

**Cape Cod Maritime Museum**

*Preserving and celebrating  
Cape Cod's maritime heritage*



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Dear friends and supporters of the Cape Cod Maritime Museum,

This narrative describes the Young Mariner Project, a major initiative being undertaken by the museum. Through the Young Mariner Project, our goal is to help children understand the opportunities that maritime culture offers, and provide the programs that help them take advantage of these opportunities.

The Young Mariner Project is a group of programs that expose children to marine biology, sailing, navigation, seamanship, and boat building. The Young Mariner Project encompasses programs and activities for children of all ages, from elementary-schoolers to high-schoolers.

We hope that you will take a minute to read the attached narrative and budget and become involved. We also hope that you will visit the museum to see, first hand, what is happening here with our current programming.

Sincerely,

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## The Young Mariner Project

### Executive Summary

*How does a Cape Cod kid envision a life as a marine biologist, boat captain, marine business owner, fisherman, or a naval architect without a basic understanding of the marine realm?* The Young Mariner Project is about activating the Museum to be a place where kids can develop this understanding while acquiring a baseline skillset that unlocks maritime vocations and avocations.

Our Museum has been offering youth boatbuilding experiences for at least a decade. In 2021, we created our Young Mariner Program to add marine biology, navigation, and seamanship, sailing, and marine physics to the mix. In 2022, we added the Sea Scholars Prize program to reward efforts in high school maritime history, marine bio, and art.

Interest and feedback indicate that we are going in the right direction. Participation across all of the programs has doubled in two years. This activity and energy has created an “ah hah” moment that has awakened the Museum Board and leadership to an opportunity to make a difference in the community while pursuing our mission of promoting maritime culture.

Our vision is that our museum can be a constant in kid’s lives and this document outlines a three-year plan to do this – expanding our current programs and adding where required to fill gaps. Our plan engages three different age groups with a series of direct and indirect year-round initiatives that connect us with elementary schools’ kids and stay with them through high school.

1. Elementary School: Set the hook with elementary school kids with reimagined, age-focused exhibits, our Young Mariner 1, on-water program aboard ADVENTURE, and our Critter Day marine biology beach initiative.
2. Middle and young high schoolers: Convert this awareness into hands-on maritime experience and scholarship with Young Mariner II, boatbuilding, and our Scholars prize initiative.
3. 16+ year-olds: Create opportunities for these young older kids to leverage these skills into maritime internships



Some of these programs exist now and will be expanded. Others are new initiatives that either fill in some blanks or extend our reach to older or younger kids. Each of these cohorts lends themselves to specific programs that are described later in this plan.

While most of the funds needed will flow into programs, this plan also includes funds to optimize the existing space in the facility so we can fit them in and make our exhibits more interactive and interesting to kids and their parents. It also augments staff and infrastructure where required to allow the programs to be run safely and effectively.

While our plan is ambitious for the community, it is also central to our mission and its future. In addition to improving our exhibits, facility, and programs, it will grow a community of young people that have an “alumni type” relationship with us. By the end of 2023, we will have almost 450 kids that have built a boat, submitted an essay or art project, or participated in Young Mariner 1 – in just three years! By keeping these kids and their parents close, we will form an ever-expanding base of support which will make the Museum more sustainable, respected, and effective.

The three-year cost of building out the initiative in full is approximately \$850,000. To put this number in perspective,

- It is a target and much of the program can be undertaken for a number closer to \$650,000. If we get more, we can do more.
- Participation fees are projected at approximately \$150,000 using our experience from Young Mariner.
- Fundraising at our current levels should yield approximately \$300,000.

The remaining funds required range from \$200,000 to 400,000 at the high end.

What this tells us is that the Project in our target range is financially feasible. The individual initiatives are described below.

## DETAILED PROGRAM INITIATIVES

**Elementary School kids 7-12:** Our plan to expose elementary school kids to maritime culture consists of three initiatives, in various stages of development.

1. **Young Mariner Program 1:** In 2021 we established our on-water program - [www.youngmariner.org](http://www.youngmariner.org). This program is designed to open the minds of 8-12-year-olds to all aspects of the maritime world.

Participants are exposed to marine biology, sailing, navigation and seamanship through our exhibits and time aboard our two vessels ADVENTURE and SARAH.



Navigation Example:  
Students view our exhibit of the Coal Wharf that projected one thousand feet into Hyannis Port harbor and then, aboard ADVENTURE, navigate where the wharf used to be.



Program Status - 2021 participation in Young Mariner 1 was 70 kids, followed by 100 kids in 2022, and we are targeting 140 kids in 2023. Program capacity is approximately 200, and we hope that we will hit this limit as the program's reputation builds. Our goal is to offer at least 40% of these kids a full scholarship and the percentage has been above this for the last two years.

A "next step" ambition for this program is the incorporation of sailing and rowing boats that are built in our boatbuilding program. This activity is an expansion of our existing boat building program that built four boats in spring 2023. We envision this to begin in the summer of 2024 and be located at Englewood Beach in Yarmouth – approximately one mile from the Museum. We have arranged access to this facility, and we are currently working on the design of a seamanship focused, non- racing curriculum.

2. **Kids "Museum within a Museum":** This initiative will re-imagine many of our exhibits to highlight their relevance to elementary school kids. Historically, kids were very involved in maritime activities, and we will have succeeded if today's young visitors can channel their historic Cape Cod self in 1820 or 1920. We also see this exhibit as critical to getting the local schools to find additional value in field trips to the Museum.

