

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Rachel Campbell  
(310) 732-3498

**L.A. HARBOR COMMISSION ALLOCATES \$1.3 MILLION  
TO YOUTH SAIL TRAINING PROGRAM**



425 S. Palos Verdes Street

San Pedro, CA 90731

Tel: 310/732-3508

After 5:00 p.m.:

310/732-3500

**SAN PEDRO, CA** – At its regular meeting on July 14, the Los Angeles Board of Harbor Commissioners approved a three-year, \$1.3 million agreement with the Los Angeles Maritime Institute’s TopSail program in support of the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department’s LA Bridges program for at-risk youth. Through the TopSail youth sail training program, the Port of Los Angeles introduces sailing, seafaring and international trade to adolescent youth, ages 11 and older.

Since 1997, the Port of Los Angeles has partnered with TopSail to educate students about the maritime industry. The program instills teamwork, responsibility, leadership and self-esteem by providing character-building experiences. After the twin brigantines, *Irving Johnson* and *Exy Johnson*, were commissioned in 2002, many TopSail participants learned to sail aboard these vessels, the Official Tallships of the City of Los Angeles.

“Summer break can be a time for kids to get into trouble or a time for fun and productive activities,” Mayor Hahn said. “TopSail gives kids a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that not only keeps them off the streets but provides an experience that will impact their entire lives.”

“Not only have the kids that participate in TopSail learned to sail aboard the City’s ships, the *Exy Johnson* and *Irving Johnson*, some of the kids actually helped to build these ships,” said Councilwoman Janice Hahn. “TopSail is a great example of how the City can provide opportunities for our kids to get involved in activities after school and during the summer.”

Port of Los Angeles-TopSail \$1.3 million Agreement  
2-2-2

“Most of these kids would never have had the opportunity to learn to sail without this program and now many of them are experts. I applaud the Harbor Commission for this commitment to the kids of LA,” Councilwoman Hahn added.

“The Board is pleased to continue such a wonderful program,” said Harbor Commissioner Camilla Townsend Kocol. “TopSail teaches children something new and separate from their routine curriculum, which helps to create awareness and spark interest in port activities.”

“TopSail is unique because it reaches students who live all over Los Angeles – from the Valley to the Harbor – and exposes them to another world,” said Jim Gladson, President of the Los Angeles Maritime Institute. “Many of these young participants expressed that they had never even seen the ocean before coming to the program.”

Administered by Community Development Department, the LA Bridges program was created in 1997 by the Los Angeles City Council in cooperation with the Los Angeles Unified Schools District and community anti-gang and youth agencies as a program for at-risk youths at 26 targeted schools throughout the City. For more information about LA Bridges, call (213) 485-4784. The TopSail youth program was started in 1992 as a nonprofit, public benefit program of the Los Angeles Maritime Museum. For more information about TopSail, visit the Web site at [www.lamitopsail.org](http://www.lamitopsail.org).

###