



# LET'S MAKE FISHING AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY SPORT

*For many of us,* rods and reels hang in the garage, tackle boxes fill the shelves, and a bass boat sits waiting in the driveway or on the dock. We know the excitement of looking forward to a weekend fishing trip with dad. This is especially true if you are from a middle or upper class family, but much less likely if you are from a home with limited resources and family support. The truth is fishing remains a sport prevalent among middle class and affluent Americans with access to prime fishing waters, but quite scarce among low-income and underserved populations.



## WHO WE ARE

***Founded in 2019,*** Candlewood Fishing Camp became a non-profit in Connecticut in 2020, and are awaiting our 501(c)3 status. For two summers, we have offered scholarships and reduced tuition for kids to attend our summer camp programs with a focus on fishing. We are creating new programs to include people of all ages and from all walks of life.

## WHAT WE DO

We create and fund innovative camp programming that increases access, availability, and participation in fishing for people of all ages (especially youth), abilities, ethnicities, and economic background. We offer day, weekend and week-long residential camps on Candlewood Lake in CT, one of the top-rated bass fishing lakes in America.

## WHY WE DO IT

We believe everyone can enjoy the sport of fishing, and benefit from a camp experience regardless of their age, ability, or the amount of money in their pockets. We want to get more people (especially youth) outside, fishing, on boats, and have an unforgettable camp experience. This generation gets more connected to their devices and less connected to the outdoors each year. Camps and fishing help build friendships, self-confidence, self-esteem,

and a connection to the outdoors. They form groups that create a sense of belonging, lasting friendships, and fond memories. We want children from low-income neighborhoods to seniors, veterans to the disabled, to know and experience the benefits of camp and fishing.

## MORE THAN A ROD AND REEL

***People who fish know it's an amazing sport.*** It requires timing, coordination, strategic thinking and mental toughness. But the benefits of fishing extend far beyond the lake. It teaches patience, teamwork, resiliency, problem solving. It builds self-confidence and self-esteem. Fishing forms groups that create a sense of belonging, lasting friendships and amazing memories.

As an avid fisherman, you know the benefits of fishing are far-reaching and lifelong. We're driven to get more people hooked on the sport so they can experience these benefits. To do this, we create world class camp programs centered around fishing.

## ***WHAT FOLLOWS ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE IMPACT OF OUR FUNDING . . .***



## UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

We believe fishing is an "inclusive" sport and everyone should have access to quality fishing waters and the right equipment. This is why we make a concerted effort to fund programs for low-income and underserved communities to enjoy our camp programs. These programs give people of all ages, especially youth, the opportunity to fish Candlewood Lake in CT, one of the top bass fishing lakes in America.

### *Impact:*

- Providing fishing equipment, guided fishing trips, camp experience
- Safe and positive environment
- Exercise, fun, sportsmanship, work ethic, discipline
- Life Skills: Perseverance, patience, ethical behavior, resiliency
- Competence, communication skills, connection to nature
- New friendships

## PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year. 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24. Fishing is known to be a top recreational therapy to help reduce stress, anxiety, and symptoms of depression. A day on the lake, or a week spent at camp can have a big impact on someone's life.

### *Impact:*

- Reflective and meditative activity, reduces stress
- Slow down and enjoy your surroundings
- Improve mood, happiness, break from life's distractions
- Make new friends

## PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Whether a person was born with Autism or lost a leg in an accident, we believe everyone can enjoy fishing, regardless of their ability. We can customize weekend or day programs to fit everybody's needs.

### *Impact:*

- Improved perceptions of disability
- Independence and self-confidence
- A community of like-minded enthusiasts

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## VETERANS

Our veterans served and sacrificed for freedoms we enjoy every day and freedoms others hope to have. Many have returned and are living with debilitating mental and physical wounds. Fishing can be one of the best recreational therapies around. We offer day and weekend camps for vets to get on the water, catch fish, and have an amazing time that they all deserve.

### *Impact:*

- Therapeutic rehabilitation (physical, cognitive)
- Psychological fitness, stress reduction
- Social interactions, new friendships
- Self-confidence, self-esteem, independence



## SENIORS

As seniors age, they often become less active and more isolated. Fishing provides opportunities for seniors to get out of their homes, meet others, and maintain their physical strength, emotional stability, and mental acuity. Fishing is a life-long sport that people can enjoy well into their golden years. We support half day programs for seniors to enjoy the lake in our comfortable and safe fishing pontoon boats.

### *Impact:*

- Lowers blood pressure, stress, resting heart rate, depression
- A sense of belonging and independence
- Meet new friends and enjoy seeing old ones
- Enjoy the beautiful outdoors



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***Candlewood Fishing Camp has a mighty vision to get more people fishing.*** Our main objective is to prioritize funding in to create and offer programming focusing on the sport of fishing and a camp experience. As we focus on underserved populations and local families that are reeling from the financial effects of the pandemic, more people will enjoy the sport of fishing and all of its benefits.

We are changing lives through fishing, but it's our gracious donors who deserve all the credit. Without people like you, the barriers to an unforgettable fishing/camp experience will remain high and less people will experience the wonderful benefits fishing has to offer.

## THE NEED IS GREAT AND THE CHANGE STARTS WITH YOU!

As a supporter, you can change all of that. With your support today, we can fund more programs and make fishing more accessible to all people regardless of their age, ethnicity, economic background, or mental condition. This means reaching more people that would normally not have the chance to fish.

Join our team of supporters and make a meaningful gift that will directly support tuition for kids and many others to attend our camps. The campaign goal is to raise \$250,000 by June 1, 2021. With your help, we can raise that and more. On our fundraising flyer, you will find a number of giving levels and sponsorships.

***Choose one today!***

***Thank you for your consideration!***

***Make your gift online today: [CandlewoodFishingCamp.com](http://CandlewoodFishingCamp.com)***

