

# Jimmy JOURNAL

Summer 2026



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**FISHINGFORLIFE.ORG**

# Letter From Executive Director **TOM GOODRICH**

I hope this finds you well. This Jimmy Journal is especially exciting for me, and I hope you'll continue reading as you see highlights from some truly outstanding events and relationships. One of the most significant is the introduction of our large "Cast the Net" campaign. You'll see more details in the following pages, but I wanted to first highlight the incredible work happening throughout all of our programming.

Our Military R&R program is going superbly. We recently held one of our most wonderful new events at Reno Lake Lodge, and I want to give a special shout-out and thank you to them for choosing to partner with us. Through that event, we were able to minister deeply to many veterans in meaningful ways.

Ryan and his camps have absolutely been crushing it in so many regards. Just look at the turkeys, deer, crappies, and all the events he has led—an outstanding job all around.

I also can't say enough about Vaughn and his availability to mentor through Deep C's Men, helping individuals, families, and veterans in need through his pastoral leadership.

A special thank-you as well to Steve, who has an-

chored many of our Military R&R events, including Holes 4 Heroes, Reno Lake, the Crappie Contest, Armed Forces events, and so much more.

Sammy, Laura, and Darla have done an outstanding job holding up the administrative side of the ministry. A special shout-out to Sammy, who has taken on leadership of our OWLS initiative, where we've seen tremendous participation and impact. Laura continues to be our operational anchor, helping keep the entire organization running smoothly and in ship-shape order.

And a huge thank-you to Michael Bull. Meeting the demands and needs of Reel 'Em In and Trout Ponds is difficult work, but Michael has done an exceptional job. I know many of us wondered how anyone could fill Michael Schlueter's shoes after his passing last season, but Michael has stepped in admirably, and we are incredibly proud of him.

Thank you again for your continued support, prayers, and partnership. Please continue reading and celebrating with us all that God is doing through Fishing For Life.

Tom Goodrich

Executive Director, Fishing For Life

## New in 2026 Wednesdays on the Water Brings Faith, Fishing & Fellowship to Summer

Fishing For Life is excited to launch a brand-new opportunity in 2026 that brings together faith, fishing, and meaningful connection in a whole new season. Introducing **Wednesdays on the Water** — a relaxed and refreshing summer ministry designed to complement our beloved winter **Ice Castle Ministry**.

Just as the Ice Castle Ministry has created a welcoming place for encouragement and fellowship during the winter months, Wednesdays on the Water will offer that same spirit of connection during the summer on beautiful Lake Minnetonka.

Beginning in 2026, participants are invited to spend a Wednesday evening aboard a Fishing For Life pontoon to enjoy a guided fishing night, peaceful time on the water, meaningful conversation, and a short devotional. Whether you are an experienced angler, brand new to fishing, or simply looking for a peaceful evening of fellowship and faith, this program is designed to be welcoming for everyone.

For those who prefer not to fish, devotional-only opportunities will also be available, creating a comfortable space to connect, reflect, and enjoy the beauty of the lake together.

Wednesdays on the Water is more than a fishing trip — it's a chance to slow down, build relationships, enjoy God's creation, and experience community in a unique and encouraging setting.

Space is limited, and because this is a brand-new program, excitement is already building! We encourage you to reserve your spot early and be part of the inaugural season of Wednesdays on the Water.

Registration is now open at:  
**[FishingForLife.org/calendar](https://FishingForLife.org/calendar)**

# More Than Fishing: Finding Community, Adventure, and Faith



**F**or many women, life is spent caring for everyone else. We're driving kids to activities, helping aging parents, supporting spouses, serving at church, working our jobs, and keeping our households running. We spend so much time making sure everyone else has what they need that we often forget to make space for ourselves - to slow down, deepen friendships with other women, and grow in our faith. That's why Outdoor Women for Life (OWLs) exists.

At our January ice fishing event, a mother and daughter joined us for the first time, looking for something they could enjoy together - a chance to spend quality time away from the demands of life. They learned how to read sonar electronics, shared plenty of laughs, and experienced the thrill of catching fish side by side. Like many moms, the daughter is used to helping her children fish - but this time she got to be the one reeling in fish and celebrating the catch.

