



PRESS RELEASE

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Plotting a New Course for North East Youngsters

A regional charity has weighed anchor on an energetic fundraising campaign to boost the personal development of young people in the region through an innovative sailing programme.

Ocean Youth Trust North East (OYT NE) is aiming to raise £475,000 over the next three years to increase the number of young people they help to almost double the current amount – from around 400 to 700. The Trust will also be putting in place new programmes to encourage individual development and teach valuable leadership skills.

Priority will be given to developing the OYT NE Young Leader Scheme which will give participants the opportunity to develop their skills in what is often their first position of responsibility. Those enrolled will also be able to work towards formal and nationally recognised qualifications which can enhance future prospects.

One person who has been trained through the Trust is skipper Grace Metcalfe, 24 from Cumbria. Grace joined Ocean Youth Trust as a crew member at the age of 17. She was given more responsibility until, in 2006, she was made first mate aboard the James Cook and two-and-a-half years later she became skipper.

Grace said: "The training I received through Ocean Youth Trust has made such a huge impact on my life. It's helped me to get a job that I really enjoy, that gets me excited when I get out of bed in the morning. I have been lucky enough to see some fantastic places and meet some brilliant people. The kids that come on voyages are always good fun and the atmosphere onboard is really friendly.

"This funding can have a huge impact on the lives of those young people who really get excited by sailing. It could help on the way to a new career, or give them a fun and different skill which stands out on a CV. Some of the training, like the First Aid courses we run, are really useful qualifications to have whatever you go on to do. It really could make all the difference to someone who isn't sure of their options."

Steve Lennon, the general manager of OYT NE, added: "At the Trust we work hard to provide activities to young people which will boost their sense of personal achievement and teach practical skills which are useful in many different situations. However we are eager to do even more to ensure that more young people in the region can take advantage of the opportunities we provide.

"This funding will help us in a number of ways, for example to reach a wider variety of people and provide specialised equipment for voyages with disabled youngsters. It's a very exciting chance for us to make a positive impact on the lives of young people in the North East who have an interest in travel and sailing."

OYT NE is based in North Shields and provides young people from all backgrounds with a chance to develop and learn new skills. The charity works with people aged 12-25 and uses its sail training programmes to build confidence and self-esteem, teach teamwork skills and offers an opportunity to try something new and different.

~ENDS~

In this picture: Grace Metcalfe



Notes to Editors

- OYT NE's sail training programmes are aimed at young people aged 12 to 25 and disabled adults from all backgrounds, with voyages in the North Sea, Baltic Sea and Arctic Circle.
- OYT NE is a Royal Yachting Association (RYA) approved Sea School, member of the Association Sail Training Organisations (ASTO) and affiliated to RYA Sailability 9th national body for disabled sailing).
- Organisations which have recently worked with OYT NE include Child Brain Injuries, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Icelandic Search and Rescue Association, Joe Walton's Youth Club – Middlesbrough, Middlesbrough Scouts, South Tees Youth Offenders and Tees and Hartlepool Yacht Club.