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*YCA Magazine*

*2012 Edition*

# ***YCA Magazine 2012***



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# Outside with the YCA



## the YCA outlook

### Youth Muskie Hunt is on!

**September 20th through the 23rd, 2012** on scenic **Moose Lake** near Hayward, WI. Can we top last years event?! Our big youth Muskie hunt this year will be done in conjunction with Muskies Inc., & The Mystic Moose Resort. To register for this National youth fishing event, please contact the YCA at [info@theyca.org](mailto:info@theyca.org)

### Torstenson Camp Out

**On May 25<sup>th</sup> through the 27<sup>th</sup>** the YCA will have the entire 750 acre Torstenson Youth Conservation Center to themselves for our annual camp out. During this camping event, we will be exploring, fishing, and even clay target shooting. Full bathroom facilities are close by and we will have screened in dining pavilion right on the water! If you're into camping, it doesn't get any better than this...

### Joe Tierno Muskie Hunt

**On Friday, June 15<sup>th</sup>** the YCA will host our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Youth Muskie Hunt on Silver Lake (WI). We're renaming this event in honor of a great outdoorsman, YCA Advocate & family man, Joe Tierno. Joe wouldn't have it any other way – kids spending the day fishing with family and friends. Come out and enjoy this special day of fishing.

### Special Kids Fishing

Mark your calendars for what has to be one of the YCA highlights of they year! **In July**, the YCA will host our annual picnic and day of fishing with special (needs) kids. We'll have food, fun, & prizes for these outstanding outdoorsmen and women.

## 26 Kids Catch 56 Muskies!

Kevin Bushnick



Founder & Chairman

**In late September, 2011, Muskies Inc. and the Youth Conservation Alliance sponsored a major youth muskie hunt on Moose Lake in Hayward Wisconsin.**

The event was headed up by Kevin Bushnick, Founder & Chairman of the Youth Conservation Alliance & National Youth Fishing VP for Muskies Inc.

The YCA's aggressive goal for this program was to catch 25 muskies. Now we expected to catch fish, but never thought it was possible that in 2.5 days, 18 of our 26 kids would yield an astounding 56 of these toothy critters. Some say this was a world record for a youth Muskie tournament. Bottom line, we were all thrilled at the effort and achievement these children delivered. It was absolutely unbelievable.

We weren't pan fishing here, these are muskies, they're usually not in a cooperative mood and they certainly aren't

the easiest fish to get in the net. The fact is, these kids worked very hard fishing from 8am to 7pm each day. We were so proud of them all. Almost half of these kids caught their first muskie ever. We also had 9 girls fishing the event. Most of who, produced a Muskie. Way-cool.

In a once in a lifetime twist of fate, of the 26 kids who were fishing, there was a dead-tie for first place by none other than Tyler Bushnick (age 10) & Trevor Bushnick (age 14), who both caught 42 inch muskies. One was caught on a sucker, the other on a Suick lure. They both received 1st place trophies and they agreed in a moment of "brotherly love" to split the big fish pool money! The second place trophy went to Tanner Saile (age 15) of South Barrington, Illinois with a 41 inch Muskie, and Madison Semtner (age 10) of Chicago, Illinois with a 39 inch Muskie. Madison is the niece of the YCA's VP of Education, Michelle Groves.







One of the highlights of the event, was having renowned muskie guide and "Next Bite" TV show host Pete Maina come out early Sunday morning to meet and speak to the entire group. He went on present awards and trophies to our winning kids; and there were many of them! Talk about a photo and lure signing opportunity for the kids! While being interviewed, Pete, Kevin and Michelle Groves were in total agreement, it is critical we bring the youth into this sport not only for the fun of catching fish, but to further the cause of conservation awareness overall. A healthy ecosystem is critical to the Muskie fishery.

We had many professional guides supporting the kids during this time. Our "Guide Masters" included fishing guru's Larry Ramsell and John Myhre. Nobody knows Moose Lake better than Larry and John. We had many kids lobbying to fish on John or Larry's boat... Kind of funny, it didn't take the kids very long to figure out that Larry and John were producing fish; and a lot of them. Also guiding and supporting the event, was the President of Muskies Inc., Jay Zahn and MI's VP of MI's Membership and former President of MI, Greg Wells.

Many local Hayward area businesses supported the event in a big way like Ryan Hexum, General Manager for **Slumberland Furniture** who really stepped up by giving each child a muskie tackle box loaded with lures and other goodies. **Famous Dave's** restaurant, another Hayward area landmark provided the entire group with one of their Famous BBQ lunches while everyone came in off the water for a quick bite to eat before heading out for the final afternoon of fishing.

Key sponsors included world renowned lure-maker Todd Cleveland of **Phantom Lures**, who hand painted a commemorative Muskie lure for each child. Other sponsors included **Pine Insurance Agency**, **Musky Tales**, **Cabela's** and the **Hayward Chapter of Muskies Inc.**, all who donated cash and prizes towards this event. The YCA & Muskies Inc. are extremely thankful to all of them.

It is important to mention Jim Onarheim of the **Mystic Moose Resort** who has hosted this large scale event two years in a row with accommodations for everyone. Louie's Landing on Moose Lake set up the group for breakfast and dinner and closed their doors to the outside to accommodate everyone. The food and service was absolutely fantastic; no complaints from anybody!

During our final evening, a major county-wide power outage threatened to ruin our post event celebration dinner at Charlie's. But together, both Louie's & Charlie's restaurants pooled their resources, fired up a jumbo generator, and Charlie's headed over to Louie's with "take-out dinner for 70" to make sure all the hungry fishermen (and fisher-women) were fed. The prime-rib and broasted chicken was outstanding. It was a really nice thing to watch competing restaurants and business owners come together and salvage what could have been a bad situation for a lot of people. There are a lot of big hearts up in Moose Lake; very impressive.

In the years ahead, Muskies Inc. ([www.muskiesinc.org](http://www.muskiesinc.org)) and the YCA will be placing a major emphasis on youth Muskie fishing. We are doing this to ensure the future of the muskie fishery and also to provide youth with a tremendous opportunity for environmental education through advanced fishing programs. Watch for more of these programs through your area Muskies Inc. chapter or through the Youth Conservation Alliance organization.



Pete Maina along with Hayward's Mary Reinemann and son Eric





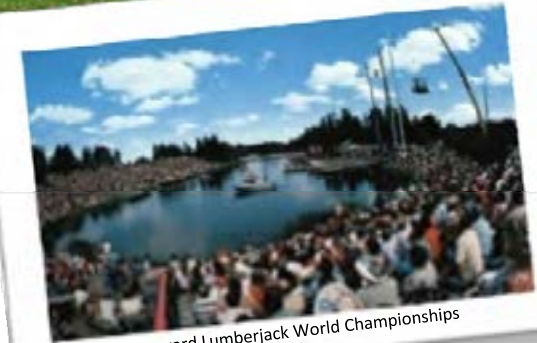
## The Hayward Lakes Area

Kevin Bushnick



Founder & Chairman

The YCA has chosen the Hayward Lakes area in large part, due to its long standing history with fishing. In fact, Hayward Wisconsin is home to the Fishing Hall of Fame. It is also the area in which the current World Record Muskie is recognized and on display. But this isn't the only reason why the YCA likes Hayward.