Her mother experienced something just as meaningful: uninterrupted time with her daughter in a new setting. By the end of the day, she had landed 11 fish and won the trophy for most inches caught. Since then, she has become more involved with Fishing For Life, volunteering at the Muskie Expo Trout Pond and helping

at another Trout Pond at a senior living facility where seniors, some who were in wheelchairs, experienced fishing. What started as a day on the ice grew into new friendships, new skills, and new ways to serve.

We continue to see these connections at OWLs events. At our June fishing event, two women discovered they were both veterans, exchanged phone numbers, and made plans to get together again. We also welcomed a woman who had recently moved to Minnesota and was hoping to find like-minded Christian women who share her love of the outdoors. She found OWLs through an online search, caught her first fishes of the year, and is already looking forward to returning in July.

OWLs is more than fishing, hiking, foraging, or shooting sports. It's a place to step away from life's constant demands, experience the wonder of God's creation, grow in faith, learn new skills, and build meaningful friendships. If you've been longing for community, encouragement, or a chance to simply breathe for a few hours, we'd love to have you join us. You may come for the activity - but chances are you'll come back for the friendships, the fellowship, and the reminder that you are deeply loved by God and created for community and connection.



## Fishing For Life Expands Reel Hope Program with New Phase 4: Metro Camps

Fishing For Life is excited to announce the continued growth of our **Reel Hope Program** with the addition of an exciting new **Phase 4 – Metro Camps**, expanding opportunities for youth to deepen relationships, build confidence, and continue their outdoor journey through meaningful mentorship and hands-on experiences.

The Reel Hope Program empowers youth ages 8–17 through trusted relationships, outdoor experiences, and mentorship that build confidence and life skills through fishing. Participants progress through three foundational phases that introduce fishing skills, guided fishing experiences, and an all-expenses-paid boat fishing trip, helping youth grow in both confidence and connection along the way.

Now, Fishing For Life is proud to introduce **Phase 4 – Metro Camps**, designed for youth who are ready for a more immersive outdoor experience. These camps create opportunities for participants to strengthen skills, grow independence, deepen friendships, and continue learning in a safe, mentorship-driven environment that is close to home.

To date, Fishing For Life has hosted **two Metro Camps**, each creating memorable experiences and meaningful connections.

The first metro camp, **Reel Family Ice Camp**, was a parent/youth ice fishing experience on Medicine Lake that brought families together for a day of unplugging, learning new skills, and creating lasting memories on the ice. Watching families work together while enjoying quality time outdoors made the day especially impactful.

The second metro camp, **Reel Connections Camp**, held this spring at a local facility in Eden Prairie, provided participants with a memorable overnight adventure. Friday evening included fellowship around the campfire, a meaningful devotional, and fishing tips and tricks to prepare for the next day. Early Saturday morning,

participants headed to the shores of Lake Minnetonka where Fishing For Life guides welcomed them aboard boats and quickly got youth on the fish. Following a successful day on the water, campers returned for a short awards ceremony before heading home with new memories, skills, and confidence.

The adventure continues this summer with **Hooked on Hope**, scheduled for **July 17–19 at Baker Park Reserve**, offering even more opportunities for youth to grow through outdoor experiences, mentorship, and time outdoors. Families interested in learning more or registering are encouraged to visit the Fishing For Life Calendar page at [FishingForLife.org/calendar](https://FishingForLife.org/calendar).

As Reel Hope continues to grow, so does the need for caring adults willing to invest in the next generation. This exciting growth also calls us to establish a permanent metro camp location through our Cast the Net Campaign. Read more about this exciting initiative and how it will help create a year-round home for ministry, mentoring, and outdoor experiences on page 6.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer/fishing guide for youth programs, please contact Sammy at [sammy@fishingforlife.org](mailto:sammy@fishingforlife.org) to learn how you can help make a difference in a young person's life. You can also visit the volunteer page at [FishingForLife.org](https://FishingForLife.org).



