



Don Posh

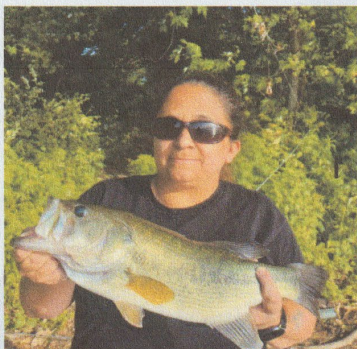
It All Started Here in the Northwoods

So many of us have been waiting for open water fishing and it's coming soon. The fishing opener is like a major holiday. It brings the humans that have been hibernating back outdoors. Some of us may feel that fishing is a thing of the past. Getting older and accumulating disabilities may keep some of us from enjoying a favorite pastime, but it doesn't have to be that way. If you have a disability and have never fished before, here's your chance.

In 1988, it began with an idea that some were left out of the enjoyment of fishing. Fishing has no Boundaries in Hayward WI led the nation in including persons with disabilities in the fishing experience. Fishing has no Boundaries provides recreational fishing opportunities for all anglers with disabilities regardless of their age, race, gender or disability. Solutions to barriers have been created to accommodate various disabilities. One thing that really stands out is the effort to change the onboarding of a pontoon. Staff and volunteers met with pontoon manufacturers to change the size of the entrance gate to be wide enough for walkers and wheelchairs. The manufacturers adapted and getting people onboard became so much easier. Changes were made for reels, rods, and rod holders to adaptive fishing. Thanks to a dedicated group of volunteers that offer their time and abilities and to the supporters, the event remains a success. This year the 2 day event at Lake Chippewa Campground on the Chippewa Flowage will be May 15th and 16th. If you are unable to attend this event there are many more. Fishing has no Boundaries has gone national with 18 chapters in 9 states. Wisconsin hosts 6 chapters. There are several opportunities to find assistance to fish. Maybe a visit to one of the 18 chapters could be in your summer travel plans.

Here is a story from a participant.

Born a Fighter: Finding Strength through Fishing



My name is Dena Mihlebach, and I live with Neurofibromatosis (NF)— a rare genetic disorder that causes tumors to grow on nerves throughout the body. I currently have seven brain tumors, but I don't let that stop me from living fully. Fishing has become more than just a hobby for me—it's healing, empowering, and freeing. Fishing with my spinning reel has become more than a hobby—it's become my therapy and my anchor in a life full of uncertainty.

Even though I'm not currently using adaptive gear, I deeply resonate with FHNB's mission of providing fishing access to those facing physical and unseen challenges. I can relate to the emotional power that comes from being on the water—the focus, freedom, and quiet strength it offers.

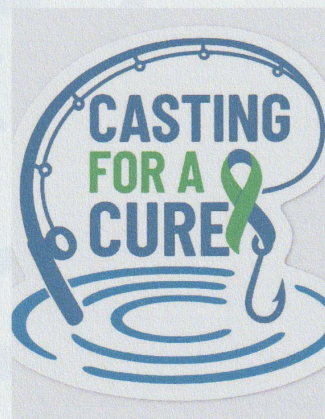
When I'm out on the water with my boyfriend or casting a line by myself, I feel peace. It's one of the only places where I can breathe deeply and focus on what I can do, not what I can't. Fishing reminds me that I'm still strong, still here, and still fighting.

As a preschool teacher and advocate, I've started creating custom awareness decals like "Stronger Than Tumors" and "Born a Fighter," blending my love for fishing with my mission to raise NF awareness. I've reached out to companies across the fishing and outdoor industry to help shine a light on rare diseases and those who live with invisible battles.

Organizations like Fishing Has No Boundaries inspire me because they give people of all abilities the chance to feel included on the water. I believe everyone deserves that moment of peace—a cast, a tug, a fish on the line—regardless of their diagnosis.

My journey with NF is tough, but fishing helps me stay grounded and gives me purpose. I hope my story encourages others to find strength in what they love—and to never stop fighting for the life they deserve.

Dena Mihlebach
Philadelphia, PA
#BornAFighter #EndNF #FishingWithPurpose



For information on Fishing Has No Boundaries:

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Be well...We're all in this Together!

For more information on independent living contact: indiGO serving Douglas, Bayfield, Iron, Price, Sawyer, Washburn, and Burnett Counties including Tribal communities of Red Cliff, Bad River, La Courte Oreilles and St Croix.

Main office: 800-924-1220 V/TTY

Our non-profit agency, indiGO, aims to empower individuals living with disabilities and we are available to assist ALL ages and disabilities. We are not a vendor and do not sell any products, but we are here as a resource.