

Sailing. Sounds exciting, fun, and relaxing. And, living in Miami, one would think routine and commonplace. But, it can be challenging for a person with a disability and surprisingly, is something that many Miami residents with developmental and physical disabilities have never experienced. In April 2011, I had the opportunity to share this wonderful experience with Diamond Garland, a Braddock resident, her friend, Matthew Ryan, the nutritional therapist, Elaine Lanaris, and her husband. This sailing activity took place at Shake-A-Leg in beautiful Coconut Grove.

Initially, this activity was planned as Elaine's vacation. However, she shared her plans with Diamond, who upon finding out about this fun activity, expressed her wish to participate, especially given that her friend Mathew was going to attend as well. Who could say no to this noble request? Thus, planning then began for this exciting outing along with Diamond.

First, approval from MCPRS' Interdisciplinary Team had to be obtained so that Diamond could participate in this water activity. Then, parental and medical consents were secured. On your mark, get set, Go! We arrived to Shake-A Leg on a bright sunny day and set sail around Biscayne Bay along with a couple of snacks, sun screen and took in the amazing views. It was windy and perfect for sailing. After sailing for around an hour, guess who decided to join us?...dolphins! They escorted us for about 15 minutes and then they went on their merry way.

Sailing was a new, fun, and unforgettable experience for Diamond. So much so, that she talked for the entire trip and even after for a few days after about how much she enjoyed it. She verbalized the activity was "*super fun*." At the end of an exciting, yet certainly long day, Diamond and the rest of the group all found themselves doing the same thing – sleeping, sleeping and more sleeping until the next day. This activity, as fun as it was, is now marked in our memories as an unforgettable experience; the day we sailed with friends and dolphins in beautiful Biscayne Bay.