# Military R&R

## *Relationships Through Recreation Program*

**A**s Fishing For Life has grown over the years, we have increasingly focused our attention on Veterans and finding meaningful ways to help them move forward in a positive direction.

At one of our recent Relationships through Recreation (R&R) events, a veteran shared something deeply personal. He told me that since finding Fishing For Life, he has finally been able to spend time with other people in public without constantly fearing that something bad would happen.

Not long ago, whenever he would go out on a date with his wife, he felt the need to carry a pistol, extra magazines, and a knife just to feel safe. He would always sit with his back to the wall and make sure he had at least two exits in sight at all times. For him, hyper vigilance had become a way of life.

But through the relationships, trust, and sense of community he found at Fishing For Life, things slowly began to change.

Fishing For Life is an organization dedicated to helping military members and veterans cope with PTSD through fishing, relationships, recreation, and community connection.

One of our core programs is Relationships through Recreation (R&R). This program is designed to help veterans, wounded warriors, and their families reconnect through outdoor activities such as fishing trips, camps, and group events.

The R&R program is built around several key principles:

- **Peer Connection** — Veterans often feel more comfortable connecting with others who share similar life experiences and challenges.
- **Nature and Recreation** — Fishing and outdoor activities can help reduce stress, anxiety, and emotional fatigue while promoting calm and focus.
- **Relationship Rebuilding** — Many of our programs include spouses, children, mentors, and caregivers to help strengthen family bonds and social support systems.
- **Non-Clinical Support** — Not every veteran is ready to engage in formal therapy. Recreational programs can provide a trusted and approachable pathway toward healing and personal growth.

There is growing evidence that fishing and outdoor recreation can positively impact veterans dealing with PTSD by reducing isolation, improving emotional regulation, and restoring a sense of connection and purpose. Research involving fishing programs for veterans found that participants described the experience as a “breather” from PTSD symptoms and a way to regain control, peace, and community.

Stories like this veterans are why Fishing For Life continues this mission. Healing does not always begin in a clinic or counseling office. Sometimes it begins in a boat, on a dock, around a campfire, or beside someone who simply understands.

# Cast the Net Campaign

From Cast to Christ, from Net to Disciple



**A**t Fishing For Life, we often say that ministry happens in the moments between casts — in conversations on the dock, quiet reflections in a boat, or shared experiences in God’s creation that open hearts in unexpected ways.

For years, Fishing For Life has faithfully lived out its mission: **CONNECTING PEOPLE TO CHRIST THROUGH FISHING & OUTDOOR PROGRAMS.**

That mission remains at the center of everything we do — whether serving youth searching for purpose, veterans seeking connection and healing, families spending meaningful time together, or individuals taking steps of faith in a Christ-centered community.

We build relationships first, earning the trust of veterans, youth, and volunteers so we can speak truth into their lives while extending love and support.

As the ministry continues to grow and opportunities expand, so does the need to thoughtfully prepare for the future. That preparation is what has led to an important next step for Fishing For Life: the early rollout of the **Cast the Net Capital Campaign.**

While still in an early phase and not yet publicly launched, *Cast the Net* represents an exciting and prayerful effort to strengthen the ministry’s foundation for years to come.

At its heart, *Cast the Net* is about stewardship — building the capacity to serve more people, more effectively, while staying deeply rooted in the mission God has entrusted to us.

The campaign focuses on three strategic priorities that together will help Fishing For Life continue reaching youth, veterans, and families through outdoor experiences centered on Christ.

## 1. BUILD FOUR WALLS

One of the most significant goals of *Cast the Net* is the development of a permanent Urban Base Camp in the Twin Cities metro area.

For over 20 years, Fishing For Life has faithfully adapted without a central home base. Programs have

grown, equipment has moved from place to place, and staff and volunteers have continually found creative ways to make ministry happen wherever the opportunity exists.

But growth has also revealed an important reality: our ministry needs a home.

The envisioned Urban Base Camp would increase accessibility for those in and around the metro area who may not be able to attend programs farther from home. It would create another meaningful point of connection for youth, veterans, and families seeking community and faith-based support.

