



March 27th, 2019

To whom it may concern;

I am writing this letter again in support of the Chesapeake Region Accessible Boating Program.

This program is very meaningful to the students of the Maryland School for the Blind. Different students with varying disabilities sail with this program twice a year. It is one of the most popular trips that the students look forward to each year. While it is an educational trip the skippers make sure it is fun for all. The skippers are what make this sailing experience so wonderful. They are so "hands-on" with our students. Our students are not your "typical" students. They may not look, or act like most students coming in for a field trip. These students all have some very special needs, and in most cases are coming with a one on one staff ratio. The Skippers ask a few great questions and then are ready to appropriately interact with our students. They allow the students to feel and touch everything that is safe to do so. Touching is how our students see. They explain and name everything for them. They of course allow the students to sail the vessel! Do you know the thrill that is, to be totally blind and sail a vessel? To hear that you are sailing a vessel under a bridge and hear the trucks moving over top? It is quite the thrill. It is something that they talk about for months to come.

Some of our students are rather lower functioning. (I always let Sarah know beforehand.) With these sails, the Skippers set a more therapeutic sail: Keeping things calm, these students may or may not want to actually sail the vessel, but rather relax and listen to the water and traffic and the birds etc.

I also need to mention how helpful the skippers are with assisting to get these students on and off the sail boats! I do not know if they are trained to lift as we are but they just take over and lift these students up and over for us. They are a huge help and much appreciated. Again I need to say they don't just grab the students and lift, they are talking to them, telling them what they are about to do and what is going on. They treat our students with complete respect the entire time that we are with them.

C.R.A.B. offers such a unique and wonderful experience to our students we are so grateful and thankful for the opportunity. Without such a program many of our



The Maryland School for the Blind

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students would never have an opportunity to ever sail in a sail boat many would never have the opportunity to be in a boat on the water! So thank you very much for what you are allowing this program to do!

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Recreation Specialist

Maryland School for the Blind