



Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association's 13th Annual

TAKE-A-KID FISHING DAY

Saturday, June 19, 2010



A great organization and a great event

by Capt. John Sheriff

Being a native of Key Largo Florida, my move to Rhode Island, Warwick specifically, and along with my love of salt water fishing, helped me find my way to the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association. This 6,800 plus group of angler enthusiasts is under the leadership of President Steve Medeiros. To see Steve in motion is to witness a true labor of love.

From meetings, to convention shows, a monthly magazine, newsletters and special events..... Steve is on top of it.

I had only been a member of RISAA for a very brief time when President Medeiros mentioned that the Association would again be hosting a day of fishing offered to kids who had never had the opportunity to go out on a boat and fish. I didn't hesitate a minute to sign up as a host captain!

Right from the get-go, everything, as usual, was organized to the 'T.' My Mate Annie and I arrived to our reserved slip at 7:30 a.m. Brewers Marina was busting with activity, and filled with the sound of hundreds of excited kids holding a bottle of water and a permission slip. There was a Captain's gazebo to check in and later, an announcement and assignment of children to each vessel.

My mate and I were assigned 4 young boys from Seekonk and one very excited Dad who had just flown in from Los Angeles to pick up his 5 year old son for Father's Day. When Mike, the Dad, realized he could come along with us as a chaperone, we couldn't decide who was more excited, the son or the dad.

We all had our photo taken for the purpose of identifying and making sure whoever went out was later returned. The boys said good-bye to their moms and we all walked down the dock to our vessel, *Fish-On*.

Each boy and the Dad were issued a life vest and were given a few rules as they all quietly listened. Right then and there my mate and I knew we had made the right decision to volunteer. The smiles and excitement was endless.

As we began to leave the marina my mate then introduced us and asked each of the boys their names and inquired if they had ever been out on a boat?

Answer: No!

Has anyone ever caught a fish? No!



Who's going to be the first one to bring one in? ME!!!!

We followed formation out and into the channel of Narragansett Bay with our orange flag flying noting that we were 'with kids' and stayed on Channel 65 for any dispatch information or emergency needs. It was so easy and rewarding to see their smiles.

It wasn't long until we caught our first bluefish. The kids were so energized and wound-up at this point. We explained that we would catch and release whatever we caught, but they could all bring one fish each back for photos. After the first catch, one boy was then challenging the other as to who would catch the next and the biggest. And after our 2 1/2 quick hours out on the water, we had caught 14 in all.

Each boy proudly brought a fish back to the marina to be photographed with when we returned. They all politely said their thank you's and goodbye's promising to be back again next year.

Before our group broke up to enjoy the refreshments another photo was taken of the kids with their



catch and another check-in that every boy was returned.

The organization and day's activity hadn't ended. The dozens of volunteers were endless and each wore smiles all day long. It's no mistake that this event is so successful. There were hot dogs, hamburgers, salad, ice cream, cupcakes, drinks, blue gummy shark candies for everyone and promises to all meet again next year.

You can rest assured that this Captain and his Mate will be there!