Just as importantly, this space would provide a permanent gathering space where volunteers can be equipped, discipleship can happen year-round, equipment can be securely stored, and ministry preparation can occur more efficiently.

In many ways, this vision is not simply about a building. It is about creating a stronger foundation for ministry impact.

## 2. BUILD CAPACITY

Fishing For Life’s ministry has always happened where people naturally encounter God’s creation — on the water, around campfires, on docks, and in shared outdoor experiences.

Those moments matter.

They are often where relationships form, trust grows, and meaningful faith conversations begin.

To continue providing safe, high-quality experiences, *Cast the Net* also includes plans to strengthen ministry capacity through investments in boats, trailers, fishing gear, outdoor equipment, maintenance, and training resources.

While these practical needs may not always be the most visible part of ministry, they are essential to creating opportunities for connection and discipleship.

Quality ministry requires quality people, and creating an

environment with the right tools, support, and resources that help attract, equip, and retain strong leaders who can faithfully serve for years to come.

Simply put, expanding capacity means expanding opportunities to serve.

### 3. BUILD DISCIPLES

Perhaps the most meaningful focus of *Cast the Net* is its commitment to discipleship.

Fishing For Life has never been solely about fishing. Rather, fishing provides the setting for something deeper — authentic relationships, spiritual conversations, mentorship, encouragement, and opportunities for people to encounter Christ.

The campaign seeks to expand support for discipleship efforts, chaplaincy, and accessible programming so finances never become a barrier to participation.

The goal is not merely to increase attendance or host more events. It is to deepen impact — helping more people grow in faith and experience the love of Christ through meaningful relationships and outdoor experiences.

### ENCOURAGING EARLY MOMENTUM

Although the campaign remains in its early stages, there is already much to be thankful for.

Initial conversations with ministry friends, supporters, and trusted partners have been encouraging. There is growing excitement about what this next chapter could mean for Fishing For Life and for the countless lives touched through its programs.

Perhaps most encouraging is the shared belief that the mission matters now more than ever.

In a world where many experience loneliness, uncertainty, and disconnection, opportunities for authentic relationships and Christ-centered community remain deeply needed.

Fishing has always been the invitation.

Jesus remains the destination.

As Fishing For Life prayerfully continues the rollout of *Cast the Net*, we are deeply grateful for every volunteer, donor, participant, and supporter who has helped carry the ministry forward over the years.

There is still much work ahead, but there is also great hope.

Because every cast holds possibility — and every life reached matters.

## *Fishing For Life is pleased to welcome Danny Benson as the new Program Coordinator for the Reel Hope and Metro Camp programs.*

In this role, Danny will work alongside volunteers and community partners to coordinate meaningful outdoor experiences and faith-based programming for youth through the four phases of the program. He will also serve as a primary point of contact for many of Fishing For Life's partner organizations and participants, helping strengthen relationships and expand the organization's impact throughout the community.

Danny brings a passion for mentoring young people and creating positive experiences that build confidence, character, life skills, and lasting relationships. His background includes leadership as a varsity lacrosse coach, experience in grassroots marketing with the Premier Lacrosse League, and years of hands-on teamwork in the construction industry. Throughout his career and volunteer service, he has demonstrated a strong commitment to leadership, teamwork, and serving others.

A former collegiate lacrosse student-athlete and member of the Student Athlete Leadership Team, Danny has also volunteered with community organizations focused on addressing food insecurity and youth development. His enthusiasm for the outdoors, coaching, and relationship-building makes him a great addition to the Fishing For Life team.

Danny is excited to connect with participants, volunteers, and community partners as Fishing For Life continues its mission of connecting people to Christ through fishing and outdoor programs. He looks forward to helping create life-changing experiences while building new partnerships and strengthening existing ones.

Please join us in welcoming Danny to the Fishing For Life family!





