

Public health student harbors passion for sailing

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Miia Newman, who is pursuing a master's degree in public health administration at Tulane University, is the 2017 recipient of the International Lightning Class Association Lightning Boat Grant for sailing. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Miia Newman has grown up sailing boats along the Gulf Coast, and she recently participated in the Lightning North American Championship for sailing in Wrightsville Beach, North Carolina.

Newman, who is pursuing a master's degree in health administration at Tulane University, is the 2017 recipient of the International Lightning Class Association (ICLA)'s Lightning Boat Grant. The ICLA awards this annual grant to young sailors with substantial sailing experience and a passion for the sport.

“Sailing is a sport that you can be competitive in your whole life. I love that I will never have to stop, and I can look forward to regattas and sailboat racing competitions as my weekend getaways,” said Newman. “Sailing is also more than just a hobby; it's a community. When I travel on weekends to race, it's basically an excuse to take a road trip with some of my closest friends to go see my crazy extended sailing family.”

The Lightning Boat Grant provides sailors with a lightning boat for one season so they can compete in lightning regattas. If successful, the sailors qualify for the Lightning North American Championship.

“In college sailing, you sail a smaller boat called a 420 that's around 14 feet long whereas the lightning boat is 19 feet long. The lightning is a little more boat to handle. You sail it with three people instead of two, so there is some extra teamwork involved,” said Newman.

As an undergraduate student at Tulane, Newman built strong relationships while competing on the Tulane University sailing team. She has now teamed up with three of her former teammates, Jessica Oswalt, Nick Watts and Malcolm Kriegel, to compete in the lightning boat regattas this season.

“We're extremely excited to sail in the North American Championship,” said Newman. “The lightning class is full of some world-class sailors, and we are thrilled to have the opportunity to compete with them.”