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NOVEMBER 2020

KID POWER

Certifying youngsters keeps one veteran diver engaged and committed to the underwater world

BY WAYNE B. BROWN



Most instructors have a preferred teaching niche. That could be Discover Scuba Diving courses, PADI Specialty Diver courses or—as for me—youth instruction.

I am constantly amazed at how well junior scuba divers and even PADI Seal Team participants comprehend the seemingly complex world of dive theory. As we all know, every scuba student's goal is to get out of the book work and into the water—this is even more so with young divers.

Opening up the underwater world to youth and sharing

our passion for the marine environment with them is one of the greatest joys of our industry. The happiness you see in their faces when they take their first breath underwater is a sight I never tire of. How quickly they become comfortable underwater and their ease with skill demonstrations create not only a solid foundation for their future enjoyment of scuba diving but for their safety as well.

Brown, above right and at far right, treasures the experience of teaching his grandchildren to dive.

IS YOUR KID READY?

[Want to get your kid interested in diving? There's a course for that—go to \[padi.com/courses\]\(#\) and select the "Youth" filter at top left to learn more about in-water starter programs for kids as young as 8.](#)

It's also important for the survival of the scuba industry to continue to bring young people into our sport—this is one of the reasons Aggressor Adventures has hosted Family Weeks at our destinations for years. Inviting families to share their underwater experience bonds them in ways no other sport can.

When my son was 15 years old, I knew that, by 16, he would be spending more time with his friends than with his parents. I wanted to find a sport we could share and bond over for years to come. I passed a scuba shop on my way to the office every day, so I asked him about taking lessons. We so enjoyed our first years of diving together that my daughter wanted to try it when she turned 15. That

started our family's world diving travels, and landed us on the *Galapagos Aggressor* in 2005. Summer of 2006 found us on the *Belize Aggressor*. In a casual discussion one night, the captain mentioned that the company owner had died and his family had put the business up for sale. On an April day in 2007, I spent hours signing all the documents necessary to purchase what was then Aggressor Fleet.

While I am still as enthusiastic about Aggressor Adventures today as I was back then, I am most proud that it brought me to where I am today, teaching youth all about the joys of scuba diving and our planet's amazing marine life. Without that connection, I doubt I would have pursued a professional path of teaching, and would have missed out on one of my greatest gratifications. I am now teaching my own grandchildren to dive, and hope that my love of the sport and marine environment continues to grow in generations of my family to come.

WAYNE B. BROWN is CEO of Aggressor Adventures and a PADI Staff Instructor.