Hayward Lumberjack World Championships

Interestingly enough, Hayward is home to the annual Lumberjack World Championships. It is important to mention that many of the Hayward area lakes and flowages were created by the early logging industry. We have chosen Moose for our annual youth Muskie hunt because of its beauty and it's large population of Muskies. Moose is not known for producing huge muskies, but it certainly produces numbers. For us, the most important thing in terms of fishing is just catching a Muskie for one of the kids; it doesn't need to be a 50 incher although rumor has it, there are a few 50 inch fish cruising around Moose.

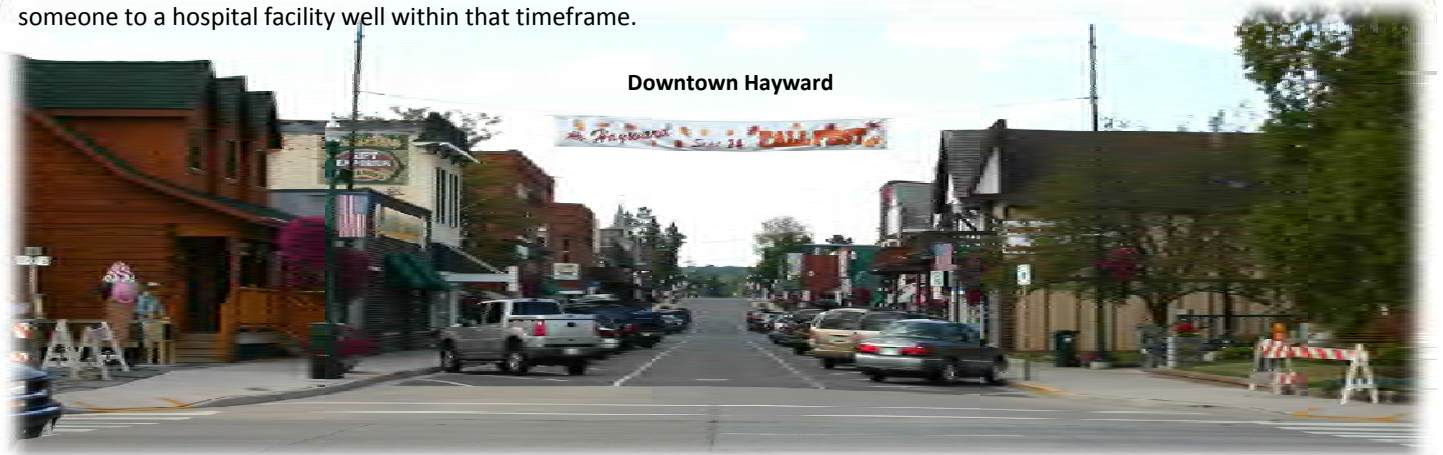
Because the Hayward Lakes area is an outdoor destination for thousands, they are able to sustain their own newspaper. The Sawyer County Record always covers our events as a feature story and gives us plenty write-up space which is way-cool.

If there's one thing that's important to fisherman, it's FOOD. Being outside all day on a boat breathing in fresh air makes people extremely hungry. It is staggering the amount of food people can eat after fishing all day. So, a key factor is being able to serve breakfast, lunch and dinner for EVERYONE. When you're talking about groups of 75 or more people, this creates some challenges. We also must have restaurants that are on or nearby the lake. We really can't have people driving all over the place in the middle of the North woods to go eat 3 times a day. This is especially important at night when people are tired, it's dark, and there's wildlife everywhere... This is why Moose Lake is such a perfect fit for the YCA.

Other requirements for our events are good boat launches and adequate parking for dozens of trucks with trailers. We also need docking for all the boats. This is a tall order as most public facilities just don't have that docking or vehicle parking.

Local Community support is always important too. For example, the Hayward Chapter of Muskies Inc. donated CASH for our event to help with costs. Several Hayward area business also chipped in big time. Famous Dave's (the actual Famous Dave) served up lunch for 75 one day. Slumberland & Wildwoods Furniture donated thousands of dollars in tackle for the kids. All of this not only helps with charity costs, it just brings the overall event to the next level.

Lastly and most importantly on a safety note; the owners of the Mystic Moose Resort & Louie's Landing are both on the local Fire Department. In fact, Jim Onarheim teaches emergency response medicine at Eau Claire College. He's also a Fire Marshall. Yet another important aspect to Hayward is their hospital and trauma center located right downtown. Although nobody has been hurt at one of our events, it sure is nice knowing there is big-time medical help near-by. It is well documented that the first hour of any emergency (the Golden Hour) is critical in life and death situations. Well, it's nice knowing we could get someone to a hospital facility well within that timeframe.



Downtown Hayward





## A Bit of Moose Lake History



**As the mist rises and the first rays of sun reflect off the water in a magical dance, you just can't wait to get out on the water and become part of it. Moose Lake is so beautiful the only way to describe it is majestic.**

One of over 40 lakes in the Hayward area, Moose Lake's 1,670 acres is surrounded by the Chequamegon National Forest. Moose is rich not only in wildlife, but in history.

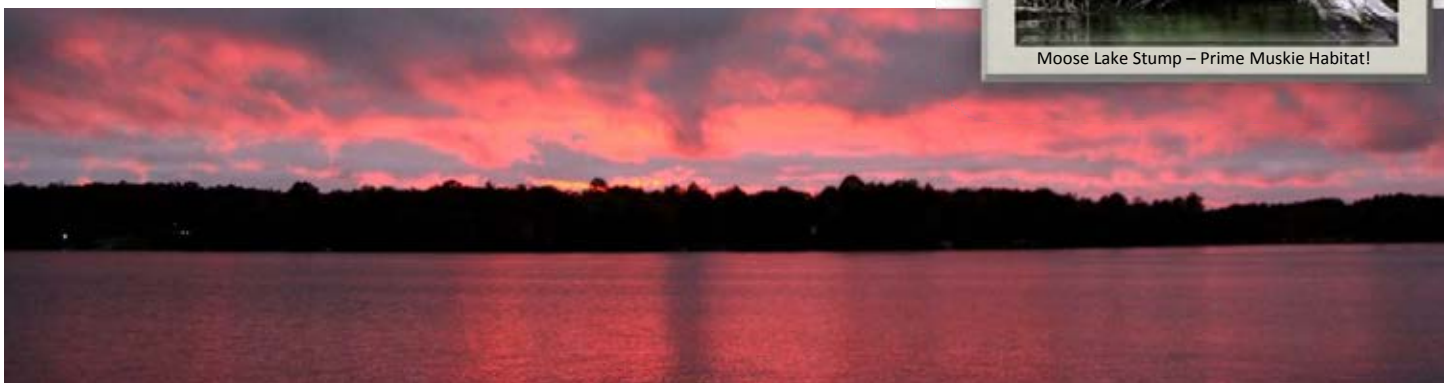
Long before the lake was created the Native Americans lived here harvesting game, wild rice and working the sugar bush in the spring. (This is the traditional harvesting of maple syrup). Finding the historical marker at the Moose Lake Bridge over the East Fork of the Chippewa off County S-Road marks the famous Battle of Horsefly where the Chippewa and Sioux tribes fought their last furious battle back in 1790. The Chippewa natives, knowing the invading Sioux were coming down the west fork of the Chippewa Flowage, staged an attack from above. It turned out to be one of the bloodiest battles ever with thousands of Natives killed. The burial site of the Dakota and Ojibwa warriors involved in the Battle of the Horsefly has been identified and marked by the Lac Courte Oreilles people as "Spirit Rock."

