 **Kids Rule in Greenwich, CT!** 

For three years Greenwich Sail & Power Squadron has been working with the Young Mariners of Greenwich. The children are from underserved families and supported by the Boys and Girls Club who publicize this as one of their most successful programs.

After helping with the initial fundraiser, we give the first timid sailors a two-hour introduction to safe boating. The Young Mariners then take them through a complete program that includes swimming, CPR/First Aid, environmental awareness and some wonderful time learning from the local sailing school. USPS members and local yacht clubs are asked to take the children out for afternoon sails – always with safety highlighted and some instruction involved. Second-year students are given our ABC3 course.

The Greenwich Squadron has adapted the ABC Course for these 5th and 6th graders, and give it over four Saturday mornings. Here is a photo of the recent graduates, with SEO Andy Cummings and D/C Susan Ryan at the back. All passed the test with over 90%, and Kevin Wing (holding the burgee) aced it. This is the boy who last year had failing grades and was destined to go to summer school to make up work. He pleaded to go on the Young Mariners sailing program instead. The next semester his grades rocketed to all As and when asked how this happened, he said: 'The sailing program showed me how to learn; how to focus.' He has since become a mentor for the class that followed him.

Graduation is fun for all, with cake and juices, presentation of the USPS caps and certificates of completion, and the swearing in as members of the squadron.

This class was the first to go through the new process of obtaining the CT Safe Boating Certificate on line. No longer will DEEP be issuing the certificate as a small plastic card. Students sign up with the DEEP website, pass the ABC test, the SEO confirms this, the student pays the $50 and then the student can print out copies of the certificate as needed. Eight children were on eight computers at the Boys and Girls Club and with DEO George Hallenbeck on hand, it went relatively smoothly. Kids certainly rule in Greenwich!

*Submitted by D/C Susan Ryan, JN*

*District 2; Greenwich Sail & Power Squadron*