



For Immediate Release  
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New England Science & Sailing

### **NESS Announces AmeriCorps Grant Award and Expanded Programs in New London**

New London, CT - New England Science & Sailing Foundation (NESS), US Sailing's Outstanding Community Sailing Center in America for 2013, today announced expanded programs in New London to advance adventure STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education and experiential learning opportunities for the city's students. This multi-faceted initiative, which exemplifies NESS's continuing commitment to serve New London, includes the following:

- A strengthened partnership with the Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School, including establishment of a NESS classroom in the school.
- A new \$133,000 federal AmeriCorps grant from the Connecticut Commission on Community Service, to positively impact students' lives by integrating NESS's science and sailing-based adventure education curriculum with Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School's STEM Academy. Numerous private donations from individuals and foundations will also support this program.
- A new partnership with Ocean Beach Park, including establishment of a NESS classroom at Ocean Beach and kayak launching amenities for NESS's marine science classes.
- A new partnership with the Science and Technology Magnet High School of Southeastern Connecticut and New London High School to offer a high school sailing team.
- A Pfizer donation of 10 Flying Junior double-handed dinghies, a 17' powerboat, and a floating dock to NESS for use by the high school sailing team.
- A new partnership with Mitchell College, which has donated the use of their fixed dock on the Thames River for use by the high school sailing team.

To celebrate this initiative, NESS will hold a ribbon cutting ceremony and press conference July 8 at 9:00 am at its new classroom at Ocean Beach Park. The community is welcome to attend to meet representatives from NESS, its partner organizations, and invited guests and dignitaries.

Anchoring the initiative is the award of a \$133,000 AmeriCorps grant from the Connecticut Commission on Community Service to hire ten AmeriCorps Members to teach students in the STEM Academy. "We are thrilled to be collaborating with NESS. This innovative AmeriCorps program has the potential to transform our students' lives through the combination of NESS's adventure STEM education and mentoring and assistance from AmeriCorps volunteers," remarked Alison Ryan, Principal of the Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School. The AmeriCorps program includes an extended learning program during the academic year for 200 students attending the STEM Academy at Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School as well as a summer learning program for 125 participants in Camp Rotary and New London Recreation Department programs.

In addition to a dedicated NESS STEM Academy classroom within the school beginning this fall, NESS opened a 1,100 sq. ft. classroom at the city's Ocean Beach Park to serve as its base for marine science education and kayaking expeditions. Dave Sugrue, Manager of Ocean Beach

Park, noted, "We're so excited to bring this wonderful program to the park to get more kids involved in education and enjoying its nature beauty. This could be transformative -- not only for the kids but for the Park itself." NESS Program Director Mary Horrigan added, "Ocean Beach is an amazing resource. We're delighted to be offering programs right in New London -- programs that will foster connections between students and their community as well as the environment."

In a new partnership with the Science and Technology Magnet High School of Southeastern Connecticut and New London High School, NESS will offer and manage a high school sailing team for students wishing to participate. "We're looking forward to bringing the world of competitive high school sailing to the students of New London. It's one of the few sports in high school and college where girls and boys compete on the same level," commented Mark Zagol, NESS's Sailing Program Director. "We would not be able to offer this if not for the generosity of Pfizer, which has donated sailboats and a powerboat for this program, and Mitchell College, which has donated the use of their dock," he continued.

"NESS is incredibly grateful to earn the trust of our donors and partners as we grow our commitment to New London through strengthened partnerships and dedicated donors," remarked Spike Lobdell, NESS's President. "There are so many organizations working together to provide opportunities for New London children," he said. "Among them we would like to especially thank New London Public Schools, the City of New London and Ocean Beach Park, Pfizer, Mitchell College, New London Recreation Department, Camp Rotary, Jennings Family Resource Center, Drop-In Learning Center, and New London Community Boating in helping to improve opportunities for the city's children," he added.

NESS acknowledges gifts from lead sponsors including The National Recreation Foundation; The Forrest and Frances Lattner Foundation; Chester Kitchings Family Foundation; The Frank Loomis Palmer Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee; The TK Foundation; 11th Hour Racing; The Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut; Dominion Foundation; Gowrie Group; Liberty Bank Foundation; Robert G. Youngs Family Foundation; The Bodenwein Public Benevolent Foundation, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee; Dime Bank Foundation, Inc.; Charter Oak Federal Credit Union; and Chelsea Groton Foundation.

NESS has been working with the Bennie Dover Jackson Middle School for two years to bring science and learning to life for students by getting them out of the classroom, onto -- and sometimes into -- the water. "This strengthened partnership and AmeriCorps award represent the next step in the evolution of NESS as a leading provider of STEM-based adventure education programming," said Cindy Nickerson, NESS's Executive Director. NESS's STEM education curriculum includes the US Sailing REACH program, which uses sailing as the platform for teaching STEM concepts. NESS's program promotes interest in STEM through experiential learning using sailing, kayaking, marine science, and adventure water sports.

NESS was named by US Sailing the 2013 Outstanding Community Sailing Center in America for its notable contributions to promote public access by demonstrating growth in program offerings, including partnerships, and community involvement and awareness. In 2013, NESS served 2,700 participants through its experiential hands-on science and sailing programs. Of these, more than 900 were sponsored by scholarship gifts and grants for underserved regional school children.