Less than 100 years later, this area began to see its first European settlers. Known for its rich timber, the Hayward area was seen as a prime source for lumber. Because of its seemingly endless supply of timber and easy access to power from the rivers, the first dam was built in 1882 along with a new railroad system that came through in 1881; Hayward was now on the map and became an important economic town in the Northern woods of Wisconsin.

By 1920, the rich wild rice beds so treasured by the Native Americans were destroyed as flooding of the land became the primary practice to move timber. This also led to the creation of many of the region's lakes including Moose Lake. After the main logging mill burned down in 1922, the area moved from a logging town to a hot spot for tourists and anglers and remains a fishing paradise today. Moose Lake is home to small-mouth, walleye, pan fish and the flooded stumps from the logging days along the bottom have created prime habitat for the most sought after of all fish, the Muskie. The fact that Muskies are present is an excellent sign of how healthy the water is. Muskies are at the top of their food chain which means they have enough food and habitat to survive long term. It takes 20 years or more for a Muskie to reach trophy size. We know Moose Lake has a healthy population of these beauties because we have caught and released over 100 of them in just 2 years.



Moose Lake Stump – Prime Muskie Habitat!







## More Moose Lake History

By Michelle Groves



Jim Onarheim, Mystic Moose Resort

The overall beauty of this lake along with a passion to want to share it with others is what brought Jim Onarheim and his wife Barb to Moose Lake over ten years ago. Jim and his wife own and operate the Mystic Moose Resort and they are our gracious hosts for our annual Youth Muskie Hunt. Jim grew up in Eau Claire Wisconsin about 2 hours south of Hayward. Like many of us, Jim Onarheim has fond memories of fishing with his father when he was young. Those experiences led him to have a deep appreciation for the outdoors and he is dedicated to making sure future generations get the same opportunity.

Jim has been a leader in his community both in Eau Claire and in Hayward. He began a career as a firefighter/paramedic and moved up the ranks to Fire Inspector. Still, he never lost his passion for being out in nature. Today Jim has found a way to do all the things he loves. Seasonally he is an Emergency Medical Instructor at Chippewa Valley Technical College, in Sawyer County. Jim is also a Moose Lake firefighter-paramedic, their Deputy Coroner, and acts as the Vice President for Hayward Lakes Visitor Center. If you have spent any time with Jim you would know he is a man with a huge heart, unbelievable patience and one of the most admirable people in all of Hayward. Our kids get more than just a fishing experience at Moose Lake, with people like Jim mentoring them along with many of our other spectacular volunteers they get life experiences, stories from the past and encouragement to simply have fun while enjoying the wonderful outdoors.

The YCA considers it a "stroke of luck" to have crossed paths with Jim. He is truly a one of a kind resort owner and we are so thankful to have him as a supporter and advocate of the YCA.



John Myhre and Jim:  
Big kids at play!







## THE POWER of "Family Night"



Kids represent the primary focus of the YCA and we believe that delivering our message in a manner that piques the interest of this audience is critical to our success.

Our best opportunity to initially gain the attention of kids lies in our multimedia presentations. We are often asked what goes in to making the final product and how we approach the design of every show. This article is intended to do just that! We use these presentations in various shapes & sizes not only during our annual banquet, but also throughout the year as we work with many different schools. YCA Founder Kevin Bushnick commonly refers to what we do here as "Kids Fishing Meets Pink Floyd."

During each year, we capture a lot of video footage and photos at all the YCA events. Kevin Bushnick, Bull Nuytens and I collect all of the files and edit them on what Kevin calls the YCA mainframe, which is really an Apple Mac Pro with a lot of processing power, memory and data storage. We use this repository for many purposes, including the YCA Web Site, newsletters and our big YCA "Family Night" event in November each year.

I have to give a ton of credit to Kevin for the final product that you see on screen at our shows. He spends countless hours editing videos and photos, researching music that is popular with our target audience, and so much more. Kevin and I compare notes along the way and adjust the material based on how we want a given show to work. After all of this effort, we end up with a final detailed script for a show.

My job is to surround all of this great material with lights and sound, which becomes more challenging as our shows get larger more complex. I rely heavily on computers in order to run the show by myself. Examples of items in the current YCA production arsenal include:

- Chauvet & American DJ Lasers
- A Couple Thousand Watts Of Powered JBL Speakers
- Apple MacBook Pro Laptops
- BX Drive Rack Real Time Analyzer
- Eventide & Lexicon Digital Effects Processors
- Mackie Pro Mixers
- High-performance Mogami & Monster cables



**Big**

**Time**



**Fun**



I have been involved with live performance for many years as a musician and I often take the "coolness" of the show for granted. However, the fascination returns when I hear the "oohs" and "ahhs" from a room full of kids that are seeing lasers dance around on the screen while learning about conservation. It becomes more and more apparent that the kids really do like the combination of music, light shows, and environmental education mixed in... The word "boring" has never been used in conjunction of one of our shows and that's a good thing when dealing with kids!





## Kids & Muskie Fishing by Joe Alfe

I was first attracted to Muskie fishing as a young boy when my father got me a book of freshwater fishes. I already knew what Pike were, especially after seeing dad catch a few nice ones. I pointed to a picture of a Muskie and asked, "How big do those get? He spread his hands wide and said "This big!" After that, I was obsessed.

Every year we would prepare for our annual family trip to the Northern Wisconsin, the destination was always Eagle River or Three lakes. I would aggressively scour the Gander Mountain catalogue in anticipation, picking out all of the cool Muskie lures that my dad would surely buy me if asked enough times. I distinctly remember, after passing Merrill, the trees changing over to Pines and the excitement rising as we passed into "The Northwood's." As usual, we would stop in town at the bait shop and I would run to the Muskie bait wall, and my dad would always let me pick something out. I couldn't wait to get out onto the water and would be out of the car and running towards the dock the minute the car stopped at the resort. My dad is an avid fisherman, and he always took the time to take me fishing. He was no Muskie fisherman though, so that part was up to me.

our staff	
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I read all the magazines, watched all the shows, and basically pushed myself to learn the sport. It was years before I caught my first Muskie, although there were many close calls. Today, I have my own children, and I realize the importance of mentoring and fostering a young sportsman's (or women's) passion for this sport. I never would be the fisherman I am today if my father hadn't taken the time to introduce me to fishing and take me every chance he could get. I remember my grandfather loving fishing as well.