Our curatorial staff and volunteers are currently reviewing our exhibits to identify opportunities to do this. We believe that 10 – 15 of our existing exhibits represent great opportunities for this. This will also involve a "kids guide to the Museum" that will be created to guide parents. These exhibits will

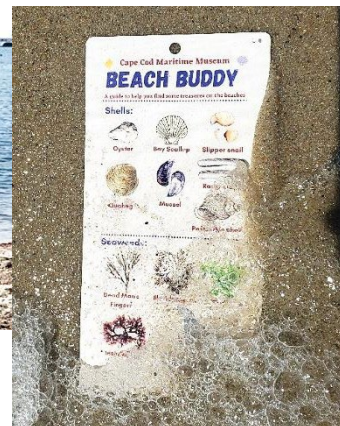
also be marked with a highly visible “Neal the Seal” marker that guides parents and provides additional relevant content instantly accessible by a QR code.

In addition, we are reviewing exhibits to identify those that can be rebuilt to be more hands-on and engaging.

Program Status - This initiative has started using existing Museum curatorial and research staff time to identify the scope of the project and start the process. Our goal is to complete reinterpretation of existing exhibits by the end of Summer 2023 and complete the interactive exhibits by the winter 2023/24.

**3. Expanding our “Critter Day” program:** This program involves meeting the kids and parents where they are – at the beach. The area between high and low tide is one of the most teeming biological areas on earth and kids as young as three are aware of the critters there and react positively to learning more.

In summer of 2022, we piloted “Critter Days” - sending young marine biologists to various waterfront locations to engage kids with the fish, mollusks, birds, and plant life that is right in front of them. Our staff brought drag nets and “critter pools” so kids and their parents can touch and learn about what they are seeing. Imagine if marine biologists accompanied you at every beach visit!



Our staff also distributed hundreds of free “Beach Buddies.” Developed by educators at the Museum, this simple, waterproof guide provides kids and their parents with a fun way to do a self-guided scavenger hunt while gaining a deeper understanding of what is in front of them. As this initiative grows, Beach Buddies could also describe some fun historical facts about some key beaches.

Program Status - Currently “Critter Days” are staffed by our Young Mariner Program staff and occur on Fridays and Saturdays when the Young Mariner Program is not in session. This limits the reach of this program which, by its open nature, has the potential to engage more kids than anything else we can do. We also see it as a “wide net” to getting kids and their parents to be aware of the Museum and its programs.

The next step is to expand this pilot program such that it can be present on more beaches. This would involve a dedicated team of two or three young marine biologists working together to engage kids and parents at a different beach each day. We are currently researching any permitting and logistical hurdles to this project and would like to expand this pilot program this summer by two or three weeks. This would allow us to visit 10- 15 beaches.



We think that our “Museum within a Museum,” Young Mariner Program 1, and expanded Critter Day Program will “set the hook” with a huge cohort of young Cape kids (and their parents) and change forever the way they look at the opportunities the water represents. We particularly think that our “Museum within a Museum” will make our Museum a more attractive field trip location for area elementary schools.

**Middle and High School Students 12-16:** Our focus with this age group includes three initiatives designed to convert exposure to maritime culture into specific skills and scholarship that will unlock opportunities for them.

1. **Boat Building:** The Museum has been providing hands-on boatbuilding experiences for kids in our Cook Boatshop for many years. Currently, this program is organized around a group of highly skilled volunteers that use the 11’8” Bevins Skiff as a project teaching boat. In a typical year, 2-3 Bevins skiffs are built by our volunteers with groups of +/- 6 kids each from local schools. Our overarching goal with this program is to expand its capacity.



Program Status - The current program is constrained by space and the availability of volunteers. Over time, the answer is a physical expansion of the Cook Boat Shop. The intermediate plan is to erect a temporary structure on the water side of the museum in spring 2024 and experiment with consolidating this activity in March, April, and May. We believe this will reduce the pressure on our volunteers and attract more. We are currently investigating the permits required to move forward with a temporary structure. This would allow us to double the capacity of this program.

2. **Young Mariner Program 2:** This would be a parallel program to Young Mariner 1 for older kids aged 12-16. This program will be largely on water in the summer and shoulder seasons and in the Museum in the winter.

If Young Mariner Program 1 exposes kids to Maritime culture, Young Mariner Program 2 will concentrate on individual skill building. These courses would be hands on, subjects under discussion are navigation, boat handling, sailing (in the Bevins Skiffs), marine biology, weather, naval architecture, a shorter boatbuilding introduction, fiberglass repair, painting and varnishing, marine engine maintenance and others.

Program Status. As a new program, we are going to use summer 2023 to pilot two, two days, “bootcamps” for this age group. One in navigation and seamanship and one on marine biology. These will be run on our existing vessel with existing staff and will give us a low-cost insight into

what would be required to get this initiative up and running with a one month offering of sessions in 2024.

3. **Sea Scholars Prize:** In 2022 we piloted an introductory program to promote maritime history, marine biology, and maritime art scholarship on Cape Cod. This program offers cash prizes to high school students for spring submissions in these areas from the Cape's eleven public and private high schools.

In 2023, this program attracted almost fifty submissions across the three subjects from seven of the target schools. We recognize the difficulty in trying to get busy students and teachers to pay attention to "one more thing" but we believe that, over time, these will become prestigious awards. Our goal is that these awards become an important connection with Cape schools.

**Young Adults 16 and over:** Our focus with this age group is to boost the availability of, and path into, relevant maritime internships for Cape kids.

We are starting to research the barriers to internship availability and what impact we can have on this. We also believe this is an opportunity to partner with several other organizations on the Cape, including the Cape Cod Marine Trades Association, Mass Maritime Academy, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, the Center for Coastal Studies, and others.

## **Conclusion**

We hope that you are interested in supporting this initiative and please feel free to contact Elizabeth York, Executive Director of the Museum at [eyork@capecodmaritimemuseum.org](mailto:eyork@capecodmaritimemuseum.org) or at 508-775-1723.