

Kids converge at pond

By **HEATHER AH SAN**
DAILY REPUBLIC

FAIRFIELD — Bass and catfish don't normally reside in the Civic Center pond.

But for Solano County's first Kids Day of Fishing event of the year, 600 fish found themselves in a new home.

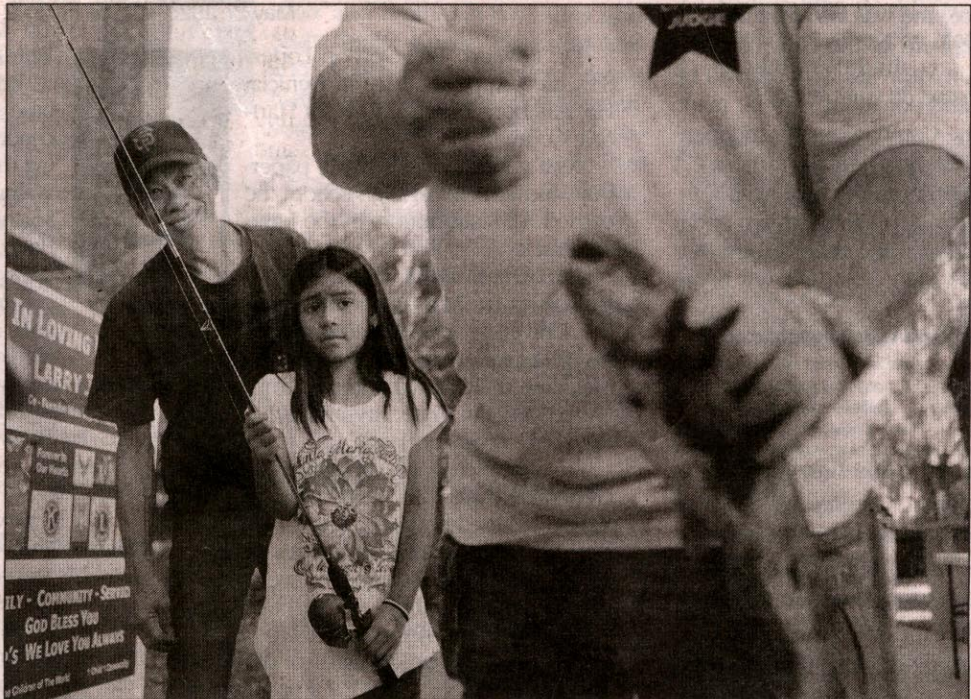
The fish, however, didn't stay there for long. About 300 children from the community showed up Saturday morning to catch some of the bass and catfish.

President of Kids Day of Fishing Mike Johns, aka "Capt. Mike", said it's likely with the turnout they had that all the fish would get caught.

Kids Day of Fishing Inc., along with the Kiwanis Club of Fairfield, hosted the first of many children's fishing events held in Solano County throughout the year.

To kick off Earth Day, Kids Day opened the event to all children, providing the first 200 to sign up with fishing rods and bait.

Special needs children were welcomed to the event. Johns said in the past he hosted these events just for special needs children because it's a great way to empower them and build confidence.



Conner Jay/Daily Republic

Eliza Mah, 8, of Suisun City, watches Bob Dinwiddle help take the hook out of a catfish she caught during the Kids Day of Fishing event Saturday at the Civic Center Pond in Fairfield.

Minerva Chavez and her daughter Cynthia came to event last year, and she won a trophy.

"I bring her here so she can learn different skills and socialize with others," Chavez said. "She's really having fun."

Johns and his father Larry first started hosting the fishing event in 2007 as a way of giving back to the community. Johns, who has always been passionate

about fishing, wanted to give the joy of fishing to special needs and underprivileged children and families through organized community events.

The event has grown by leaps and bounds since it started. In 2007, Johns began with \$20 to fund the organization. Today he has an annual budget of \$25,000 raised from the community and friends to help him hold multiple

fishing expeditions.

Johns will hold several other fishing days throughout the year, including a two-day children's camp in July.

To learn more about Kids Day of Fishing visit its website, <http://www.kidsdayoffishing.org>.

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