

**HARLEM**

City Parks Foundation and Disney presents an Uptown Family Day event with free music, dancing and fun activities for the entire family from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday at Marcus Garvey Park, W. 125th St. and Mt. Morris Park West.

Families can participate in face painting, craft workshops, free sports lessons including golf workshops, melodic interactive, narrated concerts introducing musical concepts and other jazz fundamentals geared towards young audiences and dance and jump rope workshops with healthy life-style benefits shared in the process.

Visit [www.CityParksFoundation.org](http://www.CityParksFoundation.org).

**HARLEM**

Documentary in Bloom, a bimonthly program highlighting controversial and thought-provoking new documentary films at Maysles Cinema, 343 Malcolm X Blvd. will present the U.S. theatrical premiere of "The Chilean Building" directed by Macarena Aguiló at 7:30 p.m. Monday through next Sunday.

The film, which won Best Documentary, 2011 New York International Latino Film Festival is about a story never before documented. While the parents battled the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, a group of children were raised, first in Europe and then in Cuba, safely and communally in what was called "Project Home." The director is herself a product of Project Home. Admission is \$10. Visit [mayslesinstitute.org](http://mayslesinstitute.org).

**WEST HARLEM**

Councilmember Robert Jackson and the Department of Transportation offers a free bicycle helmet event for children and adults on Wednesday from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at General Grant Houses, 3150 Broadway in the front yard.

You must be on site to learn how to properly fit and wear the helmet. A parent or legal guardian must be present to sign a waiver for children under age 18 and adults over age 18 must sign a waiver to receive the helmet. Call (212) 928-1322.

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# UPTOWN NEWS



Twenty-five high school students, participating in the Rock the Boat program, spent four days sailing 35 miles in hand-built wooden boats from Calf Island off Connecticut back to Hunts Point.

Photo by Viorel Florescu

## Ahoy there!

### Rocking the Boat lets kids build & sail own craft

BY CORINNE LESTCH  
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

THE EXHAUSTED teenagers rowed with all their strength to turn against the tide at Clason Point Park, but the current was too strong. On one boat, the mast broke, forcing another one dubbed the 'Legacy' to pull it along by a thin rope.

It was the dramatic last leg of a four-day journey for about 20 students involved in Rocking the Boat, a youth development program in Hunts Point that teaches kids about environmental sustainability and boat-building.

The teens, on boats they made, set sail from Calf Island, a small island preserve off the shore of Greenwich, Conn. They took in new sights and made stops along the way to Rye Playland in Westchester County and Morris Yacht Club on City Island.

"We traveled a long dis-

tance," 15-year-old Rigoberto Montecino said of the 35-mile voyage, once his feet were back on land Thursday. "It was a new world."

During the trip, the kids learned how to camp and rough it in the wilderness.

"I never thought I was going to do this," said Jessica Martinez, 16, showing off red splotches of mosquito bites running down her legs like badges of honor.

"There were so many bugs," she said. "And sand."

Adam Green, executive director of Rocking the Boat, said this was the third year students took this trip.

Three sailboats, each 19 feet long, and a 20-foot powerboat took them the whole way. One boat was made from a fallen oak tree from the New York Botanical Garden, he said.

"This trip is phenomenal, because kids literally get to board boats they built and sail

off into the Bronx River and on to the rest of the world, which is a great power," he said. "That sense of accomplishment rarely happens for any of us."

And little did Green know he would create a scenario that would actually happen.

"I was talking to them (one night) and said, 'What would you do if one of the boats broke?' They said they'd fix it," he said the day before the return home. "That degree of empowerment is pretty exciting."

Many of the kids have never been out of the city before, and Rocking the Boat provides an outlet not just to explore the water but to build positive relationships in a safe, structured environment.

On the day of the return voyage, dozens of children gathered near Hunts Point Riverside Park, painting murals, discussing geography and learning about the different parts of

a boat.

Doing these activities — and rowing to another state — can take their minds off of other things.

One 16-year-old boy who went on a sailing trip had to cut it short to make a court hearing. Another was still thinking of a friend who was stabbed and left to die near a Parkchester hair salon in April.

"This keeps children out of the streets," Lloyd Mqalo, 15, said of the program. "This is a place where you can get out of trouble. It's peaceful."

Mqalo came to the Bronx from South Africa six months ago, and his introduction to the program was taking part in the four-day excursion.

"To know that I'm sailing on a thing that I made is the greatest experience ever," he said with a smile. "It's like cooking your own food that's good, then eating it."

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