



TWIN CITIES BLIND SAILING



## Community Impact Statement – 2025

### Mission

To facilitate sailing independence in blind and visually impaired people of all ages in Minnesota by providing education, community awareness, and accessible, affordable, and annual learning and interactive competitive racing and casual sailing opportunities for them and the sighted people who support our values.

### Vision

Twin Cities Blind Sailing will develop blind and visually impaired individuals of all ages in Minnesota into independent sailors in both competitive racing and casual cruising environments to improve lives, enrich communities, and fill the waters with sailors that will fuel the sport of sailing for generations to come.

### Overview

During the past year, Twin Cities Blind Sailing has expanded opportunities for people who are blind or visually impaired to experience sailing at multiple levels—from first-time sailors discovering the feel of the wind on their face to independent racers mastering competitive starts. Through partnerships with local sailing centers, yacht clubs, and regional organizations, we have created an inclusive and safe environment that promotes skill development, friendship, and personal growth.

Over the course of 25 sessions, our sailors enjoyed almost 200 sailing days, made possible through 84 dedicated guide engagements. Each activity emphasizes teamwork, communication, and self-confidence—skills that extend far beyond the water and embody our core values of growth, independence, and inclusivity.

### Values:

- Growth
- Independence
- Resilience
- Fitness
- Inclusivity
- Teamwork
- Fun
- Accessibility
- Diversity

**191 Sailors • 25 Sessions • 84 Guides/Volunteers**

### **Cruising Program – Bde Maka Ska, in partnership with Minneapolis Sailing Center**

Our cruising program introduces new sailors to the fundamental experience of sailing. Participants learn to sense the boat's movement, feel the wind's power, and steer using auditory and tactile feedback.

Sailors report increased confidence in mobility, spatial awareness, and trust in teamwork.

Participation: During eight cruising sessions, sailors logged almost 100 sailing days.

Progression: Returning sailors develop advanced skills, such as sail trim and docking—some independently mooring or docking their own boats for the first time.

### **Racing Program – Lake Minnetonka, in partnership with Wayzata Sailing**

For sailors seeking challenge and competition, our racing program introduces the geometry of racecourses, sail trim optimization, and race strategy. Each session blends on-the-water drills with actual race starts and mark roundings.

Impact: Sailors develop confidence in decision-making, teamwork, and adaptive problem-solving.

Participation: Wayzata sailing hosted 38 sailing days, over 11 sessions, supported with a dedicated team of certified staff and volunteer guides.

Challenges: Evening scheduling and transportation logistics have limited participation consistency—an area we continue to improve in alignment with our value of accessibility.



### **Youth Sailing Camp – Minneapolis Sailing Center, Bde Maka Ska**

In partnership with Minneapolis Sailing Center, we hosted a five-day camp designed for blind and visually impaired youth. Under the supervision of trained instructors and guides, young sailors learned to sail, make new friends, and experience the thrill of independence.



Impact: The camp nurtures resilience, social connection, and a lifelong love for outdoor recreation.

Participation: 11 youth sailors attended the weeklong camp, supported by 4 volunteers and instructors.

### **Superior Sailing Experience – Duluth Superior Sailing Association Partnership**

In September, a group of five sailors and four guides journeyed to Superior, Wisconsin, for a transformative weekend on Lake Superior. Participants sailed a variety of boats—from the nimble 2.4m to the larger Catalina 25—venturing through the Superior entry to experience open-water sailing.



Impact: For many, this was their first time on the Great Lakes—an opportunity to experience the sounds, motion, and scale of big-lake sailing. Participants described feelings of awe, empowerment, and belonging within the larger sailing community.

### **Sighted Guide Training – Bde Maka Ska, in partnership with Minneapolis Sailing Center**

Each season volunteer sighted guides are invited to attend a one-day training program. The curriculum starts on-land and introduces the role of a sighted guide. It covers safety, awareness and respect for all parties involved. Following the discussions and lecture the training takes to the water and engages the skills practiced during typical sailing events with blind and low vision sailors.

Impact: Volunteer Sighted Guides have an opportunity to discuss and learn about the responsibilities of the position.



For new sighted guides this is often the first experience in the role and for experienced sighted guides this is the first opportunity of the season to connect and practice.

