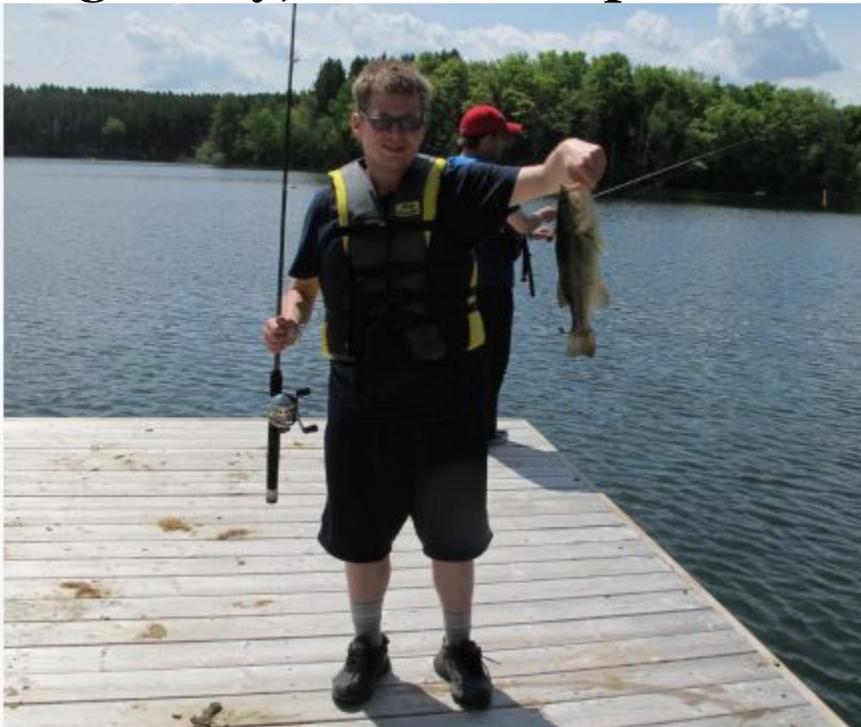


http://www.thestar.com/initiatives/fresh_air_fund/2015/06/03/for-people-with-prader-willi-camps-escape-from-daily-routines-is-a-treasured-ritual-fresh-air-fund.html

For people with Prader-Willi, camp's escape from daily routines is a treasured ritual: Fresh Air Fund

People with syndrome look forward to their annual getaway, where their particular needs are



Leslie Ferenc / Toronto Star Order this photo

Joel Pollock shows off a bass he caught at Shadow Lake Centre.

By: [Leslie Ferenc](#) GTA, Published on Wed Jun 03 2015

STOUFFVILLE, ONT.—A muskrat has popped its head up at Shadow Lake Centre and that can only mean one thing — it's camp season, so the sun is shining, worms are wiggling and big bass biting.

And Joel Pollock couldn't be happier. He's already caught two of those bad boys fishing off the dock at the centre. "Live bait" is the secret to his success, says Pollock, who gently releases his squirmy catch back into the shimmering waters of Shadow Lake.

The 29-year-old is back for his third Prader-Willi syndrome camp where he looks forward to seeing his old friends who, like him, have the rare disorder that results in physical, mental and behavioural

problems and a constant feeling of hunger. People with the syndrome never feel full and have health issues due to obesity.

At the PW camp, meals are carefully monitored and precise calorie counts maintained for every guest. This centre is the only summer retreat where their medical needs can be met. Camp is the only place Pollock and his buddies can get together, and it's always a happy reunion.

Owned and operated by Community Living Toronto, the centre is a retreat and respite from the city for more than 600 guests with a wide range of intellectual disorders. Guests are as young as seven years old and there is no upper age limit. For many, it's the only vacation they will have this year and a much-anticipated change from their daily routines. The summer camp receives support from the Fresh Air Fund.

Pollock is such a big fan he'll be back for another session in July.

"I really like it here," says the shy fisherman, who was looking forward to working backstage during talent night, but admits he won't be singing or dancing on stage.

This summer is Jocelyn Lowry's ninth at Shadow Lake. She lives in a group home in Thornhill but loves being outdoors, "and I like nature," she says. Lowry, 29, has brought several books to read during down time at PWS camp and was waiting for the temperature to rise a tad before going swimming. New this summer is a music program that is fast becoming a favourite among guests who love the drumming.

"This is such a good place. I love it here," Lowry says before hopping on the all-terrain Gator vehicle with property manager Marisa Grasse and heading to the back of the property to check the fences. "I'm going on a mission," Lowry continues, worried some fences have been damaged and bike jumps built by trespassers. "It's what I do."

If you have benefited from the Fresh Air Fund or have a story to tell, email lferenc@thestar.ca or phone 416-869-4309.

Goal: \$650,000

How to donate: With your gift, the Fresh Air Fund can help send 25,000 disadvantaged and special needs children to camp. The experience gives these children much more than relief from summer heat — it gives them a break in life and memories to last a lifetime. Our target is \$650,000.

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