**Four I-LYA Coaches Rescue Boaters during Junior Bay Week**

*On the evening of Tuesday, July 23 four I-LYA Junior Bay Week coaches, Leatherlips Yacht Club coach Evan Graves, Sandusky Sailing Club coach Ryan Kyle, and Vermilion Boat Club coaches Tim Zacher and Lee Ferber, were instrumental in rescuing seven people from the water near PutinBay.*

*Read below for Evan’s account of what happened that night and the lessons he shared with 155 junior sailors the next morning.*

On Tuesday night, we were relaxing on Lee's Ferber's J24 *Escapade* which was moored in the harbor of Put-in-Bay. We had two small inflatable Zodiacs tethered to the J‐24 to provide transportation to and from shore.

At approximately 8:15pm a sailboat moored to the north of us requested we assist a capsized boat just north of the harbor entrance. The breeze was 18‐24 knots with waves around 4‐5 feet. Ryan Kyle and I were first to respond to the capsized boat.

When we arrived on scene we encountered a flipped over and sinking 21' Sea Ray with seven people in the water, five of whom were wearing life jackets. Ryan and I immediately asked if seven was the original number of passengers, which it was, and who were the weakest swimmers.

Clinging on to the bow with no life jacket on, and in a state of panic, was a larger gentleman (400+ lb) and another man struggling to hold the larger victim up.

At this point Tim Zacher and Lee Ferber had arrived on the scene with the other coach boat .

As Tim and Lee were picking up the five other victims, Ryan and I tended to the over‐ weight gentleman. The other person in the water had a life jacket on.

We got them to the side of our boat and despite several attempts were unable to pull the man to safety. I dialed the Coast Guard for help while Ryan did his best to hold the man’s head out of the water.

After about ten minutes on the scene, a Boardwalk water taxi came to assist in the rescue effort.

The other five individuals had been picked up by Lee and Tim's boat while our two victims were still in the water. With the help of the water taxi staff, we were able to get a line underneath the overweight man’s shoulders and Ryan, Lee, and I were finally able to pull the man out of the water.

We proceeded to shore with all victims in our power boats.

The overweight gentleman had trouble breathing and was vomiting but was talking to us on the way in.

EMS arrived shortly after we came ashore and tended to the individuals. The Coast Guard arrived on scene as we were going ashore and met us there also.

The overweight gentleman was eventually life‐flighted off the island to an area hospital.

From 2003 to 2009 all four of us had competed at Junior Bay Week. I sailed for Cleveland Yachting Club, and the other three competed for the clubs they were now coaching. Ryan, Tim, and I continued our sailing careers competing collegiately (Bowling Green, Hobart, Ohio University, respectively) and all of us currently sail Thistles in the summer. There is no doubt that our years of sailing and coaching helped us save those individuals that evening.

Not only did we have experience in rough seas sailing, but the powerboat skills we learned from coaching proved invaluable.

The next morning I had a chance to speak to the competitors about the incident and lessons I had taken away from it. I chose to highlight two points: First, it is very easy for sailors (in particular juniors) to become complacent about their safety. Even if you have experienced rough conditions, be smart about wearing a life jacket and venturing out onto the water. My second point to the young sailors was that as they grow older and bring their non‐boating friends into the sport, they should remember that as the experienced ones in the group, they need to use their knowledge to keep other people safe and to maybe someday even help people like we did.

**NOTES:**

This was first-person account of an incident at Put-in-Bay during the 2013 Inter-Lakes Yachting Association (I-LYA) Junior Sail Bay Week, by Evan Graves, one of the coaches involved.

Put-in-Bay is a Village, located on South Bass Island, in the Western Basin of Lake Erie, and it is home to all I-LYA Regattas, Junior, Power, and Sail.

I-LYA also has a Junior Power event during Power week.

I-LYA is dedicated to providing a great background for boating safety in ALL its events, in hopes that will transfer over to all boating endeavors.