This is why organizations like the YCA are so critical in today's world. They provide the mentoring that is lacking for many of today's youth. It's a common lamentation that there are so many other distractions kids have today, such as texts, video games and such. From what I've seen though, it only takes a dedicated advocate and some time to introduce a kid to the joys of Muskie fishing, and it is truly amazing how fast these kids not only get hooked, but get serious about it as well. As our program grows, we can now start to see the older kids sharing their experiences with the younger kids. It's generational mentoring and it's the key to our charity. They say that Muskie fishing is the sport of 10,000 casts, but it really only takes one individual. One person who is willing to spend a little time showing a boy or a girl what it means to be a Muskie hunter.





## Kids Who Fish Are Cool – Logan Dunn

Logan's first fishing experience was with his Great-papa (great grandpa) at Benoit Lake outside of Spooner, WI. When he was only four years old he would grab his life jacket and beat (both grandpa's) down to the boat to head out fishing.

In 2005, Logan moved to Silver Lake Wisconsin with his grandparents who have adopted him. Their home is about a mile from the lake. A few years back, grandma suggested they get a boat to take Logan out fishing. What a nice grandma!! After a dismal experience with a 2-HP port-a-boat, they ended getting a 16-foot johnboat which they take out on Silver Lake. It didn't take long for Logan to figure out that a 2 horse-power engine just isn't fast enough... We all suspect he'll own a Ranger some day. This last summer Logan started fishing on his own. The golden-rule was, he has to wear his life jacket. He rides his bike with his vest on carrying his pole and tackle box to the boat launch and fishes from the Police pier. He will fish for hours. When he catches something, he will take a picture with his phone and release it. The YCA connected with Logan in 2011 when he entered and took 3rd place in the Silver Lake YCA fishing event. Logan went on to fish in the YCA/Muskies Inc. youth Muskie hunt in Hayward. Rumor has it, this was one of the fishing highlights of all time for Logan. Grandpa Pat says "we both had a great time even though we never caught a single fish!"

He goes on to say "at the time, I didn't understand what the YCA was about but, but it was a great opportunity to spend time together. Even the travel up to Hayward and back home was a good bonding experience." Logan's grandfather Pat goes onto say "Logan has grown more interested in fishing than I ever thought he would. It's great to see him enjoying it so much and to see how independent he has become as a fisherman. He has even taught me a few things."

*A comment from YCA Founder Kevin Bushnick:* Logan is a very cool kid. It absolutely cracked me up to see him fishing off the dock well after the Silver Lake tournament ended... Up in Hayward, Logan would fish for 10+ hours, get off the boat, and start casting off the dock while the rest of us hit the couch to take a rest. He is tenacious with fishing and I'm certain, he'll catch the monster muskie he seeks in his near future. It has been a pleasure getting to know Logan and his loving grandparents Pat and Cindy.







## Kids Who Fish Are Cool – Shawn Rahilly



Young Shawn Rahilly – well on his way to catching a Muskie!

Ever since Shawn Rahilly could walk, he has had a fishing pole in his hands; getting his first rod & reel at age 2. Since then, it seems like he has never put the rod down and his love for fishing continues. Shawn has fished all over the place from the small lakes in Massachusetts down to Florida, and most recently way up North at Moose Lake at the Youth Muskie Hunt in Hayward Wisconsin. Currently, Shawn lives in Silver Lake Wisconsin with his mother Susan.

A decision was made years ago to move to Wisconsin where Shawn and his mom would be closer to his Aunt Nancy and Uncle Henry. Shawn's love for fishing greatly influenced their choice of homes. When they had the opportunity to buy a house on a private road which dead ended at a lake, (Lily Lake) they jumped on it. Shawn's mom says "this was one of the best decisions I could have made for us."

Shawn and his Uncle Henry became very close and have spent countless hours on the water together. Shawn teamed up with the YCA for the first time fishing in the Silver Lake youth Muskie hunt in 2011. For those who were there, they remember how the morning started with a chill in the air and a thunderstorm to boot. None of our brave fishermen were deterred, particularly Shawn who went on to win 1st place in the tournament! The trophy served as a great bookend for an earlier tournament victory where Shawn caught the biggest Crappie.

With much mentoring from Uncle Henry, Shawn now has some tremendous knowledge of the sport from ice fishing to Muskie hunting. His mom tells us he watches as many fishing shows as possible and he continually reads fishing magazines and books. He has an extensive collection of rods, reels, tackle boxes, lures, and he takes "pristine" care of it all. Shawn's mom is quick to point out how impressive Shawn is explaining all the different tools he uses to fuel his passion for fishing. Being hugely supportive of Shawn, his mom even gave him a fully equipped 14 foot John-boat for Christmas in 2010. Since then, Shawn has taken a boating safety course and received his boating certificate.

*A comment from YCA Founder Kevin Bushnick:* It has been a pleasure getting to know Shawn and his family. Someday, perhaps Shawn will pursue his dream of becoming one of the Pro's. It would not surprise me at all to see Shawn on TV some day fishing with "the big boys." I know he could do it!

Shawn w/Grandma



Shawn, Uncle Henry & Pete Maina



Pete signs a Phantom Lure for Shawn – cool!



Shawn w/Master Guide, Larry Ramsell





## A Closer Look at Our Volunteer Guides

Ask yourself this question; **"Would you drive 800 miles and take 4 days of vacation to take someone else's kid fishing?"** Well, allow us to introduce you to Dave VanDoorn, Dan Koniewicz and Tim Crews.

This pic comes from our archives. One can only assume that Dave & Dan are giving young Trevor some crap about something; probably for not being able to get the sunfish off the hook... All in good fun...



Picture below is of DVD and one of his young female Muskie hunter students Alexandra Vendell. She has participated in several youth muskie hunts; Alex always has a positive attitude and a great time!



Picture below of Dan Koniewicz after he put young Eric onto his first Muskie ever! Eric went on to catch 4 more later in the day on Moose Lake.



Eddie Foulk always produces Muskies!

Pictures above and below of Dan K. and one of his favorite students, Eddie Foulk. They have a lot of fun together and always catch something!



Dave VanDoorn cooking up about 50 hot dogs for a lot of hungry kids. Dave helps in more ways than just fishing at these events.



Tim & Dan below enjoying some quiet time on the shores of Moose Lake before heading back out on the water to catch the kids some fish.







## Bill and Diana Nuyttens

The YCA is VERY pleased to announce that Bill Nuyttens has joined the team as our official YCA event photographer and camera-man. Bill will also serve on the board of directors as an Advisor. We call Bill, "Night-lens."

