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## **2025 Bellevue Fishing Derby welcomes 133 Participants Casting Their Lines for a Day of Fun**

Bellevue, FL – Sunshine and smiles filled the space around Lake Lillian during the 2025 Bellevue Fishing Derby, held Saturday, April 5, 2025. The day had the largest turnout ever with 133 local children and their families participating. Organized by the City of Bellevue and supported by a lineup of community partners and sponsors provided outdoor fun, friendly competition, and a free Community Cookout hosted by the Bellevue Police Department at the Bellevue Community Center.

The fishing competition was split into two age groups: Group 1 (9 and younger) and Group 2 (10–15 years old). Awards were given out in categories for the biggest fish, smallest fish, and most fish caught, with the crowd offering cheers for every winner's name.

### **Top Winners of the 2025 Bellevue Fishing Derby:**

#### **Group 1 (Ages 9 and Under)**

- *Biggest Fish:* Hazan Kurzhals – 18 inches
- *Smallest Fish:* Noah Amidei & Thomas Whitlow – 4 inches (*tie*)
- *Most Fish Caught:* Troy DeNoo – 5 fish

#### **Group 2 (Ages 10–15)**

- *Biggest Fish:* Andrew Riesen – 17 inches
- *Smallest Fish:* Mason Dove – 4 inches
- *Most Fish Caught:* Mason Dove – 7 fish

This year's derby held extra significance, as it was dedicated to the memory of Robert "Bob" Turner, a longtime advocate for youth and fishing.

"My father had a deep love for fishing, and more than that, he believed in giving kids the opportunity to connect with nature," said Craig Turner, son of the late Bob Turner. "To see so many children at the lake, laughing, learning, and enjoying the sport—he would've been so proud. On behalf of our family, thank you to the City and community for honoring him in such a special way."

The event was made possible by the generous support of several sponsors, whose contributions helped ensure a smooth and fun experience for all participants:

Fix-It Tek and Peek's Printing & Design – *who provided free fishing derby t-shirts*

Toomey Tools – *who donated bait, supplies and prizes*

Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission – *who stocked Lake Lillian in advance of the derby*

The City of Bellevue offers its sincere thanks to these sponsors, whose generosity directly contributed to the joy of the day.

A standout highlight of the event was the exceptional support from the Bellevue Police Department, led by Chief Terry Holland. Chief Holland personally assisted with participant check-in, while two police recruits were stationed lakeside to help measure and record each catch. After the derby, the department hosted the Annual Community Cookout at the Bellevue Community Center, serving up burgers, hot dogs, and smiles for families and volunteers.

“The Bellevue Police Department’s involvement turned this event from great to truly special,” said Robert Vass, the City’s Events and Promotions Manager. “Chief Holland and his team showed their deep commitment to our community—not just in keeping us safe, but in investing time and heart into the lives of our children. The cookout, the check-in help, the lakeside support—everything they did made the day run so smoothly. A huge thank you goes to the mayor, the Turner family, every sponsor, and everyone who helped make the day possible. It was truly a team effort.”

“The Fishing Derby was a perfect example of what makes Bellevue such a special place,” said Mayor Christine Dobkowski. “It was a joy to see our local families out at the lake, kids having fun, and neighbors connecting over a shared love of the outdoors. Events like this create lasting memories, and I’m incredibly proud of how our city and community come together to support one another.”

As Bellevue continues to grow, events like the Fishing Derby highlight the city’s strong sense of tradition, youth engagement, and community pride. Plans are already underway for next year’s derby, and city officials are hopeful it will continue to grow in size and impact.

For more information on upcoming community events, visit [www.bellevuefl.org/172/local-events](http://www.bellevuefl.org/172/local-events).