



C.A.S.T. for Kids Offers Fishing Opportunities for Disabled and Disadvantaged Children

Fishing Restriction Causes Change in Event Format

August 26, 2016 - Renton, WA—

The C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation is dedicated to making a difference. C.A.S.T. stands for "Catch A Special Thrill", and on Saturday, September 10, 2016, dozens of C.A.S.T. volunteers will provide a day of fun and fishing to disabled and disadvantaged children on Lake Washington.

Since 1991 C.A.S.T. has given special needs children a quality outdoor recreational experience through the sport of fishing. Whether because of financial burdens, physical limitations, transportation problems, or lack of parental expertise these children have very little, if any, access to recreational activities. By matching them up with experienced fishermen from local bass, walleye, trout, and salmon clubs, C.A.S.T. provides them and their parents the opportunity to learn fishing skills, boating safety, and angler ethics.



Each child receives a free rod and reel, C.A.S.T. t-shirt and hat, a tackle box, and tackle to take home. As a special keepsake the children also receive a mounted picture of themselves with their boat captain. With the new skills and equipment, parents are encouraged to continue fishing with their children throughout the year.

No Fishing? No Problem!

In early June of this year, event coordinator Jessica Kelly (Operations Manager of C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation) was informed that Lake Washington would be closed to fishing in September/October. As a longtime volunteer for C.A.S.T. for Kids (and particularly this event – held at Coulon Park for the last 23 years), Jessica felt a strong desire to find a way to not cancel the event and still let the kids fish! After confirming with WDFW that there was no way to get

any special rule to allow the event to continue as is, Jessica got to work on other options. Change location? Change the date? Change the event format? In the end, changing the event format was the best option.

If the kids are not able to go out on the water fishing, we still want to give them as much of the full C.A.S.T. for Kids experience as possible. First, the fish – after requesting a special rule from WDFW, we are able to bring in fish and stock nets so the kids are able to fish from shore. Another key element is the boat ride – for so many kids a huge favorite– so each kid will still get to go out for a boat ride on Lake Washington. And, since they will all be on shore – we added several shore activities as well. A casting game –to learn how to use their new rod/reel and get in some practice. The Renton Fire Water Safety Team will be there to interact with the kids, including a diver in the water. There will also be photo ops with Sea Gals (Seahawks cheerleaders), a craft table, a face painter, and a fish cleaning station – a great way to learn about fish anatomy.



With everything lined up and everything cleared with the City of Renton and WDFW and other key partners, we opened registration and let the kids register. Less than a week later (Aug 11th), we find out that WDFW has removed the fishing restriction. Wow! Instead of letting that pop our bubble (or slow our momentum), we decided to move ahead as planned. And now, the kids will get to choose their own adventure – fish on the lake or from shore – and enjoy all of the shore activities as well.

We are actively looking for more donations to help fund this fun filled and educational event. See <http://castforkids.org/event/lakewashington/> for ways you can get involved, become a fundraiser, or simply donate.

This event is by pre-registration, and limited to fifty (50) participants. Registration is still open, but only a few spots remain. We are in need of fishing anglers to volunteer their time. Registration for both groups is found at <http://castforkids.org/event/lakewashington/>

We are so grateful for the support of the following partners and sponsors: Auburn Kiwanis, Auburn Sports & Marine, Auburn Valley Kiwanis Club, City of Renton, Jimmy Johns, Kent Kiwanis, Plano Tackle Systems, Puget Sound Anglers - Renton Chapter, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, Renton Kiwanis, Sea Gals, Smith Brothers Farms, Starbucks Coffee Company, Western Bass Club, Volkswagen Puyallup, Zebco

The Full Fishing Restriction Story

The impact of the WDFW fishing regulations on our local C.A.S.T. Foundation events in 2016:

Fishing restrictions has affected 3 (almost 4) of our events in the Puget Sound region in 2016. First, there was no fishing until a state/tribal contract was signed – which led to C.A.S.T. having to work with WDFW to request, apply for and receive a special regulation to allow the kids to fish out of nets during our Fishing Kids event on Lake Washington in June.

Next, our C.A.S.T. for Kids event in July was in danger, as that contract was still not signed. Thankfully, they signed it in time – and July was the first month fishing was open.

We, at the C.A.S.T. office in Renton, thought we were clear for our 2 September events both held at Coulon Park on Lake Washington, but a separate regulation was issued – no fishing in September/October in Lake Washington (and other specified bodies of water). Thus, began the process of saving both those events (changing the format of the kids event; and moving the Take a Warrior Fishing event to American Lake).

After 2 months of planning and successfully altering the events to continue, we find out that the fishing restriction has been removed – too late for us to return to the original event format/locations. Overall, time has been the biggest cost to our Foundation due to these fishing restrictions, yet the cost of the events have also increased (the largest added cost is the purchase of fish for the C.A.S.T. for Kids event).

We have learned and gained many things through this process, yet we hope that the fishing restrictions do not repeat next year and we are able to continue taking special kids fishing.

More about the C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation

At each C.A.S.T. for Kids event, our primary program, we host up to 40 children with special needs. Many of the children are physically challenged. They come to experience new things and have a day of fun, forgetting about the conditions that challenge them on a daily basis. It's a welcome break from their normal routine of hospital visits, painful treatments, and hours of therapy. But for one day a year, they are challenged to catch fish.

The only things bigger than the smiles on the kids' faces are those on the faces of the C.A.S.T. volunteers.

"This is a great fit," stated one volunteer. "These kids need a day like this and I'm proud to be a part of the effort made by so many people to offer them the opportunity to go fishing."

The intent of the nonprofit organization is to create events whereby both children and adults can benefit, each taking their own lessons from the day. Children and adults alike can leave their problems on shore and share a day of fun on the water.



Besides creating a positive experience for youth, C.A.S.T. for Kids furthers its mission by increasing awareness of disabled and disadvantaged children in our communities and teaching appreciation for natural resources. The program is made possible through the cooperation of government agencies and local interest groups.

Celebrating its 25th year, the C.A.S.T. Foundation continues to grow and now holds events across the United States. Each year more people volunteer their time, more donors contribute, and more children participate. Since its inception, C.A.S.T. has given over 100,000 special needs children an opportunity to enjoy the sport of fishing and the outdoors.

More event info at <http://castforkids.org/event/lakewashington/>

Or contact: Jessica Kelly, Operations Manager/Event Coordinator

jessica@castforkids.org

o 425-251-3214, c 306-441-5308