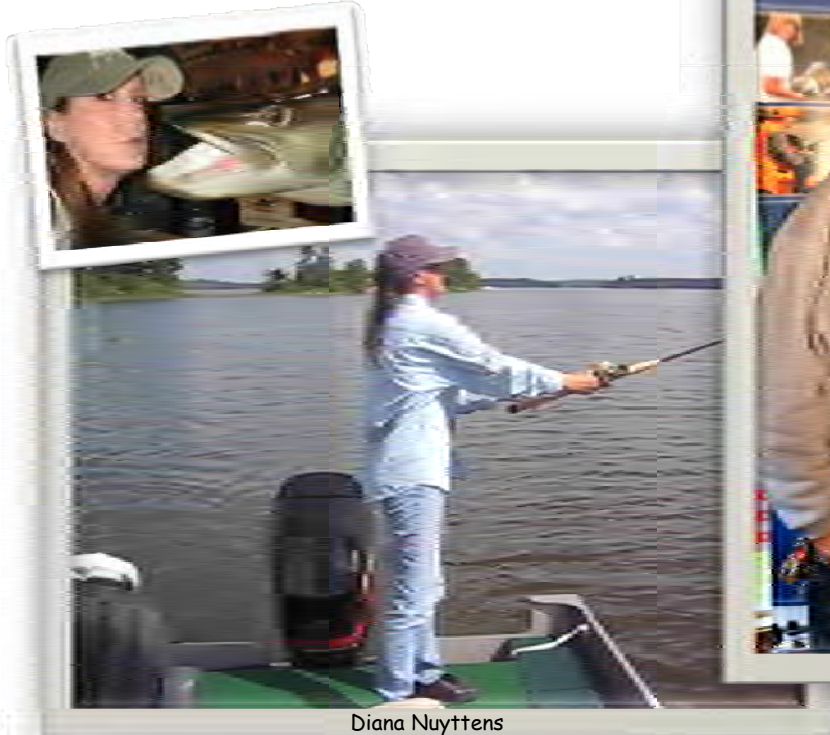
Bill's list of career accomplishments is extensive but most notably, he has received 4 prestigious Emmy Awards for his work as a field camera-man for NBC News over a period of 29 years. These awards include coverage of a World-Series, Y2K, the Chicago Auto Show and the Chicago Marathon. Bill has produced TV shows and was one of an elite team of camera-men cleared by the Secret Service to be around U.S. President's during interviews and filming projects.

Bill and his wife Diana live in Antioch. They have been married for 18 years and they are both avid Muskie hunters. Bill was a big part of our 2011 Youth Muskie Hunt. His wife Diana plans to be our very first FEMALE guide at our 2012 Youth Muskie hunt in Hayward Wisconsin.

It is an honor to have Bill and his wife become part of the Youth Conservation Alliance.



Bill Nuyttens



Diana Nuyttens

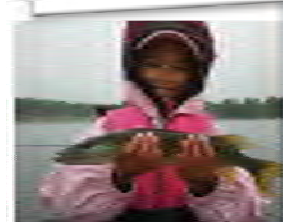
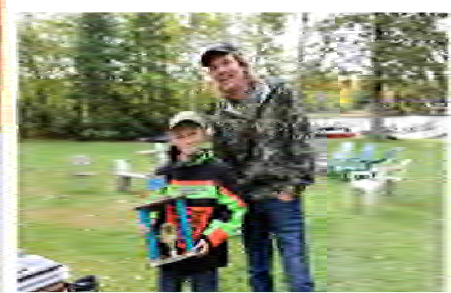
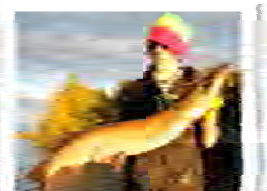
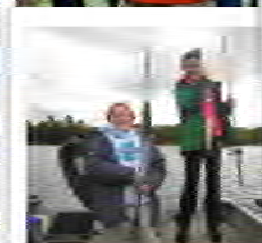
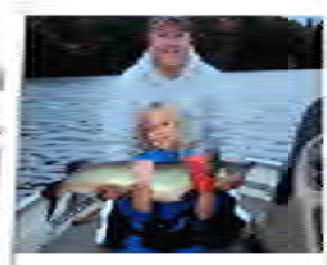
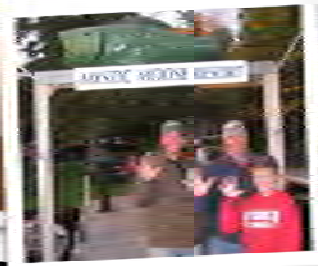
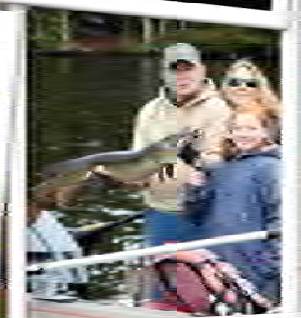
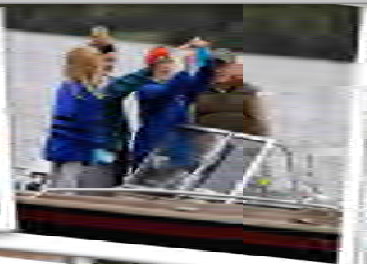
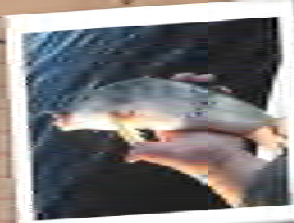


Pete & Bill







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## the YCA Goes to School

The "mild" winter of 2012 was important to the YCA as we headed to SCHOOL!

Our largest single presentation to date was to a typical elementary school in Elgin where we showed videos, pictures and "live" wildlife to over 600 children and 25 teachers. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources Conservation Police were also there supporting us. This school is in a financially challenged area and they have little budget to do anything outside of the school campus. The average classroom size is about 35 kids. Many of these kids have never been boating, fishing or camping. It was clear by the response we received that these children truly enjoyed seeing our outdoor videos. Our hope and goal, is that these kids will be motivated enough by what they saw to ask their parents to take them out fishing and camping.



AND speaking of Summit School and these awesome children; a week after the program, the YCA received 35 "Dear YCA Thank You" letters from them that were personalized with notes, drawings and hand crafted art work. One note said, "I loved seeing the big muskie caught – how big do they get - please be my friend on Facebook!" Each child wrote thanking us for coming to their school and teaching them about fishing, wildlife and the outdoors. The YCA considers this work a wonderful experience and it is an honor to serve them.

When you see these kids and the problems they and their families have to deal with every single day, it puts a great many things in perspective and should serve as a reminder to all of us what the "real" important things in life are we all need to be thankful for.



Scott Reder , YCA Vice President of Media & Production

The second school we attended was Summit School in Elgin, IL. Summit is a school that specifically deals with children where the state and public schools have difficulty advancing their education. Usually, this involves higher function autistic children. While we were there, we met a girl who was facially disfigured. She has a disease called Goldenhar Syndrome which involves facial deformities. I watched her from the back of the room along with the other kids and they were simply amazed at what they were seeing. The school principal told me this was probably the highlight of the year for many of these special-needs children. It's important to note that even though these are "special needs" children, they are polite, friendly, gave all their attention to our program, and asked highly intelligent questions during our Q&A session.



Conservation  
Police Officer  
Eric Wheatley





Kevin Bushnick



Founder & Chairman

## Why the Muskie?

Over the years, many people have asked me "Why Muskie Fishing?"

