



The Maryland School for the Blind

ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE

3501 Taylor Avenue • Baltimore, Maryland 21236 • 410-444-5000

September 6, 2016

To whom it may concern;

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland school for the Blind. We are a residential school that serves children from birth to the age 21 that have visual impairments. The majority of the students that we serve have additional multiple impairments.

I have now been with the school's Recreation Department for 4 years, in that short time I have had the privilege of working with the members of the C.R.A.B. program and offering sailing opportunities to many of our students.

The majority of our students have never had the opportunity to sail or even know what sailing is. One student last year said to me when we arrived, "Ms. Tammy, are we going sailing in real water!" They had no idea the experience that they were in for. The captains of the sail boats are absolutely wonderful; they are able to answer every question that our students have. These captains allow our students the hands on opportunity to sail a real sail boat. When you have no vision, you see with your hands. The captains allow the students to touch and feel everything as they explain exactly what everything is. They are so on cue with the students; they immediately get a sense of the level of students and know how to modify the language to what the students can understand. I can't tell you how much this experience helps to build self-esteem in our students. When the students head that sailboat out in the bay, tiller in hand and they are in control of the sail! They get such a sense a pride and accomplishment. The smiles are from ear to ear!

One of the goals that we have for the students to go on this experience is that they would be able to learn 3 things. It is amazing the things that they have learned.

I must also tell you that C.R.A.B. has also catered to our students with sever multiple disabilities. While the captains still talk about the sailboat, the parts, what makes it sail etc., a focus is more on the relaxation for the student. The experience, the opportunity to try something new, for some it is to maintain acceptable behavior, or to activate their communication devises. Those captains have been 100% into whatever the need of the students are. This would also include the physical part of lifting and assisting with getting the students on board.

I can't say enough about this program, the people that work it and the opportunities that it provides for our students! I full support the C.R.A.B Program!

Tammy Kraft, Rec. Specialist.