



GREG BERTISH

Q: How did your experience with TLOT began?

I was a shy and bullied child when I was young. My optimist dinghy was my escape and my passion. After spending 200 days in hospital due to a tropical bacteria that almost killed me 3 times, I set out to inspire and help children that are less fortunate. I wrote a children's book in 2016 and I founded The Little Optimist Trust (foundation) in 2017.

How many children do usually take part to this project?

Sailing teaches children a skill, it gives them a passion to follow and live for. Learning to sail inspires kids to get better or be better as they gain feelings of joy, hope, self-worth, accomplishment, camaraderie and adventure.

Q: How do they approach the association?

A: Our sailing Therapy courses generally host 10 to 15 children per program. However we also run larger inspiration days that can host up to 40 or 50 kids at a time.



Q: Sailing, at any level, is all about "dreaming": how do you think a sailing experience could give courage to children facing health and social difficulties?

A: We have known about Southern Wind Shipyard and the beautiful boats they build for a long time. We are honoured that they chose us to support.

We feel that Southern Wind's ethos and commitment to assisting those less fortunate is a beautiful partnership and synergy with The Little Optimist Trust. Big boat builders helping and inspiring small kids to sail small boats, so that they too can one day become big and proud and beautiful.

Q: You partnership with Southern Wind: how did you meet us and what are you expecting from a company building sailing dreams to a completely different audience?

A: Children join our programs through our social partners and organisations, schools, places of healing and NPOs. We also assist to upgrade and beautify under-resourced places of Education and healing.

Q: Can you tell some nice anectods of your past sailing experience with your special little sailors?

A: Little Terrance had been struck down by muscular dystrophy: he had not walked in 3 months. When we brought him down in his wheelchair to see his friends sail, he climbed out of his wheelchair and walked to an Optimist Boat, and went sailing. He has never ever walked again, since that day. This is the power of sailing and an Optimist!