$18,321	2%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$737,111</b>	

\* Includes \$80,000 Capital Campaign



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