### **Choroideremia Research Foundation (CRF) Experience**

TCBS partnered with the Choroideremia Research Foundation (CRF) to offer participants living with vision loss the opportunity to experience sailing—many for the very first time. Guided by our trained volunteers, participants discovered the motion of the boat, the feel of the wind, and the teamwork required to harness nature’s energy.

Impact For many, the day on the lake represented not only a new activity, but also a moment of confidence and connection—proof that the water belongs to everyone.

## High School Inclusion Day

Twin Cities Blind Sailing also welcomed students from two local area high schools for a special day of shared learning on the water. Working together, sighted and visually impaired sailors discovered how communication, trust, and collaboration create a unified crew.

Impact: Students left with a deeper appreciation of what inclusion looks like in practice—understanding that teamwork transcends sight, ability, and experience.

## Broader Community Impact

- Built partnerships with three metro sailing organizations and one regional partner.
- Expanded access to adaptive recreation for people who are blind or visually impaired.
- Fostered volunteerism and inclusion through the training of sighted guides.
- Increased public awareness of adaptive sailing through community events and shared media coverage.

## Looking Forward

Twin Cities Blind Sailing continues to grow its reach and impact. Guided by our Mission, Vision, and Values, we aim to expand participation, deepen volunteer engagement, and strengthen partnerships to make adaptive sailing even more accessible. With improved data tracking, expanded youth programs, and sustainable funding, we strive to offer 25% more sailing opportunities next season—empowering more blind and visually impaired sailors to feel the wind, take the helm, and chart their own course toward independence.



## Appendix A – Program Summary

This appendix summarizes the major programs conducted during the year, showing participation levels and partnership affiliations.

Program	Location / Partner	Description	Sailors	Sessions	Guides / Volunteers
Cruising	Minneapolis Sailing Center (Bde Maka Ska)	Introduces sailors to the motion of the boat, wind awareness, and steering with a trained guide. Builds fundamental sailing skills and confidence.	99	8	48
Racing	Wayzata Sailing (Lake Minnetonka)	Teaches rigging, racecourse geometry, boat handling, and strategy. Combines skills drills with racing practice.	38	11	8
Youth Camp	Minneapolis Sailing Center (Bde Maka Ska)	Weeklong summer camp for blind and visually impaired youth. Teaches sailing fundamentals and teamwork.	11	2	4
Superior Sailing Experience	Duluth Superior Sailing Association	Immersive weekend trip offering sailing on a variety of boats on Lake Superior.	5	2	8
Training	Sited Guide Training	Introduces volunteer sited guides to the roles, responsibilities, techniques, and best practices required to deliver programs	4	1	20
CRF Conference	Minneapolis Sailing Center (Bde Maka Ska)	Participants from the Choroideremia Research Foundation experienced sailing—many for the first time—discovering the freedom of the wind and the teamwork that makes adaptive sailing possible.	6	1	2
High School Inclusion Day	Minneapolis Sailing Center (Bde Maka Ska)	Students from two local high schools spent a day on the water learning how sighted and visually impaired sailors work together, gaining firsthand insight into collaboration and inclusive recreation	32	1	14

## Appendix B – Financial Summary

### Funds Raised

Fundraising Source	Amount
General Donations	\$2,380
Sail-a-thon	\$1,170
Give to the Max Day	\$850*
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,400</b>

\*Reported, not yet received

### Funds Used

- **Transportation Support** – \$500  
Lyft and gas gift cards helped sailors attend racing events in Wayzata
- **Event Scholarships** – \$850  
Enabled sailors to attend the Duluth Sailing event
- **Sailor Gear & Swag** – \$300  
Shirts and materials that build identity and belonging
- **Community Celebration** – \$788  
Year-end party recognizing sailors and volunteers
- **Operational Support** – \$350  
Website hosting and PayPal processing fees

### Looking Ahead

Due to our generous donors, we currently have funds of over \$3,200 as we prepare for the 2026 sailing season! We anticipate the ability to continue to provide scholarships for events and assistance with transportation to our sailors in 2026 with these funds.

TWIN CITIES BLIND SAILING



A special thank you to our sailors,  
volunteers, donors and sailing  
partners for making our 2025 sailing  
season a huge success!

Twin Cities Blind Sailing is a Minnesota 501c3 that depends  
100% on donations. Can we count on you again in 2026?

Visit our website at [Twin Cities Blind Sailing](https://www.twin-cities-blind-sailing.org) to make an online  
donation or mail donations to:

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