**MY ANSWER:** It has been my personal experience after doing many of these events that Muskie fishing in particular over many other species, requires a closer-look and even some study. Muskie fishing is truly an educational experience. Preparing for our youth events is not as simple as bringing along the worms & bobber. Planning for the event becomes very project oriented and gives a child something to work on with their family. At our youth Muskie hunts, a parent, grandparent and even aunts and uncles participate. I have seen time and time again how valuable this is. I've had MANY family members comment on the relationship building that occurs as together, they try and figure out how to catch one of these toothy predators.



Picture compliments of Jon Q. Wright, the artist and creator of the YCA's new "Youth Fishing" logo!



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(Pictured below: Tor Saile, son's Tyler & Tanner along with family friend, Ms. Chloe Kovalsky.)







## Remembering Joe Tierno

In the fall of 2011, the YCA lost a good friend in youth Advocate Joe Tierno. Joe was one of the early supporters of the YCA. He participated in many of our events including our Muskie hunts and camping.

Joe truly represented what it means to be a good dad. Joe and his wife Sue were married for 26 years. They met when they were 16 years old in high-school. Joe and Sue had 4 children; Jen, age 23, Joe, age 21, Jim age 18 and Julie, age 13 seen in the photo below (left) with her father during the 2011 Silver Lake Youth Muskie Hunt.

Joe was not only a friend to the YCA, but he had dozens of friends in the Muskie fishing community. He absolutely loved the outdoors but most importantly, he will be remembered for taking the time to spend with his family.



Joe, daughter Julie and BFF Jessica Flack



Joe & Julie fishing on Silver Lake - June 2011



Father and daughter camping





## Remembering John Hanlon

For those of you who didn't have the pleasure of meeting John, he was an avid outdoorsman and was actually one of the YCA's first 25 Advocates! John worked as an international Tax Partner for Deloitte but outside the office it took John all of five minutes to change into his favorite attire: camouflage!

John shared his love of the outdoors with his family. In fact, one of his first dates with his wife Leslie, was spent bow-fishing. Nothing says romance more than hip waders and bow-fishing! It didn't take long for John to propose and start a life with Leslie filled with an entire family that had an appreciation of the outdoors.



It also didn't take long for John to get over being what Leslie thought was a shy young man in college. They soon brought four children into the world: Nathan (15), Jack (12), Daniel (10), and Kelly (8). John was an outstanding family man and supported his kids in all of their interests. Sitting in the stands, cheering them on, sporting the colors he knew best (camo). Sports, fair play, a well-rounded experience where fishing and hunting could play a role in the education of his kids was what John wanted. John made sure his kids understood they had his support and many of those conversations took place on family trips to the Eagle River and Hayward Lakes areas.

John was an extremely well educated hunter and fisherman. It didn't matter – bass, muskie, deer, turkey – John would spend the time researching how to be the best and safest on the water and in the field. From there, he would pass it on to his kids. You know you're a serious outdoorsman when you buy your daughter a pink-camo BB gun for her birthday! John also made it a point to have one-on-one time with each of his kids. What a cool dad. John would half-joke that some day he would retire to the Hayward Lakes area as a fishing and hunting guide.



Unfortunately, as safe and thorough as he was, John was tragically shot by another hunter last Fall; someone who failed to follow the most basic of hunting laws. That hunter was no more than 20 yards away from John and his son at the time. John's son Nathan, was standing behind his father. The bullet passed through John's chest striking Nathan in the abdomen. There was a brief shout and then silence, as Nathan remained at his father's side, holding his hand until paramedics arrived.

John was born on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1967. He passed away November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011. He was just 44 years old. John was a successful business man, a real gentleman, and more importantly, he was a good husband and father. To honor and remember John, the YCA is building John's story into our hunter safety classes where we will emphasize the importance of hunting during designated daylight hours and knowing your target and beyond.





## Critical Piece of Hunting Equipment

First, I think it's great that we have someone on staff with the hunting expertise of Ron Payne. Safety is the top YCA priority when it comes to hunting. No better illustration of this than the tragic loss of John Hanlon this past Fall. John did everything right. But as we know, it only takes one person who sees safety as "optional" to cause a tragedy. We don't consider it optional here at the YCA.

John Hanlon would be the first to tell you that hunting is a privilege and an event that can build lasting memories. In fact, the first year I took my son hunting, we actually didn't. That first year was all about gun safety. We spent a lot of time on the range and we built a lot of memories even that first year! The lessons learned on the range that year served as the foundation for the hunting trips to follow.

One of the critical lessons I learned was never be in a hurry. Once you figure that out, you understand that the hunt is much more than live target shooting. People talk about "living in the moment." That's what hunting can be. You literally stop yourself and details start to jump out at you: the bend in the grass, the dogs zig-zagging in front of you, wind direction, sun. The conversations on the "near miss." Time slows down because you do. It's that time you should take aim and shoot with one of the most critical pieces of hunting equipment: your camera. Make sure you bring one and you capture some of those memories.



Michael Riley & Dad, Mike







## Hunter Safety: Never too Early

Over the past 2 years, the YCA has taught many Hunter Safety classes. It became increasingly apparent to us that Hunter Safety needed to be at the core of what we do. Not only in terms of youth safety, but also in terms of expanding the YCA and creating a vast outreach to "the other side" of the great outdoors; namely, hunting. This includes clay and trap shooting, along with archery. Now even if you don't hunt, the sport of clay target shooting and archery is a LOT of fun. And, it's something the entire family can do together.

Since the YCA was founded, we have come to realize just how many people are outdoor enthusiasts OUTSIDE OF FISHING. That said, the YCA board of directors realized the need to place a high-end hunter safety guru into the mix to ensure we were representing this critical area properly. So, we reached out to Ron Payne. Both Michelle Groves and Kevin Bushnick have worked extensively teaching and assisting Ron through many classes at Cabela's and Dick's Sporting Goods.

Ron's credentials in the hunter safety arena are extensive and his background in hunting spans 30+ years. Ron is a certified Illinois Hunter Safety Instructor, he is a NRA Firearms Instructor, an NRA Hunting Instructor, a Range Safety Officer, a Archery & Bow-hunting Instructor and lastly, he is the founder of the Sportsman's Educational Services which offers programs and classes centered on advanced hunting techniques.

Ron has been married to his wife Shawn for 17 years. They have two wonderful children; Nikki (age 16) and Kody (age 12) and of course, they love the outdoors both hunting & fishing.



