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“CAST AWAYS FOR KIDS” BRINGS NEW LIFE TO RETIRED RODS AND REELS

EAST LANSING, Mich.—Michigan State University’s Project F.I.S.H. and Gander Mountain Stores are working together with “Cast Aways for Kids” to collect and restore used fishing rods and reels to give them to schools, youth groups and other community programs.

Cast Aways for Kids, a program founded by Ron Schara of Minnesota Bound, and Gander Mountain Stores partner with fishing clubs and organizations that volunteer their time to renovate the rods to working condition. This year Gander Mountain is not only a partner, but also the exclusive donation site for rods and reels. The “retired” reels will then be given to Project F.I.S.H. volunteers.

“What we will do is work with the kids to refurbish the donated items, instead of doing it for them. This way the kids will learn how to take care of the equipment themselves,” said Mark Stephens, Project F.I.S.H. coordinator. “Cast Aways for Kids is just another positive tool for Project F.I.S.H. volunteers to use to give kids repeat contact with fishing and access to a caring adult.”

Gander Mountain employees will exchange old or unwanted fishing rods and reels for a \$10-off coupon toward a \$50 or more purchase. Donors will also receive a coupon booklet from Water Works Wonders, a national campaign dedicated to promoting the benefits of fishing and boating and sponsored by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation.

“When you bring in your ‘cast aways’ you not only get the monetary incentive, you help get a kid fishing at the same time, which is the essence of Project F.I.S.H.,” said Stephens. “This equipment may encourage a kid to become a lifelong steward of Michigan’s aquatic resources. Partnered with a caring adult role model, your donation can do wonders.”

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For more information about the location of the nearest Gander Mountain visit them online at <http://www.gandermountain.com> or call them toll free at 1-800-282-5993.

The program will run from May 15 through the end of June.

Project F.I.S.H. is a mentor-based, community-supported educational program that encourages interested teachers and volunteers to get kids excited about fishing, and works in cooperation with the Great Lakes Fishery Trust, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan State University Extension and Michigan United Conservation Clubs.

To learn more about Project F.I.S.H, check out www.projectfish.org, or contact Mark Stephens at 517-432-2700.

