



Susan Hiland/Daily Republic photos

Michael Rogers, 7, participates in the Kids Day of Fishing at Lake Solano Park near Winters, Saturday.

Kids Day of Fishing

fun for special needs children

SUSAN HILAND
DAILY REPUBLIC

WINTERS — Lake Solano Park was surrounded by happy fishermen Saturday at the eighth annual Kids Day of Fishing.

"This is the event that started the whole thing, the Kids Day of Fishing, which caters to special needs children," said Mike Johns, founder and president of Kids Day of Fishing, Inc.

Johns wanted to do something for children with special needs since his brother suffered from cerebral palsy in his youth.

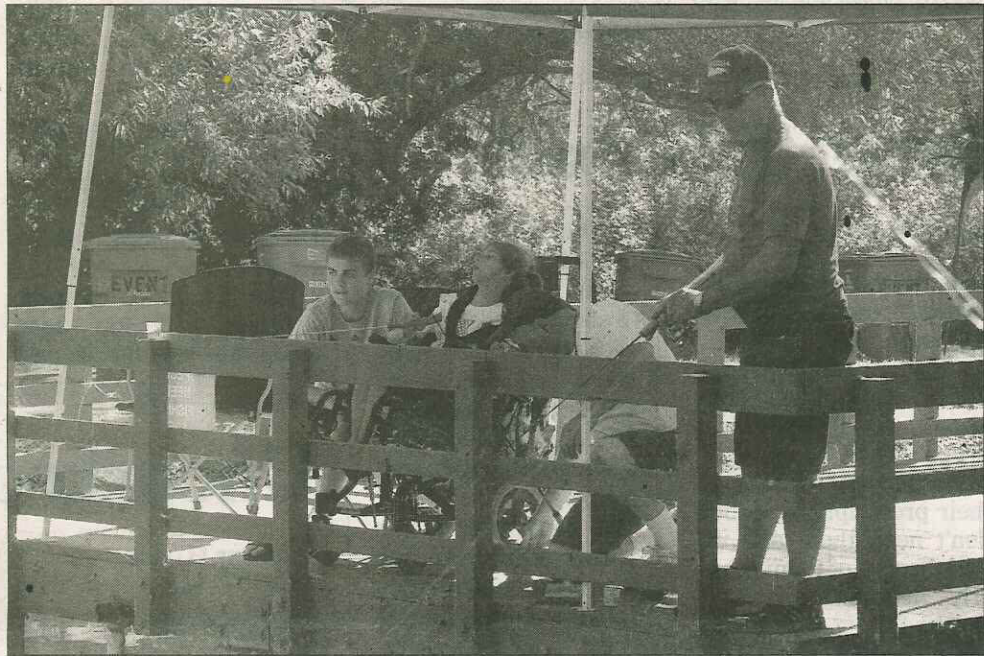
"They wanted to take him away from my dad, but they didn't and he grew up, and is making a six-figure income now," Johns said.

Johns met Natalie Bailey, who also suffers with cerebral palsy, and found further inspiration for his organization.

"People think kids who have special needs can't go fishing or be outdoors and that is not true. They can fish, and have fun doing it," he said.

This event is something that the whole Bailey family looks forward to each year. Natalie's brother, Brad, sits by her wheelchair helping make sure she is OK. Her father, also named Mike, helps her reel in the line with her pink fishing pole after Johns puts a worm on her hook.

"She really loves being out here. We have done this



Brad Bailey sits with his sister Natalie, who has cerebral palsy, at the Lake Solano Park where Kids Day of Fishing brought 100 children to fish and spend time outdoors. Kneeling is Mike Johns, founder of Kids Day of Fishing.

for three or four years and a couple years ago she won a trophy. Natalie still has it on her shelf in her room," Michael Bailey said.

Each year the organization raises about \$20,000 and, with the help of the Kiwanis Club of Greater Napa, they put on summer fishing events to help encourage children to get out and enjoy themselves.

For grandmother Sandy Rainsbarger, of Vacaville, it's a wonderful time to spend with her 7-year-old grandson, Michael Rogers.

"It's just a nice day of fishing. He can see if he can

catch a fish. This is a way to spend quality time with the family in nature," Rainsbarger said.

The fish are left in the pond so children can come back and enjoy Lake Solano Park during the rest of the year.

"We put about 2,000 fish in the pond. It costs around \$1,800," Johns said.

This is not the only event for Kids Day of Fishing. They will put on a Kids

Camp at Lake Solano Park next month for 35 special needs children.

"It is a two-day educational event for kids. They will learn about ecology, camping and fishing," Johns said.

For more information on the event, go to www.kidsdayoffishing.org/upcoming-events.

Reach Susan Hiland at 427-6981 or shiland@dailyrepublic.net.