## 2026 Ice Castle Ministry

Thanks to the generous donation of a second Ice Castle in 2025 by Sandy Younger, Fishing For Life was able to operate two Ice Castles during the 2026 ice fishing season. The additional shelter allowed us to serve more families and create even more opportunities for people to experience the joy of ice fishing.

This winter, 35 families/groups participated in the Ice Castle Ministry, with many of them enjoying their very first ice fishing adventure. For many participants, it was more than just a day on the ice—it was an opportunity to spend quality time together, learn new skills, and create lasting memories in the outdoors. Throughout the season, the shelters provided a warm, comfortable, and welcoming environment for families and anglers regardless of their previous fishing experience.

One of the greatest rewards of the ministry is introducing people to the sport of fishing. Watching first-time anglers catch fish, learn about the outdoors, and share excitement with family members is what makes this program so special. This year our OWLs chapter enjoyed a day on the lake in the ice castles enjoying learning together, Veterans and their families enjoyed the day inside at Holes 4 Heroes, we hosted local high schoolers through our Reel Hope Program and FFL had an additional 88 people through our ice castle ministry.

We would like to share just a few notes from those who were able to get out on the ice with us.

*Thank you so much for letting us use the ice houses to celebrate my son's 18th Birthday weekend! We are beyond words grateful!! We had to cancel our annual trip to Nisswa where we typically celebrate our birthday ice fishing due to my husband needing urgent neck surgery to replace two discs in his neck...This has been one of the toughest seasons of our lives and getting to stay close to home so we could still celebrate meant the world to us. My son had a great 18th Birthday, and we caught some nice crappies...Thank you for the memories made and for sharing your wonderful ice castles. Fishing 4 Life is an amazing organization that truly blesses those in times of need. Thank You! – Ellie*

*We are back! It is such a great feeling to bring 4 young men (center photo) to set down their phones and pick up their fishing gear. Jayden, David, Andrew 1 and Andrew 2 ... playing board games while catching crappies ... PRICELESS!!*

*Amazing how fast a year goes by, a reminder not to take time together for granted. The other dad that was going to come with had a medical issue that prevented him from joining us...Thank you to Tom, Steve, Kent, and others who were able to make this memory possible. –Colin & the boys*



The success of the 2026 Ice Castle Ministry would not have been possible without the generosity of donors, volunteers especially Kent Lillehaugen, and supporters who continue to invest in the mission of Fishing For Life. Their support allows us to provide

meaningful outdoor experiences that strengthen families, build community, and create memories that will last a lifetime.

# Lake Reno Resort

## Reel Heroes Fishing Event

Fishing For Life continues to expand its commitment to serving veterans and their families through meaningful outdoor experiences. In 2026, we are excited to offer 12 veteran-focused events as part of our Military Relationships through Recreation (R&R) Program, including two new additions: **Gunnin' for Gobblers** and the **Reel Heroes Fishing Event**.

These events are designed to provide veterans with opportunities to reconnect, build friendships, and find healing through time spent outdoors with others who understand their experiences. By intentionally expanding our Military R&R Program, we are reaching more veterans and families than ever before.

The Reel Heroes Fishing Event at Lake Reno Resort brought together veterans for three days of fishing, fellowship, and encouragement. While catching fish was certainly part of the experience, the greatest impact came from the relationships formed and the support shared among participants.

Throughout the event, veterans spent time on the water with volunteer boat guides, shared meals, exchanged stories, and connected with fellow service members who understand the challenges that can come with military service. For many attendees, these connections are just as valuable as the fishing itself.

Several veterans shared how Fishing For Life has positively impacted their lives:

*"Fishing For Life has helped me get out of the house and start interacting with other people. This trip was a great experience."*

*"Fishing For Life has been a place that brings peace to me. No matter the weather, it's the group of veterans that makes it special. I also caught my personal best sunfish at 1.4 pounds."*

*"It was an awesome time. The camaraderie and talking with other vets was terrific."*

*"Thank you, Fishing For Life, for introducing me to some wonderful veterans I can now call friends."*

These comments remind us that the true value of these events goes far beyond fishing. For many veterans living with PTSD and other service-related challenges, isolation can be one of the biggest obstacles they face. Through outdoor recreation, shared experiences, and authentic relationships, veterans find community, encouragement, and hope.

