

## **The Ms. Race “Stays the Course”**

**By Lori Draz**

Sailors know the phrase ‘Stay the Course’ means to keep forward momentum to reach either the next mark or destination. How appropriate that in these troubling times, the Ms. Race Committee’s theme for this 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Ms. Race is “Stay the Course”.

Much is different this year, even social distancing rules regarding racers are still being worked out, but one thing has not changed, domestic abuse and violence, making this year’s Ms. Race fundraiser and its recipient, 180 Turning Lives Around (180nj.com), even more critical. Sadly, instances of domestic violence have been higher due to the quarantine, while funds for essential services is lower than in years past.

The unique, woman only sailing regatta has been helping 180 every year. The race has raised over \$160,000 for 180 and they are looking for innovative approaches to keep the tradition alive during these difficult times.

The seafaring sisters will re-convene at the Atlantic Highlands Yacht Club for the 16th Annual Ms. Race charity sailboat race on Saturday August 22 on Sandy Hook Bay. The yacht club will adhere to any of Governor Murphy’s Covid-19 water and safety protocols that are in place at the time of the regatta. This may impact the number of crew members allowed on each boat and the event format, but the sailboat race will go on, so keep checking [facebook.com/MsRaceAHYC](https://facebook.com/MsRaceAHYC) or [ahyc.net](http://ahyc.net). You can also email [ahyc.ms.race@gmail.com](mailto:ahyc.ms.race@gmail.com).

Last year’s race included 10 sailboats and over 80 participants from surrounding yacht clubs on the Sandy Hook and Raritan Bays. Though restrictions pertaining to the number of sailors on each boat may vary, the committee is actively seeking women who race smaller sailboats such as small J Boats to participate in this year’s Ms. Race to allow for more social distancing. Last year’s Ms. Race winner, Kim Sinatra of the Raritan Yacht Club, raced a J/29 and the previous year Kim’s mother, Ann Myer, won the race on her J/105. Elaine Maher from the Atlantic Highlands Yacht Club is a three time winner of the Ms. Race on her J/24, A Good Hair Day, proving that these J boats can be easily raced short-handed.

Registration requirements will be updated this month so email [ahyc.ms.race@gmail.com](mailto:ahyc.ms.race@gmail.com) for more information.

According to Anna Diaz-White, Executive Director for 180 Turning Lives Around, “When family stressors increase, abusers get more abusive, and families are placed in greater danger. Your support for 180 has never been more important than it is now.”

To help 180 even more, Ms. Race Co-chair Eileen Campbell is enthusiastically organizing a virtual Ladies Night for 180 fundraiser via Zoom tentatively scheduled for Thursday July 30 at 8 pm. According to Eileen, “The virtual Ladies Night get together and online discussion will explore some of the challenges women sailors are facing in their personal lives and sailing careers. We will cover the topics of racism and the need for inclusion in our sport, Gender Bias and Domestic Abuse. Women in the sailing community will share their personal stories of how they overcame adversity in their lives and stayed the course to achieve their goals and realize their dreams.” See the story of seasoned sailor Karen Harris and her emboldening Ms. Race Story on YouTube “Ms. Race Charity Regatta - A Story of Empowerment”. The event is hosted by the Atlantic Highlands Yacht Club Ms. Race Committee and is open to the entire community. Visit [180nj.org/get-info/special-events/ahyc-ms-race](http://180nj.org/get-info/special-events/ahyc-ms-race).



Last year's Ms. Race winner, Kim Sinatra, with her crew on the J/29 Smokin' J  
Photo by Jeff Smith/[jeffsmithphoto.net](http://jeffsmithphoto.net)



Ann Myer with her crew came in second place on her J/105 Magic in 2019 and first place in 2018  
Photo by Jeff Smith/[jeffsmithphoto.net](http://jeffsmithphoto.net)



Karen Harris and her crew on the J/120 Cygni race to an inspiring third place finish in last year's Ms. Race  
Photo by Jeff Smith/[jeffsmithphoto.net](http://jeffsmithphoto.net)