

## Girls Talking Fishing . . . in School!

by Jeff Ledermann, Guest Writer, Father

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*Angling for a concept to introduce girls to fishing? Here's a true "fish tale" by Jeff Ledermann, a father of two young ladies and their introduction to angling by casting his girls in the right direction. Our author took the extra steps to coach his daughters and some of their friends to the idea of fishing and doing in the face of stereo typing.*

### Here's Jeff's "Tale":

From the time they could walk, I've introduced my two girls (now in high school) to the outdoors, including helping them catch their first fish at the age of two and guiding them in the harvest of their first deer in the last couple of years. My focus expanded, however, when my oldest, then a fifth grader, came home from school one day and announced that "girls don't fish."

I decided then and there that at least the girls in our community were going to know that not only was it okay for girls to fish, but it was a lot of fun. With her help recruiting friends, we founded **Fishing Daughters Club** for girls and their parents and guardians.

Since 2006, we've averaged seven or eight fishing events a year that typically include over a dozen girls and their parents or guardians spending time on the water fishing and having fun. With the support of our community education and school staff, at least once a year an invitation goes out to families throughout our school district via e-mail and school announcements. There are still girls at our schools that might choose to not fish, but now at least they all know that boys aren't the only ones that do!

I really knew we had changed attitudes, however, when a couple years after the club started, several seventh grade girls hounded my daughter at her locker about when I was going to get the schedule out for the summer events so they could get their parents to sign them up – middle school girls talking fishing in the school hallways??????

My biggest tip, however, is this one: when taking kids on outdoor outings, encourage them to bring friends. I'd like to say I discovered how important this was through pure genius, but it was really dumb luck.

I'll never forget our first outing for Fishing Daughters Club. I was excited because we had managed to get several parents and girls to join us at an area lake and the weather was great and everything else was going as planned. On the way there (and on the way home), however, my two daughters fought the whole time in the car! Here I had put together this great "family time" and everyone was on edge.

At the next outing, one of my girls, Heidi, couldn't join us, so I let Katie bring a friend. Katie and her friend had a great time and the ride home was peaceful. Third time out and both daughters are going. Out of fairness, I let Heidi bring a friend, but not Katie (I had a really small boat). Lo and behold, my girls were angels to each other, as neither wanted to make a bad impression on the friend.

Ever since, I've encouraged one or both of them to bring a friend. It has worked out amazingly! Not only do the sisters get along better and it is a much more enjoyable experience for everyone, but we've introduced several girls to fishing that never would've had the chance!

I would be happy to share any tips and suggestions for others interested in starting their own fishing clubs for kids. People can [email](#) me, Jeff Ledermann, or call 651-773-5537.

The girls might not appreciate dad deeds did for the short-term, but I will bet you a rod and reel that their tackle box full of memories will never be forgotten.

Here is a MNDNR link for more information at:

[Fish and Wildlife Outreach Section](#)



The girls excited about their big catch of the day.