

IT'S A LOT MORE THAN A CATFISH CONTEST

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Brad Poster, Executive Director of United Way of Greene & Columbia Counties, on right with 1500 dollar winner Greg Van Wormer on left.

by John H. Vargo, Publisher

Brad Poster, Executive director of the united way of Columbia and Greene Counties has developed a way of reaching across a wide spectrum of the community within Columbia and Greene Counties to raise financial support for 501c3's, (non profits) in a fun, inspirational day of catfishing!

On top of that many of the board of directors and even members of the 501c3's that receive a significant amount of money from United Way, also volunteer their services for the day.

It cannot get any simpler than a catfish contest on the Hudson River. It is something that southern fishermen have enjoyed for generations and has caught on in the Hudson River.

First the Hudson River is healthy and full of a wide variety of fish and other wildlife. Catfish are a strong resilient fish that can be caught, transported to the weighing station and then released with very little possibility of destroying the fish. Further Channel Catfish, a species that is very prevalent in the Hudson River is growing in size, length and quantity each year.

All this inspired Brad Poster Executive Director to establish a catfish contest over 4 years ago. This year over 450 people registered for the contest making it the best fundraiser that United Way of Columbia and Greene Counties has ever had. An estimated \$23,000 was raised and is earmarked for deserving non-profit organizations that apply for the money.



Kirsten Gaylord, age 24, who lives in Hudson, NY has been fishing as long as she can remember. Her father and brother put their boat in early at the boat ramp but found the engine was overheating so, not giving up, they began fishing from shore. Kirsten, who met them at 8 AM on the shore, was not fishing 20 minutes when she again showed she has the "touch" by catching this 24" inch channel catfish.



Hudson River Fishermen volunteer, Tony D, and 7 yr. old Zaida Cruz of Catskill, NY with the first fish Zaida has ever caught. (If you do not think this is a memory that will stick forever, think again)



Tony D, and 7 yr. old Zaida Cruz

Underneath
everything we are,
Underneath
everything we do,
We are all people.
Connected,
Interpendent, United.
And when we reach out
a hand to one,
We influence the
condition of all.
That's what it means to
LIVE UNITED!



A picture's worth a thousand words. There were 377 registrations, 121 fish measured, and recorded and released. There were an estimated 800 people fishing!



- Thanks to everyone who helped:**
- Save - A - Lot donates 400 hot dogs and hamburgers
 - Price Chopper donates the condiments
 - Freighoffer donates the buns
 - Loews gives us the charcoal
 - Kohl's Department Stores sends 10 volunteers and they cook it all and we give it away! (any remaining food goes to Salvation Army)
 - Big Top Tent Rental donates a 45' x 30' tent with 6 tables and 30 chairs
 - Village Dodge in Hudson pays for the insurance policy that covers a new pick-up truck, boat, motor and trailer if someone sets the NYS Channel Catfish record during the contest (the flyer says Sawyer Chevrolet...there was an eleventh hour change)
 - Mid-Hudson Cable Vision sponsor's the Smallest Catfish of the day in the Junior category
 - Herrington Lumber sponsor's the Kid's Casting Contest (I named it "Ed's Kids")

- Our local iHeart Radio Station broadcasts from the event and a DJ spins music and provides a PA system (donated)
- The Top Junior prize was a new bicycle donated by Wal-Mart.
- We handed out prizes to the top 8 adult places and top 7 Junior places.
- The Village of Catskill waives the fee for the Dutchman's Landing Park for the event
- Every year we invite Individuals with Developmental Disabilities to join us at no charge and that group gets bigger every year
- The Hudson River Fisherman's Association drives 2 hours to volunteer with bait and poles!
- We got a donation of Box Seat tickets at Fenway Park for a Red Sox Game and an autographed football signed by Hall of Fame Quarterback of the Buffalo Bills Jim Kelly, and a \$400.00 Whirlpool Electric Stove that were raffled.



Brad Poster, Executive Director, (in center under 50 years sign) with all of the volunteers of the HRFA, of Rochelle Park, NJ. Who donate free fishing rods, bait and tackle to anyone who wish's to fish for the day. This is the last of a breed of volunteers with knowledge, skill and enthusiasm to support such as organizations as United Way on the Hudson River an the coast of New Jersey