Fishing For Life is grateful for the volunteer boat guides, supporters, sponsors, and the team at Lake Reno Resort who make these events possible. Together, we are creating opportunities for healing, building lasting friendships, and honoring those who have served our nation.

As we look ahead to the remainder of the 2026 season, we are excited to continue expanding our reach and helping more veterans and their families experience the restorative power of the outdoors.

# A NIGHT AT THE DOCK: A Gala to Remember

**A** Night at the Dock was truly one to remember! Thank you to everyone who attended our 21st Annual Fundraising Gala, **A Night at the Dock**, on April 18th. It was an evening filled with fellowship, fun, inspiration, and incredible generosity in support of Fishing For Life's mission.

Guests enjoyed wonderful live music provided by former FFL employee **Phil Lambert** and his talented wife, **Erika**, creating the perfect atmosphere for the evening. The ever-popular minnow races brought excitement and laughter as the minnows raced fast and guests cheered them on.

One of the most meaningful moments of the evening was hearing directly from our staff, who shared their programs and what inspires them to do this important work through Fishing For Life. We were also excited to premiere a brand-new Fishing For Life

video created by **Pilla Media**. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who participated in making the video—it is now available for viewing on our website.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we are thrilled to share that the gala raised **just over \$40,000** to support Fishing For Life's operational budget and help ensure our programs continue making a difference in the lives of those we serve.

We would also like to recognize our very own **COO, Laura Hudson**, who served as this year's auctioneer, and **Geoff Jones from BOB 106**, who kept the evening lively as our emcee.

Finally, a sincere thank you to **North Heights Lutheran Church** for their outstanding hospitality and partnership in helping make this memorable evening possible.

We are deeply grateful for your continued support and look forward to seeing you next year!



**O**n April 18th, during our annual gala, Fishing For Life had the privilege of recognizing an individual whose commitment, service, and heart for ministry exemplify what it means to serve others through fishing, faith, and fellowship.

Since 2014, the **Fishing For Life Volunteer Hall of Fame** has honored volunteers who have gone above and beyond in supporting our mission through their time, talents, and treasures. Each January, Fishing For Life staff prayerfully nominate and discuss candidates whose dedication during the previous year has made a lasting impact on the organization and those we serve. Once again, we were blessed to have many deserving candidates for this meaningful recognition.

It is with great honor that we announce the **13th recipient of the Fishing For Life Volunteer Hall of Fame Award – Travis Busch**.

Travis has faithfully served within the Deep C's Men's Ministry for many years and has been the **North Chapter Coordinator** for the past four years. His willingness to serve reaches across many areas of Fishing For Life. From volunteering as a guide for **Camp and Military R&R trips**, to sharing his time and talents through our **Reel Hope program**, Travis consistently steps up wherever there is a need.

In addition, many participants at the Men's Retreat know Travis as the leader behind the fishing tournament, where his passion for fishing and fellowship shines through. As an educator by profession, Travis also brings his gift of teaching into his ministry work with Fishing For Life, helping others learn, grow, and connect through shared experiences.

We are incredibly grateful not only for Travis, but for the support of his family and the many ways they have become part of the Fishing For Life community. Volunteers like Travis are the heartbeat of our organization, and we are truly blessed by his faithful service.

Thank you, Travis, for all you do – and congratulations on this well-deserved honor!



From Left to Right: Gordy Herman, Paul Franke, Andy Anderson, Fred Mier, Rick Snozel, Gary Christenson, Bruce Bailey, Paul Wagner



## TROUT POND MINISTRY

# A Special Shout Out to Paul Wagner and His Crew

We want to give a very special thank you to one of our longtime volunteers and faithful supporters, Paul Wagner, and his crew. Paul has played a meaningful role in helping build Fishing For Life over the years. He and his team have consistently invested their time, talent, and treasure by sponsoring many events, supporting our annual Gala, and being a key part of our Deep C's chapter.

