



JAMES B. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION, INC.
RICHARDSON MARITIME MUSEUM • THE BOATWORKS

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Press Release

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Boatworks And Nathan Teach Girls Local Maritime Heritage

Fifty-two teenage girls recently descended on Dorchester County to learn about the area's maritime heritage. The entire eighth-grade class of Springside School in Philadelphia, the girls went sailing on the skipjack *Nathan of Dorchester* and built boats at the Richardson Maritime Museum's Ruark Boatworks.

The trip was arranged through Womanship, the sailing school for women, and coordinated by the Dorchester Skipjack Committee. For three days, they broke up into several groups and rotated among the skipjack, the Boatworks and several other local attractions. A Womanship instructor accompanied the girls who went out on the *Nathan*, where they learned how to sail a skipjack.

Cyndy Carrington Miller, Museum Administrator, particularly enjoyed seeing the girls working on the boats at the Boatworks. So often, boatbuilding is perceived as a guy thing and women and girls are hesitant to get involved, she noted. To watch these young ladies having such a great time building these boats was so exciting.

Each of the three days, two different groups composed of five girls each worked on two 16-foot pulling skiffs, constructing them from mostly pre-cut pieces. The last groups finished up on the third day by painting them in their school colors, blue and gold.



John Swain, center, directed the construction of the boats.

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Shipwright Nick Biles, left, and Springside School instructor Hadley Ferguson, right, watch as the girls attach a gunwale to one of the hulls.

For about five hours each day, they drilled holes and drove screws, clamped and glued, planed and sanded. Not exactly the usual field trip, the girls clearly enjoyed the activity, at times breaking out in song as they worked. We are so lucky to be able to do this, one young lady enthused.

Shipwrights John Swain, builder of Chestertown's *Sultana*, and Nick Biles, with the assistance of Museum Treasurer Mark Murphy, supervised the construction on the first two days, with Museum President Frank Newton and volunteer Ken Guelta taking over for the final day of finishing.

The boats will be transported back to Philadelphia and auctioned off to raise funds for future trips. Miller hopes that this will be the first of many such events at the Boatworks. It was great to have these girls come down from Philadelphia to learn about boatbuilding, she said. But this is the kind of thing we need to start doing within this community, too.

Now that we have seen how much fun this is, both for the youngsters and for the volunteers assisting them, I hope we can start doing this on a regular basis with local groups of kids.

Miller welcomes groups interested in sponsoring a boatbuilding event for kids, or in volunteering, to contact her at 410-221-1871.

For more information, visit the Richardson Maritime Museum website at www.richardsonmuseum.org.

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The eighth-grade class of Springside School in Philadelphia with the two boats they built at the Richardson Maritime Museum's Ruark Boatworks.