Ron Payne, YCA Vice President of Hunter Safety Education

*First and foremost, it is helping our youth see and experience the wonder of nature that led me to the YCA. I could not be happier for the opportunity.*

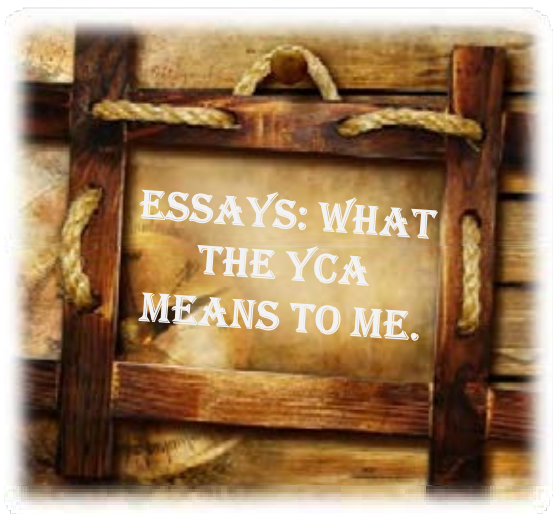
*There are few things in the life of a child as important as moments of clarity, those moments when a concept 'clicks' in their brain and they take one more step towards being a responsible and mature person. I have made it a personal and professional mission to help others see and achieve their full potential in life. Fueled by my passion for the outdoors and my personal mission, I have been doing my best to enable those "moments of clarity" in young hunters. In my experience in working with youth, there are four key components in making a lasting connection: Knowledge, Skills, Attitude and Opportunity.*

*As most would agree, seeing and doing are two completely different things. When it comes to potentially harmful activities, learning the activity should be done by explanation, demonstration and practice. Using these steps, the first two components (knowledge and Skills) are fulfilled. Our YCA shooting and hunting activities will always have a topics relating to firearm safety, ethics, and our responsibility to our natural resources.*

*Now on to the tricky component... Attitude cannot be forced but it can be heavily influenced, especially in our youth. As parents and adults we need to remember how our kids act is a strong reflection of us, after all, about 90% of how they act is learned behavior. When we are out in nature with our kids we should be focusing on the positives and beauty of nature, only focusing on the negatives as it pertains to how we can influence change or improve the situation. If they are surrounded by those that love and appreciate the outdoors, they will naturally be influenced to adopt the same attitude. Our YCA hunting and shooting activities will always be positive, upbeat and fun.*

*Opportunity is the simplest and sometimes, most difficult component. In today's world everyone is busy, to much on their plate, not enough time to slow down. Opportunity comes down to a simple fact that it is a personal decision of where the need/desire to enjoy nature ranks in your list of priorities. Being a member of the YCA has already shown where your priorities lie. My job is to make sure you and your family have many opportunities to experience hunting and shooting in a safe and positive environment.*





Because the YCA has an education foundation, we thought it would be way-cool to have the kids who have participated in one or more of our events talk about "What the YCA means to you?"

We asked the kids to hand-write an essay and talk about how the YCA has impacted their lives. Parents were encouraged to talk to their children about this, but we asked the kids to write "from the heart" on how they felt about the YCA programs.

The entire board of directors for the YCA voted on these essays with the results shown below. It's important to mention that ALL the essays were excellent. But, 3 of them in particular really captured our attention.

AND THE WINNERS ARE... Julie Tierno, Maddie Moser and Jessica Flack.

Congratulations, Girls!

What the Y.C.A means to me?  
What it means to me is something  
were I can spend more time than a  
day fishing with my dad, meet new  
people, try to get the biggest and most  
fish, and just to have fun.

I've learned from the Y.C.A  
trips that there are girls just  
like me that enjoy fishing with their  
dads. One trip that I liked the most  
is camping at McGraw's. That was  
the first time I've ever went camping  
with my dad, even though I didn't

-Julie Tierno  
13 years old



each other. The events YCA plans help create memories with  
my father with events like Weekend at McGraw, Silver Lake,  
and Moose Lake. The bond between my father that  
was created through fishing is so strong that I  
would rather spend a day with him at McGraw  
rather than an iPad. Sure an iPad is worth a couple  
hundred dollars but the bond with my father is worth  
way more. I also hope that when I become a  
father that I can participate in events sponsored  
by YCA because as much as their service is  
providing ~~best~~ Outdoors Events, it's their desire to  
make kids create a bond with their parents in  
an exciting activity.

Kevin  
Jacobz

at McGraw. The first time with the  
Y.C.A was a blast!! I pitched  
my tent, sat by the warm fire,  
and watched the wilderness around  
me. I went fishing that day.

Quentin Brooks

Ever since my science teacher  
Mr. Butler introduced me to  
the Y.C.A, I have had an  
amazing time! My favorite

Shawn  
Pohilly

Maddie Moser

3/3/12

The YCA means a lot to me  
because it made me realize what I want  
to be when I'm older. When I'm older I  
want to work with special needs kids.  
I want to do this because of all the  
special needs fishing events I helped out  
with. When ever I help them fish it makes  
me happy because I love the smiles  
that are on their faces when they catch  
a fish or when they are talking to their  
parents. I love walking around helping them  
put the bait on the hook or taking the fish  
off. But the best part of my day is just  
talking to them and having them tell me  
their having fun and can't wait to do it again.



I remember to appreciate the little things in life that make me happy. Ever since my parents' divorce, I never saw my dad as much as I wanted to. But because of the events that the YCA puts together, we are able to spend time together and bond over fishing. We create memories like being river rafters, playing in the water and learning how to rigging my line. I was able to spend time with my dad in life when we were broke and fishing buddies at the Mygared North trip. Making it, her dad, my dad, and I all went fishing and for the time I felt kind of like a big sister to her. The YCA has given me amazing chances to experience nature through camping and fishing experiences, while making friends and spending time with my dad. I now love fishing and look forward to whenever my dad tells me that there is a new event, especially since I moved to Texas because I have nothing to look forward to when I get back. I've also seen how the YCA serves to educate kids and teens about animals and how to protect them. I love animals and getting to see the owls, otters, birds, deer, and of course the fish encourages me to help protect them even.

-Emily Orsak, 16.

The YCA camping trip at McGraw was a great experience. I'm so glad I went. I loved everything there, but I especially liked fishing. I liked it because the lake was nice and we got to use the boats. I really like the YCA because it gets connected and gets you close to nature. When I got the chance to snack and camp and fish I was so excited and happy. I love how YCA teaches the importance of the great outdoors. I really like camping and fishing and I am so happy that YCA offers the chance to do that. YCA is a great organization. It offers the chance to

Cecilia Brooks

YCA isn't about where we are fishing, what we're eating or whether or not we're even catching fish. YCA is about the privilege to fish with my dad and meet other kids my age who enjoy fishing as much as I do. The truth is, I've never caught a musky and would very much like to, but if it wasn't for YCA, I probably would've given up. However, this amazing organization told me that: 'it's not about catching the fish, it's about spending time with my dad.'

-Becca Underwood



Becca & Dad



Jessie & Dad

One thing I learned from some of the outings I went on was it does not matter if you win or not, what counts is spending that time with your mom or dad. When you are in the boat with them all day or hunting, it's special bonding time that a kid may have never had before with their parent. I know I enjoy spending time out in the boat with my dad. I feel like I am one of the luckiest kids in the world when I'm out there fishing because in the back of my mind I know... are kids might not have a mom or dad to take them.

By Jessica Fish

What I will bring my kids to the Y.C.A. if it's o.k with you. So now do you know how much I love the Y.C.A.? I look forward to the next trip.

