



File photo by Jim Powers

Sail to Prevail started adaptive sailing programs on Nantucket 11 years ago, with the goal of giving all youth who wanted to experience the joy of being out on the water and learning how to sail, an opportunity to do so. An early participant was Hayley Lamb, then 6, sailing in July 2011 with her mother Andrea McDevitt.

Nantucket Community Sailing to take over Sail to Prevail program

By David Creed
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Paul Callahan made it his life's mission to help children with disabilities overcome the adversity their disability brought to their day-to-day lives.

Callahan, a paraplegic, is the CEO of the Newport, R.I.-based Sail to Prevail, a non-profit organization that has sponsored a sailing program on Nantucket for 11 years that gives disabled children an opportunity to participate in free sailing lessons.

Callahan and Nantucket Community Sailing CEO Diana Brown announced this week that NCS would be taking over the program. Callahan said it was difficult for him to leave the program but believes that handing it over to people who are on Nantucket full-time will help it take the next step.

"When you get to the point where you don't think you can provide that quality-control and success anymore at the highest level, then it is time to let someone local handle it," Callahan said. "They have a good operation. We started talking right before the pandemic and obviously



Paul Callahan, founder of Sail to Prevail, based out of Newport, R.I.

everything stopped. I think they will do a great job. I think the families and the children with disabilities on the island will be well served. I would never leave them high and dry."

Brown said that her mission is to carry out Callahan's philosophy of making sailing for everyone. She said the organization is already working with a Sail to Prevail children through the Nantucket STAR (Sports & Therapeutic/Accessible Recreation) program, which meets every Friday at the Community Sailing Jetties Beach site, offering different water

sports and sailing activities for free.

"We have had a close relationship with Sail to Prevail for years and given that it just wasn't feasible to continue to operate remotely on Nantucket from his Newport operation we felt like it made a lot of sense for us to pick this up," Brown said.

Callahan said he wants to stay involved in some capacity with Community Sailing and he is always just a phone call away if it needs assistance. He is proud of the success he has had, building his program from two children in the first year to a number hovering around the 100 mark in recent years.

"We were a little bit of a victim of our own success," Callahan said. "It could be better off locally managed. I know what it is like over here to manage something big. We have 1,500 kids per summer (in Newport) and it takes a lot of quality control. It is extremely important to maintain the safety and the quality of the program. We couldn't be both in Newport and Nantucket, so I approached NCS."