



"One Day Can Change A Life"

Catch A Special Thrill Newsletter

August 2015

In the words of one of our Kids, C.A.S.T. for Kids is the "Best Day Ever," - and we thank you for being one of those special people who bring that to each Kid!

Coordinator Spotlight: Rebecca Fink

Rebecca Fink has been working with the C.A.S.T. Foundation as coordinator of the Take A Warrior Fishing event at West Point Lake in LaGrange Georgia the past two years. With Rebecca's leadership and great partners, the West Point event has brought plenty of good times and memories to the soldiers and veterans, along with their families, each year.

Rebecca, whose dad retired from the Air Force, spent time growing up in parts of Arizona, Japan, Germany, and Arkansas before graduating high school in Illinois. At college in Illinois Rebecca earned an Associates Degree in Biology, then a Bachelors Degree in Environment, Ecology and Evolutionary Science. While in college Rebecca did volunteer work with birds, spent time as a framer and spent three years as a Corps of Engineers student intern in Alton, Illinois.

Rebecca was hired soon after graduating and works for the Mobile District Corps of Engineers at West Point Lake,



Executive Director's Message: Jay Yelas

The summer is rolling along, and C.A.S.T. events are in full swing across the country. I have had the pleasure of attending several events this summer, and it has been such a thrill for me to meet so many wonderful volunteers, coordinators, parents and kids. People are what C.A.S.T. is all about, and there are a lot of great folks involved with our events! Thanks to everyone who is involved for your participation in our "C.A.S.T. community".

I love the way C.A.S.T. events really encapsulate what community is all about. Building community is all about developing relationships, and the best relationships in life are those that challenge, support and inspire you. Challenges



Rebecca Fink

abound at our events, and that's awesome! Catching fish can often be the biggest challenge, both for the kids and the volunteers who want so badly to be a successful guide. But the fishing is all just good challenging fun, and everyone still has a great time even if no fish are caught. That's because everyone is there to support one another! C.A.S.T. events have always been, and always will be a good time because we are all just there doing what we were created to do: love each other.

Perhaps my favorite intangible about our events is the inspiration that is so prevalent. Of course, the kids are inspired to do more, try more, enjoy more of what life has to offer. Their parents are inspired to see the children succeed at something new to them. The volunteers are inspired by their generosity to give more to their community. And staff are inspired by the fact that, "hey this was such a great event, we need to do this again next year!"



*CAST Foundation's
Year in Review 2014*

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Georgia. She is currently in charge of 22 volunteers, permits for special events, on the water safety programs and the public affairs office.

Rebecca has partnered and worked with Highland Marina, Southern Harbor, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and the Coast Guard Auxillary to help put on her event. When asked what she liked most about the Take A Warrior Fishing events she has coordinated, Rebecca pointed out the organization of her partners and volunteers, and seeing everyone's passion to help. "Watching them work well together makes me see a future for a sustainable event."

When asked about her favorite moment at a Take A Warrior event, Rebecca couldn't pick out a specific one, but was "grateful for the opportunity to be a person that was part of a bigger picture that affects so many people."

As for future Take A Warrior events. Rebecca wants to maintain partnerships and possibly add another event each year.



Jim Owens & Rebecca show off the TWF blanket

Special People: Byron and Sandy Saunders



This month's article on volunteers involves a very special couple. Byron and Sandy Saunders met in high school in 1978, and have been together ever since. They have a son Brandon who has graduated college and is now working in Florida.

The Saunders have been volunteers at 12 of the past 14

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Calaveras Lake C.A.S.T. for Kids events. Missing only for the graduation (college and High School) of Brandon. Byron states that the C.A.S.T. name (Catch A Special Thrill) is perfect because he gets as much thrill as the children do at the events. The Saunders have perfected the art of cat fishing at the Calaveras Lake C.A.S.T. event. The children they assist have several times caught more than 30 fish in the 2 hour fishing period!

When the Saunders are not at C.A.S.T. events, they spend their weekends fishing for redfish down on the Texas coast. Always together, they are still best friends after 35 years together! Special people helping to make a difference in children's lives. It is what the C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation is all about.



"We Can't Wait to Come Back Next Year!"



Craig Family and boat captain, Kevin Pangle, with their catch on Prineville Reservoir

While the main focus of C.A.S.T. for Kids events are the children, their parents are often extremely appreciative of all the love poured out on their kids during their day of fishing.

Jay Yelas recently had a chance to visit with Jesse and April Craig of Redmond, Oregon at our Prineville Reservoir C.A.S.T. event on July 12, 2015. They are the parents of 6 year old

Jayden Craig. Jayden is an amazing young lady who enjoys fishing and has a beautiful smile.

The Craig's were attending their second C.A.S.T. event. According to Jesse, "we brought Jayden last year, and everybody had such a good time we couldn't wait to come back this year." Jayden is non-verbal, but as April says, "fishing doesn't show her disability, it just shows her freedom." According to Mom, the freedom Jayden gains at C.A.S.T. events is a big deal, "experiencing boating and fishing allows Jayden to be captivated by the wonder of a day on the water, and free from her disability for a while,

it's so awesome." Some of Jayden's favorite things to do in the boat are petting the fish after they are caught and playing with them in the livewell. "She also loves the wind in her face during the boat ride," said April.

The Craig's boat captain for the day was Kevin Pangle. A resident of Bend, OR, Pangle is one of the many members of the Central Oregon Bass Club that volunteered as boat captains at the event. "Kevin was really good and patient with Jayden", said April. Pangle has volunteered at several C.A.S.T. events over the years. When asked for a quote about his day with Jayden and the Craigs, he said "it was the highlight of my year."

"Jayden comes alive during a C.A.S.T. for Kids event" said April. "She started speaking today in the boat and said "happy" several times. She also said 'bye-bye' to the fish we let go. We caught about a dozen bass in three hours. There was therapy as well, and signing practice as I was able to work with her on some new sign language." Jayden looked so happy afterwards at the picnic lunch, enjoying a scoop of ice cream. According to Jesse, "we can't wait to come back next year!"



Craig Family at the BBQ Lunch

Words from the Shore: "Best Day Ever!"

*"This is a highlight of my year, every year."
--Boat Captain, Prineville Reservoir*

*"I still tear up thinking about our day. It was in her words...BEST DAY EVER! Loved every minute. Deeply touched by the kindness and generosity."
--Parent, Strawberry Reservoir*



Biggest Fish: 27" Cutthroat Trout at Strawberry Reservoir's C.A.S.T. for Kids event