



SMALL FRY, BIGGER FISH

Junior anglers compete in 19th Key Colony Beach Kids Fishing Derby

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What began with \$2,000 19 years ago is now a five-figure charitable event serving dozens of Middle Keys kids. On June 17, 45 junior anglers dropped their lines over the gunwales of the Mara-

thon Lady in search of the biggest catch of the day for the 19th annual Key Colony Beach Ron Sutton Memorial Kids Fishing Derby. Retiring to the Inn at Key Colony after hitting the dock, competitors were treated to lunch — and a table full of toys and trophies that towered over more than a few of the award-winning fishers. The derby is the brainchild of soon-to-retire

Police Chief Kris DiGiovanni, who has overseen the growth of the event into a summer mainstay that this year netted more than \$30,000 for prizes and donations throughout the year to Middle Keys children in need, with the full support of Key Colony Beach's residents and elected officials. "I made sure when I came on as chief that I kept the derby — that was my baby," DiGiovanni told the Weekly. "Every year it got easier to get sponsors, because they all wanted to be a part of it. Bay View Inn would always donate the T-shirts since the beginning, Key Colony Inn has always been welcoming for our reception, the city of Marathon has always been supportive. The Marathon Lady marks their calendar a year out."



1. Blaise Merryman accepts his third-place trophy in the age 9-11 division from Monroe County Mayor Michelle Lincoln. 2. Mackie Childress has the lucky ticket, winning a raffled bicycle on top of his second-place finish in the age 9-11 category. 3. Jonathan Hackett takes home the big trophy in the 9-11 age group, presented by Monroe County Mayor Michelle Lincoln. 4. Thor Sutton finishes second in the age 12-14 division. 5. Key Colony Beach Mayor Freddie Foster presents Justin Suarez with his first-place trophy in the age 12-14 division. 6. Kitty Sutton presents first-place winner Skye Levine with her trophy in the age 6-8 division. 7. Smiling kids collect their raffle prizes from Police Chief Jamie Buxton. 8. Retired Police Chief Kris DiGiovanni, left, thanks donors and supporters for nearly two decades of growth in the Key Colony Beach Ron Sutton Memorial Kids Fishing Derby. Bottom row: Kids haul their catch over the rails aboard the Marathon Lady. Photos by Alex Rickert and Sandra Lee Photography