

To honor the Neil McKenzie Youth Fishing Derby guides, boat drivers, donors, and other volunteers...a story from the Take Me Fishing.org website titled:

“When They Catch Them on Their Own...”

I received a wonderful email the other day.

It showed a photo of a young boy with a fish. **Not a big fish, but one of the most special fish photos** I'd ever had sent to me. You see... the fisherman was my very own 11-year-old son, and I received the email while on another continent working on a story for *Field & Stream* magazine, thousands of miles from home.



He wanted to show me the fish he had caught by *himself*.

It was a bittersweet moment. Like any dad, I naturally wished I had been there in person. It also dawned on me that I couldn't remember a time when he'd ever caught a fish that I wasn't standing at his shoulder coaching him along. And I couldn't help but feel an immense sense of pride and satisfaction in knowing that some of those lessons had sunk in. **Perhaps more profoundly, I was happy to know that a spark of interest in fishing had caught fire on its own.**

I know he has fishing in his heart, and that makes my heart soar.

Many of you adults already realize this, but there is absolutely no joy on the water that matches what one experiences when teaching another person—especially a younger person—how to fish.

You can catch all the big fish you've ever dreamed about, take photos and hang them on your walls to preserve wonderful memories, but **there's no photo you'll treasure more than one sent to you by a person you taught to fish.**

If my dad were here today, he would tell each of you volunteers that “You done good today.” And when you fisherkids turn 18, I hope you will keep coming to this event to pass on your fishing knowledge and stories to others learning to fish. Because the core, the very heart center, of today is to “Keep Kids Fishin’.”

Thank you.

Kelly (McKenzie) Sylte...Neil's daughter

<http://www.takemefishing.org/community/blog/when-they-catch-them-on-their-own%E2%80%A6/>