Abbu walqurski

Thank you

being outdoors with my family. I am a girl you can take camping anytime. I loved being with my Auntie Micki and mom. I loved meeting Kevin Bushnick and his family. I liked hearing the history of Moose Lake, told by Jim. I liked being on the water and catching fish. I caught 2 muskies on my first year, but I wouldn't have caught it if it wasn't for Larry Ramsell. A

By Madison Sammier





## The YCA Visits the Jake Wolf Fish Hatchery



A person could (and many have) written books about what happens in a fish hatchery. We're simply going to summarize the YCA's visit to the Jake Wolf Hatchery, by saying it was an amazing day for the kids and the parents. This was without a doubt, one of our most educational experiences ever for the families of the Youth Conservation Alliance.



Picture LEFT, shows a pair of Muskies in the wild doing what Muskies do best in the spring; make baby Muskies. In a hatchery, the spring is also a critical time of year for this Muskie magic. The process however is very labor intensive, and requires a staff of people to make happen. What a hatchery can do is ensure there's no disruption to this spawning process and in turn, produce thousands of Muskies that can be raised and released into our lakes and river systems. This entire process is not limited to the Muskie, but is replicated for bass, walleye and other fresh water species. Our favorite, remains the Muskie.

Picture RIGHT shows a large female Muskie full of egg's.



Picture LEFT shows a tank of male Muskies ready to fertilize the females' many eggs.



Picture ABOVE shows a YCA youngster pushing egg's out of a 30 Lb. female Muskie.

Mixing eggs & milt to create a Muskie!



Picture ABOVE of a YCA parent Bob Moser looking at "life in the making" under the microscope.



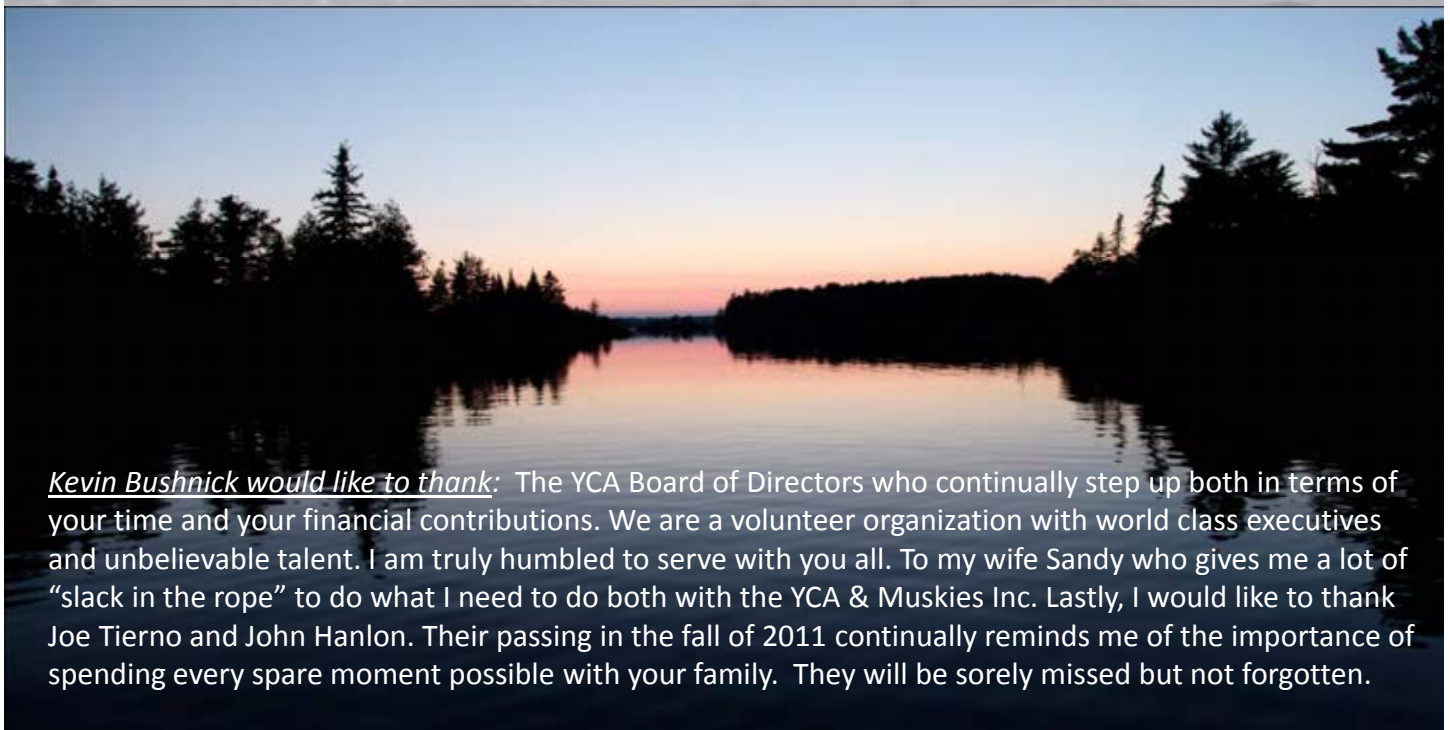


## ***The YCA Would Like To THANK:***

Greg & Ellen Wells for being there from the beginning. To Rich Gallagher for helping with the YCA's school programs and for being our "go-to" MC on family night! To Mike & Carol Moorman for your financial support and for always being there to advise us on ideas and issues; you have great wisdom. To Carol's grandfather Max McGraw for having the vision to do something special EVERY DAY on the conservation front long after he passed. To Michael Conley for your generosity and continued support of the YCA. To Brian Urlacher for signing "all the stuff" that means so much to the kids.



To Todd Cleveland from Phantom Lures, for making and donating the coolest kids Muskie lures ever! To Silver Lake Police Chief Dan Kingsley for supporting the kids during one of our largest community programs of the year! To Jim Onarheim and the Mystic Moose Resort for taking our youth programs personally and making sure everything is perfect for the kids. To Jack & Pam at Louie's Landing for serving up some fantastic North woods meals and making everyone feel at home in their kitchen on the lake.



*Kevin Bushnick would like to thank:* The YCA Board of Directors who continually step up both in terms of your time and your financial contributions. We are a volunteer organization with world class executives and unbelievable talent. I am truly humbled to serve with you all. To my wife Sandy who gives me a lot of "slack in the rope" to do what I need to do both with the YCA & Muskies Inc. Lastly, I would like to thank Joe Tierno and John Hanlon. Their passing in the fall of 2011 continually reminds me of the importance of spending every spare moment possible with your family. They will be sorely missed but not forgotten.





Now more than ever, kids need an outlet to enjoy some good, clean fun; to learn about the outdoors; and to extend their education on conservation and the world around us. They should have the opportunity to explore what's outside vs. what's online.



**Our mission is to teach environmental education, highlighting fishing & hunter safety as family activities; something everyone can enjoy regardless of age.**

**The YCA believes the outdoors should play a key role in child and teenage development and act as a conduit for conservation throughout a person's lifetime.**





© Jon Q Wright

*Kids who fish are cool!*



Environmental  
Education

School  
Programs

Fishing

Hunter  
Safety

Camping

Bird  
of Prey

Special  
Needs Kids

Community

Y.C.A.

[www.theYCA.org](http://www.theYCA.org)