Over the years, they have especially become known for their incredible fish fries. Whether it's the Pastors Tournament, Armed Forces Family Fun Celebration Event, or other special gatherings, Paul and his crew have poured countless hours into preparing and serving meals that bring people together. Their generosity goes far beyond the food—they create fellowship, encouragement, and memorable experiences for so many.

We want to recognize and bless each one of these men who willingly give up their time, resources, and energy to serve others. Your commitment and servant hearts do not go unnoticed.

Paul and crew, thank you for all you do for Fishing For Life. The Armed Forces participants loved the fish fry, and we are truly grateful for the way you continue to serve and bless our mission. God bless each and every one of you!

Each year, the Musky Expo brings together thousands of anglers, families, and outdoor enthusiasts who share a passion for fishing. With more than 2,000 attendees over three days, Fishing for Life was grateful to once again be part of one of the Midwest's premier fishing events.

The Mobile Trout Pond quickly became a favorite stop for families. For some children, it wasn't just their first time catching a trout, it was their very first fish. Parents gathered with cameras, siblings cheered one another on, and smiles spread around the pond as new memories were made.

Families also enjoyed our archery and BB gun ranges, creating opportunities to experience the outdoors in a safe, fun environment. Throughout the weekend, our team also connected with fellow vendors, industry leaders, and outdoor organizations, sharing the mission of Fishing For Life and the many ways we use the outdoors to build relationships and serve our communities.

Behind every successful event is an incredible team of volunteers. Throughout the weekend, volunteers donated more than 126 hours of their time, including 42 hours served by Military Veteran volunteers. Pictured above are four of those veterans—Don O., Greg F., Brian L., and Derek L.—whose camaraderie and servant hearts helped make the weekend memorable for everyone they met. As they served alongside one another, they strengthened friendships, shared stories, and experienced the sense of purpose, belonging, and community that grows through serving others.

Our Mobile Trout Ponds are about more than catching fish. It's about building relationships, sharing the outdoors, and creating moments that bring people together. Thank you to our volunteers, partners, and donors for making weekends like this possible. Your support continues to build community, one family at a time.



# Youth Specialty Camp Breaks Records

**T**he 2026 Fishing For Life Youth Turkey & Firearms Safety Camp made history. For the first time ever, every camper harvested a turkey during the hunt.

Was it ideal weather? The dedication and expertise of our volunteer guides? Or simply God's abundant blessings? We believe it was a combination of all three.

The camp began with one of the most important aspects of becoming a responsible hunter—firearm safety. Every participant completed the in-person portion of the Minnesota Firearm Safety Course or received a refresher if already certified. Campers also spent time learning turkey hunting fundamentals, including habitat, calling techniques, decoy placement, ethical hunting practices, and proper game care.

While learning new outdoor skills was a major focus, the true heart of camp was found in the relationships that were built. Evenings were filled with campfire conversations, laughter, and meaningful devotions centered on faith and God's provision. One of the highlights was watching longtime camper Max step into a leadership role by leading several devotionals. Seeing a camper who has grown up attending Fishing For Life camps now investing in the next generation is exactly what our ministry is all about.

Each camper received a turkey box call and hands-on instruction in using a variety of turkey calls. As the camp progressed, those lessons came to life in the field as campers successfully called birds into range. One camper, who traveled from out of state to attend, harvested his turkey within the first hour of hunting.

The excitement didn't end once a tag was filled. Camp Director Ryan kept successful hunters busy by introducing them to another outdoor adventure—fishing the nearby river, where campers landed sturgeon and several other fish species while waiting for fellow campers to complete their hunts.

More than the impressive harvest statistics, the greatest success of the week was watching young people grow in confidence, develop safe and ethical hunting skills, deepen their faith, and experience God's creation alongside caring mentors and volunteer guides.

Fishing For Life extends its sincere gratitude to the landowners who generously opened their properties, the volunteer guides who shared their time and expertise, and the many supporters whose prayers and generosity made this life-changing camp possible. Together, they helped create memories that will last a lifetime and inspired the next generation of ethical outdoorsmen and women.

