

[Return to home page](#)

C.A.S.T. for Kids volunteers 'hook' another success



ABOVE: Volunteer April Kendall readies Personal Flotation Devices for distribution to C.A.S.T. for Kids participants. BELOW: Volunteers Janet Kirsch, Bill Martin and Martin Einert ensure participants have all the necessary equipment for a morning of fishing.



Nearly 40 novice anglers from across the Las Vegas Valley are relishing memories of big or small fish tugging on their lines.

Last Saturday, a morning-long adventure for novice anglers who, by and large, had never spent time or had limited time on Lake Mead, enjoyed a day of fishing during the 12th annual C.A.S.T. (Catch a Special Thrill) for Kids event at the Las Vegas Boat Harbor (LVBH).

In addition to fishing, there was a new aspect added to this activity; the Department of the Interior recently selected this C.A.S.T event as one of three Reclamation activities chosen to exemplify the Department's *Let's Move Outside* initiative to encourage healthy eating choices and outdoor activity.

The day was great, if a little warm, but then some people say a day spent fishing is never bad.

"Regardless of the temperature, the participants were happy and their smiles of excitement pleased the hearts of approximately 120 volunteers whose efforts made the event possible," said **Phil Aurit**, who has coordinated the C.A.S.T. for Kids event over the past several years.

The event, held at the LVBH which was volunteered by manager Gail Kaiser, provided the participants, who are disadvantaged or disabled adults and youngsters, with an opportunity for an exceptional outdoor experience.

"Some stood, some sat in wheel chairs, and some could not see what they caught, but regardless of how they fished, the participants were top-notch anglers," said Aurit.

This was reflected in the lunch menu, which included the typical barbeque items, as well as cold fruit juice to help quench thirsts and cold fruit for dessert.



ABOVE TOP: Valerie Vernier oversees the assignment of participants to their respective boats. ABOVE: A mother wheels her son onboard a boat, while a volunteer escorts her two additional children. RIGHT: Volunteer Bob Hartman assists a participant on the walkway to the boats.

“Just like previous years’ events this one brought together generous sponsors and tireless volunteers,” said Aurit.

“The success of the event depends largely on all the Reclamation folks who volunteer to assist,” said **Joe Liebhauser**, Resources Management Office director.

Following lunch Deputy Regional Director **Jayne Harkins**, along with **Valerie Thomas** and Aurit, spent about 30 minutes handing out souvenir photos,

trophies, and various mementos donated by event sponsors.

Food for breakfast and lunch was been provided by the Railroad Pass Hotel and Casino since the event began, and even served as an event site a few years ago when it rained at Lake Mead.

“On behalf of the patients and families we serve, thanks to each and every one of our fabulous



By mid morning nearly 40 C.A.S.T. for Kids anglers and their escorts were on board the pontoon boats at Las Vegas Boat Harbor, and fishing was well underway.



volunteers for making the 12th Annual C.A.S.T. for Kids event another incredible, unforgettable day!" said Debbie Oliver, executive director, AmeriFace. "With your help, we are . . . *Making a world of difference in a world of facial differences!*"

"I just wanted to thank you and C.A.S.T. for such a great day of fishing," wrote Dr. Neal Marek of The Blind Center of Nevada, in a recent note. "I think it was the best C.A.S.T. day yet for our members."

With the help of two unnamed volunteers, 11-year-old Valerie caught the first and second catches of the day. Her first fish shown on the left was a 10-pound, 11-ounce catfish.



ABOVE LEFT: Jeff Smith, who had been part of his U.S. Army Reserve unit's training activity, went directly to the C.A.S.T. event to volunteer. ABOVE RIGHT, RIGHT and BELOW: C.A.S.T. participants proudly display their catches.





“Everything went so smoothly and they really enjoyed the boat ride especially when they got to steer the boat. They had a great time.

“Also a special thanks to the Girl Scout troop for bringing the goodie bags and trophies to our clients,” said Dr. Marek.

ABOVE LEFT: While most thought the fishing was great, there were a few who thought otherwise. ABOVE RIGHT: For some young anglers “Coastie” the interactive, remote-controlled boat robot, furnished by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, attracted more interest than the fishing.



Always present to provide guidance and information, Event Coordinator Phil Aurit announces the presentation of awards will follow lunch, which he said was planned to include tasty, as well as healthy food choices.

Photos of the C.A.S.T. for Kids event were provided by Kelly Conner, Martin Einert, Steve León, and Alex Stephens.

Reclamation Volunteers

While the volunteers for the event numbered more than 100, the following list reflects the Reclamation employees who were registered volunteers for this year’s event -- **Dana Anat, Jeff Anderson, Greg Burkhart, Dave Chubb, Kelly Connor, Martin Einert, Lorri Gray-Lee, Jayne Harkins, Janet Kirsch, Steve León, Joe Liebhauser, Eric Loomis, Rick Malone, Bill Martin, Leah Masterson, Nancy Rolfe, Alex Stephens, Brittany Stubitz, Val Thomas, Val Vernier, Ty Wolters,** and **Phil Aurit.**