

Fishing hopes afloat for Special Kids

by Troy Antrim Jens

There is a new boat at Captain K's Marina on Lake Michigan. It's not just any fishing boat, it was specially given to the United Special Sportsman's Alliance by an anonymous donor who had a special heart for children. The USSA grants outdoor fishing and hunting wishes for kids and families enduring serious and life-threatening illnesses, and they now have a new vessel of opportunity for these special children.

The salmon fishing boat in the picture, which was given to the USSA this summer (2010) will provide years of enjoyment to many of the children who wish to take part in a dream fishing trip. After the donation was received, the boat was taken to TLC Truck Lettering in Pittsville, where the logo design for the USSA was put on the rig. Dean Ourek, owner of TLC Truck Lettering donated the artwork for the special craft.

Fishing tackle and other gear are being donated as well, bringing more fishing opportunities for kids and families who endure rigorous challenges of disease and illness. Time out on the water is a great get-away for these special kids and families, who are often burdened with hospital visits, medication, disability and incredible medical expenses. The fishing trips are provided at no cost by the all volunteer USSA charity at childswish.com.

How is it working out so far? "The day after we received the boat, I was in the 'Heart and Sole' race", describes Brigid O'Donoghue, the founder and CEO of childswish and the USSA. O'Donoghue went on to add, "I ran into good friend, Dave Schmitz, who had told me many times that someday he would love to take some kids salmon fishing. I said to him, if I come up with a salmon fishing boat would you take some USSA kids fishing? Dave replied he would! So I then told him about how we had just received a great salmon fishing boat, and how we can take kids fishing on big water!"

Receiving the boat has been counted as a major blessing for the USSA, who had provided over 6,300 wishes to children and families across America. The USSA now has state directors in numerous states, and that also includes the help of Americans wounded veterans in activities and events, as well as providing certain wish trips for them.

While there may be specific value to the boat that was so generosity provided to the USSA, the smiles and happiness it will bring to many kids over the years will remain forever priceless. The USSA is grateful to the donor of the boat and to the volunteers who have made setting it up for special trips possible.

For more information on the USSA charity, visit www.childswish.com



Pictured l-r is Dean Ogurek, owner of TLC Truck Lettering Company; David Schmitz, Pittsville Postmaster and Jim Hoogesteger, owner of Pittsville Homes Inc.